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PROLOGUE

“But you put on quite a show

You know,

Very entertaining

But it's over now, but it's over now

Go on a take a bow”.

I am singing this song looking myself in the lengthy mirror, I love this song with all my heart as I am busy singing and shaking my not so there booty. The song stops playing, someone must've switched off the music. I wonder who it could be because as far as I know my mother is at work and my dad is on a business trip. Wait. What if it's a thief? How would they get in because I always lock the gate, the butler and the door once my mother leaves for work. Argh, I get out of my room and tip toed to the lounge to check who it is. It is my Mother, I am

surprised to see her home so early because she usually knocks off around 19:00pm. She looks stress & tired. I greet her and sit down next to her.

“You home early”.

“Your father told me to knock off early he wants to talk to me about something” She takes off her shoes and rubs her feet.

“I wonder what's so important that he has to tell you in a way that you had to knock off early. Let me go and get you water to soak your feet”.

Mom: “We are yet to find out, please do, my feet are killing me”. I stand up and prepare her water then take it to her.

Her: “Thank you baby”.

Me: “Let me go and start cooking then”.

Her: "I'll go and take a bath so long" I nod getting up from the couch and walk to the kitchen.

I wonder what my father wants to talk about with my mother, it sounds important the way my Mother said it I hope he is not thinking of taking a second wife or divorcing her, that will break my mom apart. I cook beef & rice something easy and quick.

"I'm glad that you both here", he says sitting down looking happy as ever, I guess he comes bearing good news.

Mom: "Get straight to the point Muzi".

Dad: "Very well then". He clasps his hands. "Noma I'm sure you've noticed that our marriage is no longer the same. We've both fell out of love with each other".

Mom: "We? By 'we' you're including me? I did not fall out of love with you. I love you Muzi. Yes, things are no longer the same, but we can work them out". He shakes his head.

Him: "There is nothing to work out Noma".

Mom: "What do you mean, Muzi"? Her eyes are shiny as if like she wants to cry.

Dad: "I want a divorce I can't continue with this sham of a marriage".

Mom: Gasping! "Muzi No! You can't do this to me you are my life, how are you expecting me to live without you?" She is now crying...

Dad: "I'm sorry Noma, I never intended to hurt you this way, but sometimes life forces us to do things we do not want".

Me: "Dad please. You can't divorce mom, What about the vows you made at the church 30 years ago? You promised to love her till death do you apart"!

Dad: "Luxolo you will soon grow up and know what life is. Life is not a movie that you always see on TV, this in no Cinderella story this is reality".

Mom: "Muzi please we can go to church, marriage counsellor anything I don't want to lose you. Anything but not divorce Muzi! We can fix us, I can even give you the son you always wanted". He shakes his head. She is on her knees begging my father, she is crying her tears are now mixed with snots, my dad is not even touched. He just looks at her with disgust.

Dad: "My lawyer will deliver the divorce papers tomorrow please sign them, I don't want to fight you on this Noma, because you know you won't win. You can have the house and the car".

Me: "I hope you know what you're doing. The pain you're inflicting in my mother it shall be inflicted to you 30x, never undermine the tears of a praying woman" He chuckles, he thinks that this is a joke? He's stupid.

Dad: "A praying woman you say. If she is one then why didn't she pray to God to 'save' her failed marriage"?

Mom: "Mu...Muzi" (hiccuping) pl...please we can work this out".

Him: "I have made up my mind Noma, and it's final. Oh, and another thing go and find a father of this bastard daughter of yours"! He is already on his feet.

Mom: "Wait, who is she? Who are you divorcing me for"?

Him: "It's Bhebetsi. Your sister". My mother let's out another heart piercing wail. My eyes are also full of tears now, I hate seeing my mother cry. I don't even know this Bhebetsi woman. But either way, why would she hurt her sister like this? It doesn't make sense.

He turns back and walk out. Wait, what did he just say? Did he just indirectly tell me that he is not my father? If he is not my father then who is? I look at my mother, and she is crying, hurt is written in her eyes Dad, no Muzi broke her I've never seen my mother like this. On the other hand I wanted to ask her about what Muzi said about finding my real Father, but I

decided to keep quiet I'll ask her some other time right now she's hurting, and doesn't need me interrogating her. Why would her sister do her like this? This is cruelty on another level. She doesn't need more stress, and I pray that these news doesn't trigger her high blood levels. I get up from my couch and sit next to her trying to calm her down... The doorbell ring, I stand up and go to attend it, I yanked it open and it were I believe sheriffs judging by their uniform.

“Good afternoon miss”.

“Afternoon sir”.

“Can you please sign here for me”? He gives me a pen and a clip board, I sign then give him back his pen & board he gives me an envelope I guess it's the divorce papers, that was fast. But let's hope I'm wrong. They bid their goodbye, I close the door after them and go back to my mother. She is calm now. I give her the envelope.

“You can open it” mom tells me.

Me: "Are you sure"? She nods.

I do as told, and we are served with a notice, we must evacuate this house within 2 days, WTF! But Muzi just said we can keep the house, what nonsense is this now. I show it to my mother, and she shakes her head and let out another wail and I know why. We have nowhere to go. God, what wrong did we ever do to you? I cry as I lie my head on top of my mother's lap. Where will we go? Where to from now? Why did Muzi divorce my mother? Couldn't he at least give her heads up? This is too sudden, and It doesn't make sense at all. By the look of things, it seems like he has been planning it all along or this Bhebetsi person fed him lies about my mother. He decided to break her more, he knows very well that she has no one, we were all that she had, and he decides to divorcé her. I continue crying as she hushes me. One way or the other, they will pay for this. They will pay for hurting my mother, all of them...

1

{2 months later}

LUXOLO

“Xolo please bring me my pills” my mom shouts from the bedroom.

“Ng'ywaletha mama” (I'm bringing them mom) I respond from the kitchen/lounge. We've moved out of what I used to call “home” from a 2 double story house in the suburbs to a shack with no electricity in someone's backyard, but it is better than nothing. We have a roof to cover our heads, Imagine the street kids. To tell you the truth it was hard at first adjusting to this new life of mine. Ever since that fateful day that changed our lives, my mother started getting sick she was going in & out of hospitals, they even dismissed her at work. The doctors

diagnosed her with stroke now she is getting a little bit better since she is taking her medication. I go to her and give her- her medication, I also pray to God to always keep her alive for me there's so much I want to do for her. This woman went through hell for me, and I owe her that much. She asks me to sit down and I do so.

“I think it's time I tell you about your father”. Sighs, I swallow hard, yes I wanted to know about him, but thinking about the fact that he never raised me or try to look for me makes me think not to even bother wanting to know about him. He doesn't exist to me.

“It's fine mama you don't have to tell me. I'm sure he has forgotten about me wherever he is”. She shakes her head.

Her: “No, I insist. You must know the truth you are old & wiser now. Don't worry I won't be long” I take a deep breath.

Me: “Okay. I'm listening”.

“It was back in the 70s when I first met your father. He was so charming Xolo, every woman wanted him, but he chose me instead and the women from my village started hating me, but I did not care because I was with the man I love. Time went by, we moved in together mind you we were not married then, but we loved each other dearly. My parents warned me about him, I did not want to hear it. My parents ended up disowning me, I didn't care though because I was going be with my lover, the man I loved”. She takes a deep breath.

“Few months staying together, your father got a job as a truck driver and you know truck drivers are always travelling I was happy for him, he even did a mini lunch inviting his friends to celebrate the good news with us. He was a loving man he even budgeted for Lobola, we were living a good life, and he always bought grocery every time he would be happy... This other time he came back, he was given 5 days off he came back without money, but he did not take it out like he used to do all those years. I asked him about it, and he told me that I must never ask him that because he works hard for his money, I decided to keep quiet. I then made him food and served him he did not thank me I knew right there and there that this is no longer the man I fell in love with”. She presses her lips together preventing herself from wanting to cry.

“He threw the plate on the floor and it scattered on the floor, and started shouting at me calling me names. To think that was the last meal I had left because I knew that he will come back with food and money. He looked at me with disgust, clicked his tongue. He went to the nearest shebeen to go and drink and remember he said he doesn't have money. I cleaned up the mess he created. He came back around 02:00am in the morning smelling of alcohol, he kicked me on my tummy waking me up. I was shocked because he has never ever laid his hand on me before. He pulled me off from bed and started beating me, I protected my face while begging him to stop, but he never did. He hurled all kinds of insults at me, I was even bleeding from the nose then he did the unthinkable he tore my night dress apart”.

I am now wiping my tears. Something deep inside me is boiling.

“He hit me again and poured my body with alcohol then he... He... Raped me Xolo, from around 2am to 6am he never stopped. I don't know where he got that energy from. I cried, pleaded with him to stop, but he did not want to hear it I cried till I had no tears left to cry, I was too numb. After he was done

with me he spat on my face and called me a whore, he kicked me once again and left me on the floor then he went out. I forced myself to stand up, I eventually did even though my body was in pain I was badly bruised. I managed to go and take a bath, tears streaming down my cheeks thinking of what your father did he was a monster I did not recognize him. He did not sleep at home for 3 days he came back because he was set to leave on that day, he did not even apologize for what he did to me. Months went by, and he came back again for a visit, I thought that this time around things were going to be different, but I was lying to myself, same thing happened. He raped me all night and almost beaten me to death, if it wasn't for my neighbour that came in at that moment I'd probably be 6 feet under”.

She is crying and you can hear from her voice that she is broken, the pain in her voice is not to be missed. I can't take it anymore its just too much. Wiping my tears.

“My neighbour, helped me escaped

I came here in Mpumalanga that was the last I saw him and I thank God for Thandaza, that woman really saved me. Then I met Muzi and by the time I met him I was already 4 months

pregnant with you, he accepted me as I am and once upon a time we were a happy family until now. I wonder what changed". We are both wiping our tears. May God give me this woman's strength, she is boss!

Her: "Should it happen that he comes looking for you one day, accept and forgive him he is your father" I chuckle.

Me: "I will never do that, I'm sorry, but he is not my father he is a monster. I'm better off without him or Muzi. You are the only family I have" scoffs. "I doubt he will even come looking for me. From what I've detected in your story, he didn't know that you were pregnant. It's best that he knows that I don't exist. I don't want to know him. I grew up without him and I will continue doing so".

Her: "You will understand one day, let me nap. Wake me up when you are done cooking".

She stands up and get into bed. I also stand up and walk out leaving her to rest, I walk outside and call my boyfriend Sanele. It rings unanswered, I try a few times and it's still the same, well

I am not surprised I figure that he is busy, he will get back to me once he is done with whatever he is busy with. Argh, who am I kidding? He will never get back to me. We hardly communicate these days, actually I'm the one who tries to keep us going, but he doesn't even meet me halfway. I need to talk to someone, I keep on wiping my endless tears. If only I had friends nearby.

★»★«

VUYO

“I am not happy about the girl you gave me the last time Layla. She didn't give me what I paid for”!

Her: “I'm sorry about that Vuyo. She is still new, but I will have a talk with her or better yet give you another girl”.

Me: “You better, I can't be wasting my time with girls who do not want to satisfy my needs! They are useless, they don't want to let loose. I was told that your girls are the best in town but that? That was pure disrespect! Where is Bella? She is the only one who can satisfy me”! I am angry. Can't she see that?

Her: “I will make it up to you, I promise. My girls are the best indeed and Bella is no longer interested in working for me. She has decided to spread her wings to something greater”.

Me: “Make it quick or else I will shut down this bloody club, am I making myself clear”! She nods quickly.

Her: “I will arrange one of our best for you, apologies again”.

Me: “Don't fuck with me Layla. I'll be waiting in room 103 tomorrow night, you better deliver or else. Nc nc nc, kiss your club goodbye” banging the table. I stand up and exit her office banging her door after me. I pay her a lot of money for her to give me amateurs who refuse to swallow my cum. Why wasn't I told that Bella no longer works there? She was one of the best

this club has ever had! She didn't mind exploring as long as I was giving her money she did everything I asked her too, she never limited herself to sex. That's why I liked her.

★»★«

“Welcome back baby, dinner will be served shortly” my wife tells me as soon as I step inside the house.

“Let me go and take a shower then”. I kiss her cheek then go to the bathroom, and take a shower.

I find her done setting the table and I sit down waiting for her to serve me food. She places the food on top of the table and join me.

Her: "How was work"? She asks dishing up.

Me: "Work was fine, thank you. And how was your day"?

Her: "My day was good, thank you. Babe, I've been thinking".

Me: "About"?

Her: "I think it's time I met your parents, don't you think? I mean it's long overdue" I choke on the food, she hands me a glass of juice that was on top of the table.

Her: "Sorry".

Me: "Why are you so keen in meeting my parents knowing very well that we are not in good terms"? She huffs, and drops her fork in her plate.

Her: "Because we've been married for 2 years without their blessings, I think it's time you reach out to them".

Me: “Do you lack anything? Don't I give you enough love? Don't I spoil you”?

Her: “None of any of that, but I think it's time you let go of the past. Should it happen that we decide to have a baby what are we going to do? You know very well that my mother is old and very frail, and don't get me started about my Father he is a lost cause”.

Me: “We will hire a stay in nanny” she softly laughs, and shakes her head.

Her: “Are you being for real right now? You are unbelievable Vuyo. Our child will need to be introduced to both our ancestors”.

Me: “Why must we introduce her to our ancestors? Were you introduced to your ancestors when you were a baby? Our baby will grow up Just fine without being introduced to the ancestors”.

Her: “Fuck maarn. I'm tired of your shit Vuyo! You better pull yourself together and go make things right with your parents or else I will divorce you”! That statement took me by surprise I never expected it, in all our arguments this is actually the first time threatening to divorcé me.

Me: “Yo... You don't mean that right”?

Her: “I meant everything I said. Go and make things right with your parents! Maybe they are the reason why we don't have a baby, your ancestors must be angry at you”.

Me: “I just lost my appetite”. Taking the napkin wiping my lips.

Her: “Same here. I'll be in the bedroom”. She clicks her tongue and stands up walking away leaving looking at her agape. I've never seen Cindy this mad, she surely is tired of my bullshit she has had enough. I take my car keys and drive to the club, I need to blow off some steam, and clear my mind. I'm driving like a mad man until I see a woman walking in the middle of the road

I stop my car abruptly and my tyres screeched she quickly jumps on the pavement.

“Hey don't you know a walk way? You don't walk in the middle of the street you bitch. I almost hit you, do you want to die? Then go and jump on top of a building or something”! She gives me one look and starts running to the nearby houses, and she disappears on site. Some people, I shake my head and continue driving to the club I really need to blow off some steam, plus Cindy is refusing to be intimate with me lately, ai...

2

LUXOLO

I get done washing the dishes and I go and sit next to my mother on the mattress, I heave a deep sigh and lie my head on her lap, and she brushes my hair.

“What's wrong ntombi”?

“It's nothing mama”.

Her: “It can't be nothing. There is something troubling you, I am your mother Luxolo and I know you”. I chuckle.

Me: “I was thinking of going and look for a job so that I can be able to help with paying rent, and to buy myself toiletries”.

Her: “Why? I still have my UI-19 money, and it provides us with everything we need”.

Me: “I know mama, but it won't last us for too long. Your medication is costly, we have to pay rent and buy groceries it's too much mama. What if it runs out in the long run, what then”?

Her: “I guess you're right. Where do you want work”?

Me: “Anywhere. I mean even with my qualifications I don't get a job, even if I can work in retail or restaurant it's fine as long as I'll be bringing in money you've been supporting me all my life, now it's time I look out for myself”.

Her: “That's a start and I hope one day you'll get your dream job”. I smile. I was studying electrical engineering, and I was about to register for studying Diesel mechanic in a different college though, that's when Muzi stripped us everything of which resulted me into dropping out of college, and on top of that my mother became sick.

Me: “God shall answer my prayers one of these days”. My phone rings, I check the screen and it's Sanele. I look at my mother, and she nods for me to answer it, she doesn't like

Sanele, and she doesn't even pretend when he's around and thus led Sanele to stop coming to my house, we were meeting secretly. I stand up and go to answer it outside...

“Hello”.

“Hello yamasimba. What took you so long to answer my call”?

Me: “I was busy nursing my mother”.

Him: “Really now? You took your time to answer my call because of your mother”? I softly laugh and shake my head. This guy is unbelievable right now.

Me: “What are you implying exactly Sanele”?

Him: “Who is important between me and your mother”? I laugh. Now he is bullshitting me!

Me: “Are you really asking me that bullshit Sanele? Unbelievable”!

Him: “I am. Does this sound like a joke to you”?

Me: “You are a joke and for your information my mother is more important than you”!

Him: “Is that how you thank me, after everything I've done for you”?

Me: “Everything you've done for me? What did you do for me wena Sanele? You did nothing for me don't you dare start something you can't finish”!

Him: “I'm not surprised by your behaviour that's how whores thank someone who has battered some low life's life, I was feeding you wena syoyo. You're one ungrateful cold bitch”! I chuckle.

Me: "If you don't have anything sensible to say, I think it's best you hang up in fact let me save you time. While at it, Fuck you and your small dick"! I hang up. How dare he? Who does he think he is? Yerrr, this piece of shit!

He tries calling again but I just look at it letting it to ring alone, once upon a time me and Sanele we were madly in love. Things started to change when he came back from his Durban vacation with his colleagues. He became someone else overnight we've been together for 6 years, and from where I'm standing we won't even celebrate our 7th anniversary, we are too disconnected. I walk back inside the house and I find my mother already sleeping, I join her and drift into land of thoughts... I am 28 years, but I haven't achieved anything in life, I don't even have a pet, yet my age mates are flourishing out there, they are living their best life while I still ask airtime from my mother whereas I was fucked almost every day. Sanele never gave me money to buy toiletries that time I was doing 360 angles, and giving it to him however way he wanted whenever he wanted, but fakhashit never appreciated my efforts, mxm. So, basically I was being nyoba'd for free, and no I'm not selling, but he should've spoiled me once or twice in a month as his girlfriend, and I've never asked him for money.

That should count for something right? Exactly. Mara Sanele? Yi waste of a man...

★»★«

CINDY

“You sound stressed what's up”? That's my older sister asking me. I called her because I needed someone to talk to. I can't really call my friends because they will not even entertain me, and besides they are not married hence they don't want me talking about my marital affairs when with them, they are all about ‘living free, and not being tied to a man’.

Me: “Vuyo is stressing me”? Heaving a sigh.

Her: “Not again. What did he do now”? I can hear the annoyance in her voice it is not to be missed. “I told you that I don't like him, he is bad news. He is causing you stress again”?

Me: “I did not call you to lecture me, I just wanted to talk to my sister but it seems like I am wasting my time”.

Her: “Argh, I knew that you were going to act somehow once I mention that monster's name. And you clearly wasted your time”. I huff.

Me: “Greet the family for me”.

Her: “Right”. She hangs up, I sigh.

I never have a good conversation without Nonhlanhla mentioning Vuyo's name, Yes, he was abusive and a serial cheater few years back, but he has changed. He is no longer the old Vuyo they know, but my family wants nothing to do with him. I was once hospitalized for 3 days due to his beatings and ever since then, he changed I love him he is my husband... I

don't know how many times my family told me to stay away from him because he is bad news, they don't understand that it's not that simple even if I want to leave him I can't this guy has a very serious hold over me that can lend me in jail. Should my family find out about it, I am as good as dead my father won't even think twice about putting a bullet on my brain. Just then my phone rings, I look at the screen Sanele's name flashes across the screen. I roll my eyes I am not in the mood to talk to him, let me ignore him he will eventually hang up. I walk to the wine cabinet and take out red wine and I drink straight from the bottle. Just then a message comes through

I take my phone and read it.

“You better bring your ass here if you know what's good for you. Wear that sexy lingerie that will be delivered to your doorstep” it reads.

I chuckle, this guy must be fucken kidding me! Who does he think he is? My doorbell rings I go and attend to it. It was a courier guy, he hands me the box after signing the damn paper. I close the door after him and place the box on top of the table, I open it and it was Bella Ville lingerie! Laughing. I've never

worn a lingerie before and this piece here already makes me feel like I'm naked, I cringe at that thought.



VUYO

I am at the office when my friends Nathi, Thabiso and Bonga throws themselves in my office without knocking, these guys never knock. They greet and make themselves comfortable on my couches.

“You do know that I fuck and masturbate on that couch right”?

“Damn you Vuyo maarn, yasis”! Bonga jumps up, the others laugh.

Thabiso: "So what? Sex is sex we all do it".

Me: "You're annoying. Why are you guys here"? Tilting my head.

Nathi: "Do we need to have a reason to come and visit you? We are your friends".

Bonga: "And friends visit each other unexpectedly".

Me: "That's new considering the fact that all of you never visit me unless I ask you to". They chortle.

Thabiso: "We know and that's why we decided to come and visit you". I pick up the phone, and call Amber to come to my office.

Nathi: "Amber my sweet Amber".

Me: “Dude, I've already tapped that”.

Them: “Yohhh”.

Bonga: “You're going to get sick boy. We will be visiting you at the hospital with Mageu & bananas”. We all laugh... Amber makes her way through, she is white by the way.

“You called for me sir”, she says as soon as she steps inside the office fixing her glasses.

Me: “Yes. Can you please bring my friends something to drink”.

Her: “What would the gentlemen like to drink”?

Thabiso: “I would like to have you”. The other 2 fools laugh, Thabiso is too much.

Her: “I'm not available sir”.

Thabiso: "Then avail yourself for me my pretty white thing".

Nathi: "I would like to have Whiskey".

Bonga: "Sparkle water will do for me". She looks at Thabiso.

Thabiso: "Since you not available why don't you give me your numbers, maybe I might take you out tonight".

Nathi: "So ufuna ukudla lakudle khona u Vuyo? Sies, ungcilile wena". (You want to chow where Vuyo has already chowed? You are rotten) Bonga chuckles.

Him: "Limhlope njer" (but it's white)

Me: "You so dumb. That would be all Amber thank you". She walks out of my office, and we all burst out with laughter.

Me: "What was that all about? You guys are fools, especially you Thabiso".

Nathi: "And that's why we are your friends"/ We all laugh... I don't know why did God give me such friends, they are just stupid but I still love them.

CINDY

I ring the doorbell twice, and he opens for me, he is shirtless it seems as if like he was exercising. I am focusing on his sweaty abs when he pulls me inside the house and smash his lips unto

mine I close the door with my heel, and he picks me up and place me on top of the kitchen counter. I hug his waist with my legs pulling him towards me, and we continue kissing I am now turned on, I don't want to lie. He unties my jacket and my cleavage is out in the open, he tears my bra allowing my boobs to fall free... He then sucks on one of them while caressing the other with his free hand, and I let out slight moan, he kisses me from my belly button while his other hand is playing with my bubbles. All I want now was for him to be deep inside me. He lifts my legs shifting the lace thong aside, it's my first time wearing one, and it's not comfortable. He teases my nunu with the tip of his tongue, I am super wet now he plays with my clitoris using his tongue and I feel a strong sensation overcoming me, he then goes' H.A.M on my haven. I am on another cloud. Vuyo never did these things to me, it is all so foreign to me but it feels good. I am on a verge of cuming when his doorbell rings. He continues licking me ignoring whoever is ringing his doorbell. "San... Sanele I'm cu..." I did not even finish my sentence when his door falls down. Men in black clothes carrying big guns make their entrance, and they look scary making me to shake.

"So this is what you specialize in, huh"? One of the men asks me I don't even know him. I am so scared I think I'm going to

pee on myself. Sanele stands here unfazed by their presence, in fact he is chilled about it. “You little bitch leave at this instant”! He roars. I freeze, and the next thing I hear gunshots. I close my eyes and cover them with my hands, thinking that they've shot someone, The shooting dies down I don't even dare open them.

“I'll call you, leave”. Sanele tells me removing my hands from my eyes. I open my eyes and not say anything, I search for my bag on the floor, I pick it up and about to go out when another man stops me shaking his head...

“Does your husband know that you are fucking around with young boys”? His question takes me by surprise. My heart freezes, my palms are starting to sweat, and he looks so serious. I can't bring myself to answer him, I am shocked to say the least.

Me: “Why... Who are you and how do you know my husband”? I ask him with my lips quivering.

Him: "Don't mind about who I am. Worry yourself about your husband finding out". He winks at me, and goes to join the others in the lounge. I can't hold it any longer, I pee on myself... I run out of the house half naked as I am, and go to my car. This is not happening, I fumble with my bag looking for my car keys, my hands are not steady, I find them, opening the door with trembling hands it's hard I manage to open it, I step inside bringing the engine to life, and drive off while wiping my tears, I'm in deep shit. Should Vuyo find out I am as good as dead, how did I get here? I drive around not knowing where to go. I messed up big time, and I have myself to blame.

3

SANELE

“You do know that I hate being disturbed, right”? I say to Killa as I join them in the round big table.

“Let's get down to business I don't have time for patty chats about your whoring ways”.

Me: “Sure boss, make it snappy”. He chuckles.

Him: “I want us to do a heist, this heist will bring us a lot of money if it goes well”.

Snake: “Sizindlebe bhoza plus ku madada lamalanga” (we are listening boss plus we are broke)

Him: “We are going to hijack Ali's cars. They are bringing them this side and my informant told me that they'll deliver the cars this afternoon”.

Fila: "You're telling us that we are going to do this heist in broad daylight with people going up & down"?

Him: "You are fast. I like you".

Me: "Are you insane? Anything can happen around that time and the police are always patrolling, and I am definitely not planning to go behind bars any time soon".

Him: "I did not recruit cowards. Now, we are all going to get the job done, and we won't go to jail I have police officials on my payroll, all of them. We are safe".

B: "And when is this heist happening so that we get prepared"?

Him: "Today at around 16:00pm. We have 3 hours to get ready".

Us: "What"?

Him: "Exactly what I said. Do not mess this up, because if you do nc nc nc you'll be burying your families every weekend. Have I made myself clear"?

Fila; "Ek'se boss. That's a short notice we don't even have a proper plan, we are really going to die today. I can feel it".

Him: "We are going to do that heist. If you think you're not keen in partaking I will suggest that you stand up, and leave right now". He looks at all of us. "Good. I guess we are all going to partake in it, right"? We all nod in unison. This is a bad idea, but we can't defy Killa he will blow our brains out without even blinking.

Him: "Those are my boys. Gentlemen I will keep in touch with you, and I will let you know if there are any changes".

Me: "What about my door"?

Him: "Oh, that's nothing I'm sure your mistress husband won't mind putting in a new one for you". He laughs.

Me: "Wait a minute. What did you just say"?

Him: "Don't you know? Your bitch it's someone's wife but I don't blame her because the nigga is also fooling around, I hope you're using protection not unless you are ready to start taking ARVs". He taps me on my shoulder.

Him: "Let's go boys. I'll send someone for the door".

They bid their farewell and leave. I sit down again trying to process what I've just heard. Is Cindy really married? But she has never mentioned it to me and I've never seen her with a ring on her finger. Killa is just being him nasty self. He just wanted to ruin my day, and he succeeded, great just flipping great! I gulp down the remaining glass of whiskey... I then remembered that there's Luxolo my girl, well she is no longer my girl, but she doesn't know it yet. So I'll use her as my incubator, I laugh at those thoughts then I will wife Cindy I love that girl, and her pussy is of top class. Speaking of Luxolo I

didn't like the way she spoke to me earlier on, I decide to call her again and it rings unanswered. I've tried 5x but still and in my mind I am certain that she is cheating, I will find that son of a bastard and whoever he is I will reunite him with his ancestors and kill Luxolo too. I take my car keys and my gun and walk out, driving to her house.

“Dude she no longer stays there it's been 2 months since she moved away from her house”. I tell Andile as I gulp down the glass of Jameson we are at his house.

Him: “What were you expecting? When last did you talk to her? You've been neglecting her. All because of a new pussy”?

Me: “Then why didn't she tell me that she'll be moving away? Now I looked like a fool in that house”.

Him: “Serves you right. New pussy got you by your dick boy, you neglected her. You treated her like shit and you still do”.

Me: "If I didn't know you I would say that you're tapping her arse judging by the way you're defending her".

Him: "Unfortunately unlike you I know how to control my pants".

Me: "Shut the fuck up and drink your beer".

Him: "Cheers"...

I call Luxolo again and this time around her phone is off, I don't even know where she lives now. My phone rings and it is Cindy. I ignore it I am not in the mood to talk to her.

★»★«

LUXOLO

I am meeting with my friend Bella at club chisanyama it's Saturday afternoon and the vibe is cool, the girls are showing some legs, hubbly bubbly smoke fills up the air, some are already drunk and it's not packed yet. I find her seated already waiting for me. She is drinking Bernini blush. We hug then I sit down. She called me early this morning, and requested me to give her my new address.

“Thanks for meeting up with me my friend, how are you”?

“Thanks for inviting me it's like you knew that I needed an outing. I'm good thanks and how are you”?

Her: “I'm good too. Would you like something to drink”? I nod. She calls for the waitress. The waitress comes, she introduces herself as Naledi.

Me: "I would like to have juice for now, thank you".

Her: "And we would like to have 2 Paps, Wors, Chuck and your peri-peri special". The waitress nod and walks away.

Me: "Are you feeding a whole army"? She laughs.

Her: "I wish. Anyway how are things between you & Sanele"?

Me: "Not good. I think Sanele is cheating on me ever since he came back from Durban he is no longer the same, he has changed completely. The last time I saw him was 3 months back".

Her: "You are as good as a single person". Laughing.

Me: "And I'm better this way, I can't be focusing on relationships right now while my mom is sick".

Her: "What's wrong with her? Speedy recovery to her".

Me: “She has stroke, and thank you on her behalf. How are things between you & Bonga”?

Her: “They are good I can't complain”. Our food come and the meat looks tender I must say so myself, we dig in.

Her: “There's a reason why I called you here”.

Me: “So, you did not call me for food? What's your reason? I hope it's not something illegal Bella”. She picks up a hand bag that was next to her and gives it to me underneath the table. I look at her shocked and wanting an explanation at the same damn time. I look around and seems like no one saw anything, which is a good thing.

Her: “Please keep this safe for me. You are the only person I trust”.

Me: “What is it? Is it a bomb”?

Her: "It's money, diamonds and some bullets". I gasp and lean towards her...

Me: "What? How did you get hold of these things Bella? And what are you doing with them"? Whispering.

Her: "I will tell you some other time. Please keep the bag safe, and guard it with all your heart".

Me: "You owe me big time for doing this for you. You do realize that you are putting my life in danger right"?

Her: "No. Your life it's not in danger. Thank you babe I knew that I can count on you". We continue eating our food over a light conversation, I have a lot of questions that I want to ask her right now. I sigh and listen to her telling me about her relationship with Bonga. I am getting bored by this conversation

hhayi. Let me swift the topic...

Me: "Friend can you please help me with a job".

Her: "What type of job"?

Me: "Anything as long as I will get money month end".

Her: "I'll let you know when there's an opening at the guest house and I will be an ear for you out there". She owns guests houses and few small business all funded by her Nigerian Blesser.

Me: "I would appreciate that".

Her: "Anything for you girlfriend". Her phone rings, and she excuses herself and walk away to answer it. Some guy pulls a chair and sit down, I don't even know where he came from. I swallow hard and cling to the bag tightly. What if he was watching us the whole time?

"Uzwakale nobani la"? (Who did you come with here) he asks with his deep voice he is scary. He looks like a sgebengu/Igintsa (Thug) a hardcore thug. That those rape, hijack and kill for fun.

I keep quiet and don't answer him, deep down I am scared but I won't show him. My legs are even shaking. All I am hoping for is for Bella to come back now.

Him: “Hhey wena sferbe ngi ringa nawe awuva emadlebeni”?
(Hey you slut I am talking to you, are you deaf)

Me: “Zishaphi ngawe”? (What's going on with you)

Him: “Yah nayoke le kgensi beng'yincanywa”. (This is what I'm talking about)

Me: “Enhlek sdunu sakho lana kuhambani”? (Why are you sitting here)

Him: “Ngathy sowuza ngamasimba manjer”. (You are coming with shit now) I swallow at absolutely nothing once more, my throat is dry... This is burd!

Me: “Mazilime ziyetsheni boy. Makwenzeke okwenzekayo”.
(Let's get to it. Let anything happen)

Him: “Ehhh uthini lo mshwama lo”? (What is this bitch saying)
he put his hands on top of his head taking off his dirty hat in the
process.

Me: “Awuva emadlebeni”?

Him: “Ngizoy'cisha le shwama minah kuzoba bovu Phansi”. (I
will kill this bitch, blood will be spilled) Yoh Jehova.

Me: “Awudinwa ukukhonkotha or igwebu livale umphimbo”?
(Don't you get tired of making idle threats or phlegm has
blocked your throat) he whistles twisting his dirty hat with his
big dirty hands.

Him: “Ngibambeni zinja zami ngathy ngizophalaza igazi la,
sizodakwa yigazi” (hold me my gents it looks as if like I will puke
blood, we will get drunk by blood) Iyoh his friends come to our
table in a bolt of speed, and they surround it. Everyone is dead

quiet watching everything, it seems as if like this is the most feared gang around. They all look ugly, the other one is cutting an apple with a knife looking at me straight in the eyes. Bella is nowhere on sight, what if this is a trap? What if she has planned all of this? I swear to God, I will hate her. I look on all the four corners and there is no way out, there are like 5 of them.

“Engathy isa tag nyana le Ike” (she's new around here), one comments.

Ike: “Ngiyacava and feder ngathy I R6”. (I know, and she is too forward)

Guy 2: “Masimufakeni emadlozini” (let us introduce her to the hood) He brushes my cheek and I remove his hand roughly.

Me: “Ung'bambe njalo futhy ekini bazokuculela amagugu”. (Touch me like that again and your family will sing a funeral song for you)

Him: “Eh eh eh uthy uyang'sabisa”? (Are you threatening me)
Okay, I think I have just made them more angry.

Me: “Angisabisi ngiyashubisa” (I'm not threatening you I make things happen)

Him: “Une time neh”? (You talk a lot)

Me: “Yah, manjer”? (And now)

Guy 3: “Enhlek masm'ncandeni somhlanganisa nehogo, ngiyam'bona ngathy Uku fast lane”. (Let's go and rape her I can see that she's on a fast lane) My heart is beating out of my chest now. Rape? No no no. They can't. Tears are already building up in my eyes, that strong girl I was few minutes ago is gone.

“Ek'se mayiphele le party njengamanje”. (Stop whatever is going on right now) The voice comes from behind me, I don't dare look back. A man stands right next to me. He looks so handsome maarn with his neatly plaited dreadlocks, and he has

a goat beard he looks yah. Well, and a huge scar running across his face.

Ike: “Eish, Hade Bra TK mazinye gents” (let's go gents)

Guy 5: “Ayikapheli sazohlangana liyincosi le kasi leli” (It's not over we are still going to meet this is a small hood)

Me: “Sesizabona phambili” (we shall see ahead) The guys leave and TK walks away too without greeting or anything. But, he came right on time. I take a deep breath that was a close call and right now I will have to watch my back, I just made myself some enemies unaware. A text comes through and it's from Bella.

★should it happens that you don't hear from me in the next hour know that Bruno Vilakazi aka Mr V killed me★

I read it 3x trying to process it, I try calling her but her phone is off. Shit! I get up from where I am sitting and rush home, I am busy looking behind me to see if those guys are not following

me. This is not good. I get home and I find my mother , I greet her and walk straight to the bedroom to hide the bag. Heaving a sigh. What the actual fuck Bella? And who on earth is Bruno Vilakazi? Whatever happens she better not snitch on me... I need to smoke just to calm my nerves down.

★»★«

BELLA

I am lying in this cold floor in a foetus position, my body in great pain I have bruises all over my body. I hear the leather whip hit my flesh again and I scream in agony.

“I want my stuff Bella. You will pay back everything you took I want it back”! Mr V is yelling at me making the whip come into

contact with my skin, Mr V wants his diamonds & bullets the very same things I gave to Luxolo to keep them safe for me. Mr V is a very dangerous gangster, I only dated him to retrieve my dad's diamonds that he stole few years back, and avenge my brother's death he killed just because he was a minute late to give him his money. I wanted him to feel the pain my father felt when he stole those things, and he is indeed feeling it but it is too much for him. He whipped me till my body couldn't take it no more. I swear I am staring death in the eyes with the last strength in me I manage to say

“You can beat me all you want or kill me but the pain that your pregnant wife is feeling right now is nothing compared to what you are inflicting on me”. He gives me a weird look, and then he realises what I am talking about ... “And now I will die in peace and I'm just glad that my father will be at ease wherever he is, and my brother will rest in peace”.

“What did you do to my wife? What the fuck did you do”? He roars kicking me on my stomach, I cough and drops of blood hits the floor. Oh, and his neck veins are about to pop. He slaps me and kicks me again and I can feel my ribs cracking, or is it bones? But something did crack.

“I will kill you bitch I will fucken kill you”. I chuckle.

“I'm already dead and I'll surely greet your wife and your baby for you in heaven”. I tell him and close my eyes.

“No no Bella Bella”! He shakes me waking me up, and I don't respond. “Oh, God what did I do”? He is panicking. Instead of finding out about how his wife is doing, he is here crying for me. Pathetic.

★»★«

VUYO

I get home and I find Cindy passed out on the couch it's so unlike her. There are like 5 empty bottles of wine scattered on the floor and butt cigarettes but Cindy doesn't smoke, she must be going through something big I just let her be and go to take a shower... I wake her up, she opens her eyes and it seems as if like they are heavy.

“Just let me be” she says in a sleepy voice.

I shake my head and let her be. I make myself a quick fruit salad and go to my study...

TSAKANI (TK)

The smell of blood touches my nostrils, and I almost laugh. Perfect. Just perfect. I lodge the knife deeper in his stomach, and watch him scream writhing on the cold, hard ground. Blood oozing from his stomach. I hate people who double cross me, and deny double crossing me, whereas the evidence is staring at them right on the face. Now, tell me; how do you not kill such a person? They are exhausting honestly. I watch him as he gasp taking in his last breath, I spit on his face. Rubbish...

“You called for me boss man,” Lee says stepping inside the garage.

“I want you to find out who the girl we met at the club is. What is her name and where does she live, who she lives with, who are her friends, who is she dating find me everything you can about her even her age if possible,” wiping my bloody hands.

“Bhoza?” (Boss)

Me: “Did I stutter?” He shakes his head. “Good, then find me the information about that girl.”

Him: “Where will I start looking for her? It was my first time seeing her around.”

Me: “Go back to chisanyama or something. All I want is her information that's all, find me her information and I'm good.”

Him: “If I may ask sir, why are you so keen in finding information about her? You've never asked us for any information on your mistresses before”.

Me: “Did you just question me? Who said anything about her being my mistress?”

Him: “Sorry boss I'll find everything about her”.

Me: "Good. You may be excused."

Him: "Bhoza," before he walks out I call his name, he turns and looks at me. "Bhoza"

Me: "Call the guys to come, and clean up this mess," he nods, and walk away.

I sit back down. There is something about that girl, but I just can't put my fingers into it, and well, she's average looking not the type to introduce to my parents though. I liked the fact that she stood up for herself, she doesn't shy away from situations she might be useful to me in the near future I Stan her bravery. Sasha throws herself into my chambers without even knocking, Sasha? She is just Sasha she is not the type of girl one would want to introduce to your parents or want to marry just like the "girl," I've mentioned earlier on, Sasha likes material things.

"Hey babe I've missed you" she kisses my cheek and sits on top for me.

Me: "What happened to knocking?"

Her: "What's up with the cold shoulder? I, last saw you 2 days ago, didn't you miss me those past 2 days?"

Me: "I was busy and no I didn't really miss you?" If it was any other day I would've entertained her but today it's just not that day.

Her: "Wow. But some days you used to entertain me and drop everything for me. What changed?"

Me: "Nothing has changed, and right now I'm very busy as you can see"

Her: "Who is she?"

Me: "Who is who?"

Her: "Stop acting dumb. The bitch that is trying to take you away from me!"

Me: "I always knew that you are crazy and for your information I'm not seeing anyone not that it concerns you though"

Her: "You are a such a jerk Ali".

Me: "I know and quite frankly I don't give a fuck."

Her: "Fvxk you!" She stands up and get out of my chambers, she seems mad but it's cool because she is not my girlfriend but my fuck buddy, and I think she is getting too comfortable right now I need to remind her of her place. She is too blinded by material things, nc nc nc. I lit up my cigar and place my feet on top of the table, I hope Lee comes through for me with the information, I really need it.



LUXOLO

I tried calling Bella for the whole week but her phone is still on voicemail, I am really worried about her, and my mom's health is not doing any justice for her. It's like she became worse overnight, I'm fearing for her life & mine too, she is the only person I have left. No one else. I finish cooking and I dish up for my mother and go to give her -her food then go and fetch mine and join her, she says grace, and we start eating.

“Xolo mntanami there's something I want to talk to you about.” I stop eating and look at her it sounds serious. “I was talking to my sister Bavumile earlier today, and she has asked me to come back home” Bavumile is the second born with my mother being

the 3rd, well the last time I saw her was at a family gathering, and I was 5/6 years old around that time.

“That's a good thing right? I mean you will have people who will take care of you and I will go look for a job, so long. I'm sure there are a lot of job opportunities that side.” Bavumile stays in Jo'burg... Since Bella has vanished without a trace, I'm forced to start job hunting again. I'm sure something will come up. This must be a good start for me. She gives me a faint smile.

Me: “So, when are we leaving?”

Her: “I declined her offer”

Me: “What? But why Mom”? She heaves a sigh.

Her: “It was for the best”.

Me: “For whom?”

Her: "Both of us, me moving in with her has terms & conditions."

Me: "What are those terms & conditions? I'm sure they are not that extreme"

Her: "I can only move in with her if I leave you behind" I tilt my head, and laugh.

Me: "What? But why? I thought Bavumile liked me mama?"
Yes, that was 20/21 years ago.

Her: "She was pretending to like you. She always called you a child of a rape." I feel tears stinging my eyes but I hold them back...

Me: "Wow! It's fine mama. You can go. I'll stay behind, I'll... I'll stay here, and start looking for a job."

Her: "I can't leave you alone Luxolo. What would I be without you? How will you survive on your own?"

Me: "I'm a big girl mama and I know how to guard myself. I will look for a job, I guess I will have to learn to live without you but where will I start? You are all I have and the only person I know."

Her: "I know baby, but this will be my first time without you. This also gives you an opportunity to stand for yourself, spread your wings, and experience life." What's the to experience? I am too old now to be experimenting things. And I'm also not ready to let go of my mother, but her health comes first.

Me: "Your health comes first mama and I don't want to derail you from healing. Call Bavumile and tell her that you are agreeing to come and stay with her. You are right. It's time I stand on my own two feet." I hug her, It's going to be hard living without her but I will learn to.



My mom is officially gone. Bavumile came and fetched her that very same day she did not even look my way let alone greet me

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I guess she was disgusted by me. I pray & hope that she treats my mom good, I don't want to hear any complaints and that they are treating her somehow because all hell is going to break loose should I find out that they are abusing her. My mother is my everything nina, so nje they better treat her right. Or else I will turn that fucking place upside down it's a good thing they gave me the address. They will wish they have never known me, just like they don't know me now.

I am preparing myself to go to work, I'm working as a waitress in a strip club in town, the tips are good I won't lie even though I wanted to work at Penny's adult club, but after witnessing the owner chopping someone's head off I decided otherwise. That man recruits you, you don't go to him and ask for a job, some girls went there with hopes of getting a much better pay, but a day was enough for them they were already complaining about treatment that side, and unfortunately for them they are stuck

in that place for life. The owner told them straight up that they will die working for him, he did not recruit them they offered themselves.

My uniform is a short black & white scotched skirt and a white crop top with half knee socks and black heels. Sometimes we wear bum shorts with white shirts and tie them in front or at the back, is up to you. My shifts start from 18:00pm to 03:00am at least we have stuff transport. I get to work and go straight to the changing room and I find the girls already changing into their outfits. We (strippers, prostitutes and waitresses) all of us use one changing room. I've been working here for 2 weeks now and the tips are not that bad we get paid month end, I'm yet to get my first pay anyway.

“Hey babe Mr Sol is calling you to come to his office immediately” calls out one of the strippers.

“I wonder what did she do, she's hardly a month working here but already she is in trouble with the boss” comments another. I exit the change room and walk to Mr Sol's office I take a deep breath before knocking.

“Come on in”, he shouts from inside. I make my way in.

“Please take a sit” I sit down.

Him: “Don't worry you're not in trouble. I called you here because I'm promoting you” I don't like the sound of this.

Me: “Promoting me? To what if you don't mind me asking”

Him: “To being a stripper.”

Me: “What? You must be kidding me!”

Him: “I'm serious and you are starting month end.”

Me: “I'm sorry I can't do it.”

Him: “You don't get to tell me that I'm the one who makes the rules, I'm the one who hired you!”

Me: "Then I will have to quit sir. I am not about to parade my body for those thirsty men out there, never!"

Him: "Scar please play her the video. I'll leave you to it. There is only one way to leave out of here."

He stands up patting my shoulder on his way out. Scar plays the video and what I see is disgusting, I stand up and go to throw up in the nearest bin that was at the door. What I saw it's just inhuman! I wipe my mouth and signalled scar to stop the video. The door swing open and it is the devil himself, I thought that Billy was ruthless? But him? He takes the cup. Mr Sol he has a smirk on his face. This man is a monster I tell you. I have no choice but to agree, I don't know what I have I gotten myself into. I should've known, the money was too good to be true. Now I am in too deep! After here what then? I am not coming back here tomorrow.

"The choice is yours and don't even think of not coming back because I will hunt you, I will find you and kill you." I swallow hard. Not coming back it's out of the table for now.

Me: "Fine. I'll do it."

Him: "That's music to my ears. I'll get your contract ready."

Me: "Why me? I mean there are a lot of girls who've been here before me."

Him: "The customers wanted you and what the customers want they must get. I will not lose money because of you!"

Me: "Thandaza ku nkulunkulu wakho ukuthy akuvikele ngoba once ngiyayishubisa uzoshaya Nge dolo phansi kube iscengani" (pray to your God to protect you because once I retaliate you will be on your knees begging me to spare your life) I see scar widening his eyes, I guess he is shocked that I can speak tsotsi taal. Deep down I'm scared, and my legs are shaking.

Mr S: "What was that"? Oh, he is a Portuguese by the way, you can imagine.

Me: "I said I can't wait to bring in more money for you"

Him: "Scar?"

Scar: "That's what she said and that she is willing to learn"

Him: "Good girl now go back and do your job" I stand up abruptly and walk out of his office, someone pulls me by my hand.

Scar: "Ungubani and uthunyelwe wubani?" (Who are you and who sent you)

Me: "Ngingu Luxolo and akho ondithumile (no one sent me) I'm only here to make money, and go back home."

Him: "I don't trust you I'll be watching you like a hawk."

Me: "Ungazihlanyisi" (don't make yourself crazy) I look at his hand, and he loosens his tight grip from my hand I then walk

away. Who does this man think I am? Nxa I am so angry and my heart is beating out of my chest, I first go to the toilet and get a grip of myself. I wipe my tears then rinse my face and walk out. I get to the change room and I find Lizo doing her face.

“What trouble did you get yourself into with the boss?” I laugh sarcastically.

Me: “Trouble? Oh, no sweetie. I've been promoted to being a stripper.”

Her: “What? But how? I mean you've been here for like 2 weeks some of us we were here for 3 years, but we never got promoted.”

Me: “The customers wanted me and what customers want they must get, right?”

Her: “This is unfair!”

Me: "I know right. Let me go and serve the customers before I get fired." I leave her busy complaining. I know that by the time the shift ends everyone will know about my promotion.

★»★«

CINDY

Ever since that Sanele saga I've distanced myself from Sanele I told him that I'm going through some stuff I need a break, and he gladly gave me one without questioning me. Truth is I was still in shock about what transpired, ei, I was praying day & night for Vuyo not to find out about my infidelity he will kill me, and Vuyo can see that something is different, I hardly talk like I used too.

I am in my office going through some files when my friend Sasha steps in, she has a box of chocolate with her.

“I've brought you some sugar” she says sitting down placing the box on top of the table.

“Thank you babe”, placing the files on the side.

Her: “What's going on with you, you hardly go out with us any more?”

Me: “I've been busy. Being a COO for a big company is no joke it requires one to focus” She laughs.

Her: “You're lying and you know it. Is it your play boy?” I shake my head.

Me: “What about him?”

Her: “It's him, isn't it? He did something to you”

Me: "He did nothing. I'm just going through some stuff"

Her: Are you pregnant?" I laugh.

Me: "What? Don't joke like that a baby is the last thing on my mind. Anyway aren't you supposed to be with your man?"

Her: "I think he's cheating on me"

Me: "That's unlike him. Why even think that?"

Her: "It's how he's acting these days he no longer spends time with me. He is forever busy with something"

Me: "Maybe he is going through some stuff, not all guys cheat you know."

Her: "Maybe you're right. He'll come around. Let's hit the club tonight" I wanted to turn down the offer but knowing her she'll force me too.

Me: "Okay give me the name of the place & time"

Her: "Solz strip & adult fun club, 19:00."

Me: "We are going to watch strippers?" My eyes lit up with excitement, I love watching those hunks they turn me on.

Her: "Yes baby!!!!"

Me: "I'm game I guess a night out will do me good"

Her: "It will do us good we will forget about our troubles for a few hours". We chat for a while, then she bid me farewell and walk out of my office. I lock the door after, closing the binds, and take my laptop making myself comfortable on my couch, and start watching porn on my laptop. I strip off my clothes and get ready to pleasure myself...



VUYO

I am home cooking I want to surprise Cindy, I want to make her smile she's been moody lately. I set the table and place the food on the table, she should be home by now. An hour later she is still not home, and she is not picking up her phone, I hope nothing happened to her. I try again and this time it around her phone is off, where the hell are you Cindy? I don't want to think of the worst like she's cheating on me, it will really break me, I end up eating alone... Sighs. I clear the table and go to bed I am angry. I hope nothing bad happened to her, and she comes back home in one piece.

LUXOLO

I've been keeping in contact with my mother daily, and she sounds happy, if she is happy then I am also happy. I will have to make time and go and see her, these stupid works are demanding, and I'm forever tired. I also work as a waitress at Nando's restaurant just to get extra cash, actually I want to go back to school. Tonight will be my first night working as a stripper. I am nervous I won't lie, even though I was practising the dance moves for the past 2 weeks perfecting them, I am hoping & praying that I get all the moves right. These colleagues of mine hate me they think that I slept with Mr Solz for him to promote me, if only they knew the truth they wouldn't be hating me, actually they would be pitying me. I'm getting ready to go, and do my pole dance when Alicia, the Queen of strippers steps into the room with her heels clicking across the whole entire floor. Alicia is a beautiful woman, but with a bad attitude.

“Don't think that you're going to take my spot of being the best just like that. I'm the best of the best I'm sure you and everyone else in this club knows that,” she tells me. I laugh.

Me: "Are you threatened by me? A newbie?" She laughs that mocking laugh, you know it right?

Her: "Me? Threatened by you? A newbie in this game? Girl, You wish."

Me: "If I'm not a threat to you then why are you so concerned about me stealing your spot light and being the best? Are you doubting yourself?"

Her: "I'm not concerned I was just reminding you that I'm still the queen here. Nobody works the pole like I do, even your long skinny legs won't help you."

Me: "The men in the private lounge will be the judge of that tonight. Queen," she practically rolls her eyes at me.

Her: "They won't even look your way."

Me: "Why not? I mean I'm the 'fresh meat' in the house, so it's pretty much obvious that they'll want to see what I have to offer as the new girl." Her face turns red she is boiling with anger. I finish doing my face, I wear my heels my breast are bare I'm just thankful that I have portable breasts, I'm also wearing a thong lace. I feel really naked & cheap but I have no choice, but to make Mr Solz happy or else I die, is this how my life is going to be like? Well, at least he doesn't restrict us from anything, but we must not quit.

"Shall we?" I ask Zama. Alicia is busy perfecting her make-up.

She gives me a nasty look and exit the room while I follow behind her. We get to the VVIP lounge, and there are men already seated with money in their hands, some women must be stressing & crying wherever they are because half of these men are married men. As soon as we get to the stage they start whistling and the music starts playing, I take a deep breathe and hope that I don't fumble my steps, luckily for me this mask is hiding my face. You can only see the eyes, nothing else. My hands come into contact with the thick pole, and the men cheer with so much excitement... I get in the mood, thanks God to Gordon's dry gin, and that one joint. Guess I'm doing it right because all eyes are on me and the money they are showering

me with speaks volumes, I did not want to focus on Alicia I know that she is fuming wherever she is. She must bare in mind that this is business, and in this business we are in a competition! At the end of the night we all want to come out at the top, you have to give it your best.

★»★«

SANELE

Cindy decides to drop by unexpectedly, the last time I saw her was when Killa came by unannounced, I'm still mad at him for doing what he did depriving me of sex. We are in bed she is laying her head on my chest, we've just finished making love. Or should I say sex because we did not use a condom? My phone rings, I look at the screen and it is Tshego my friend.

“Sure,” I answer.

Him: “When last did you talk to Luxolo?” Why is he asking me about her knowing very well that I dumped her?

Him: “Oh, I almost forgot that you guys broke up, hade to bother you bruh wami.”

Me: “Sharp,” hanging up.

“Who was that?” Cindy ask lifting her head to look at me.

Me: “One of my friends.”

Her: “Okay... I love you,” that was unexpected. Wait, why would she say she loves me when she's married? It doesn't help that I love her too. Do I really? I take her left hand, and select her left finger, and there is a ring mark. “chuckling”

Me: "Are you married?" She gasp, and starts coughing. I guess she is taken aback by what I just asked her, and she is thinking of a good believable answer. "I asked a question Cindy," She sits upright and looks at me.

Her: "Yes I am married, but I don't love him I love you," she tells me sincerely. She looks serious.

Me: "Okay, divorce him then and be with me."

Her: "What? I can't do that. He is my husband Sanele."

Me: "But you said you don't love him, so why don't you divorce him, and be with me?" She sneers.

Her: "Because it's impossible. Please don't ruin what we have going on for nothing that's not there," I laugh.

Me: "Right. Tell you what; I will give you 21 days to think whether you want to be with me, or your so-called husband. And make a wise decision, a decision that you won't regret."

Her: "You don't have to give me days I know who my heart yearns for. I'll be in the bathroom, and remember that I love you."

Me: "Cool," She gets off bed, and wear my T-shirt. I guess she is disappointed because I did not return the L word... "Run us a bath there so long, I'll bring my sexy self in a few", I wink at her. She laughs and disappears to the bathroom. I take my phone, and call Tshego back he sounded like he wanted to tell me something important about Luxolo.

"Tshego's phone hello", Some girl answers his phone.

Me: "What business do you have with Tshego's phone?"

Her: "How is that any of your business? Did you buy him this phone? And the who the hell are you?" Bitch be rude, yuck.

Me: "Tell him I called he must get back to me asap."

Her: "I'll pass the message."

Me: "You... (bitch hangs up) Who on earth is this rude bitch? Tshego and fucking all these nonsense girls will be the death of me one of these days I swear. I get off bed clicking my tongue and go and join Cindy in the bath, I wonder who her husband is I will need to research about him."

★»★«

TSAKANI

A month later still no information of this mystery girl I'm becoming impatient I sometimes think that Lee is not doing his job right. I had to hire 3 more private investigators and they all don't know or find this girl, it's nerve wrecking it was going to

be better if I had a picture of her. It's like she just vanished into thin air, ai, but for now I have to get these thoughts of finding her out of my mind because we have a mission to carry. I can't work while distracted, I must be sober minded. My phone rings I'm hoping it is Lee and he has some information for me, I'm disappointed when I see a name of one of my contacts more like an informant, but this call is much more important...

“Talk to me.”

“The trucks are leaving now, and there are 3 security cars that will be escorting them, all in all you are going to deal with 12 people, the guards are heavily armed. They will be using the north route since it's not that busy at night, I've got to go now before they catch me,” he hangs up. Well this will be an easy mission for me.

I gathered all my boys in my house. In whatever mission we are going to do we start by praying, asking God for strength & courage, and to be with us through our missions Besides, God loves us all he has no favourites. We are all created in his image right? Of which means that; we are God ourselves. That's why

we always pray. We wear our bullet proofs vests, taking our guns

and head into our different cars. These cars are bullet proofed and have hard metals instilled in them so it is not that easy to knock them down, me & Rambo will be driving the tanks.

Rambo is one of my trusted man, I've known him since our university days he was one quiet young man with under lying heavy conditions.

★»★«

[NARRATED]

The X-Gang (Tsakani's gang) are patiently waiting for the trucks to pass by they've been waiting for the past 30 minutes. They are with 2 girls who were to distract the securities the girls are beautiful and have thick bodies. They are in short dresses they

are posing as prostitutes in distress, they all positioned themselves accordingly. The first security car passes by, and one of the girls appears from out of nowhere and runs straight to the oncoming car. The guards hesitate to stop at first, but eventually do upon seeing that she is in distraught.

“Plea... Please help me,” she tells them immediately as the window rolls down. She is shaking, her make up is ruined, her mascara is mixed with tears and her hair is messy.

“What happened to you?” One of the guards ask stepping out of the car.

“The... They...” She can't talk, the other girl appears too running straight to the guards car whilst the guards are busy questioning the first girl. As soon as she get to it, Men appear out of the bushes and walk towards the car, pointing their guns towards the guards. The guards that remained in the car quickly take their guns on top of the dash board... Before they can even start shooting, multiple gun shots are fired at them, and they die on the spot. The first truck passes by, little did the truck driver know that he was not going to arrive at his destination, as soon as the truck driver approaches the four way, one Tank

comes speeding and bumps the truck passengers door with force making the truck driver to lose control, the driver swerves into the empty road until it comes into a complete halt.

The other guards car has punched tyres, after the second truck passes some of the guys throw sharp objects across the streets making the 3rd guards car to stop abruptly almost losing control, but the driver's driving skill saved them before the car could even roll over. Amanga & Volcano fire shots at the guards, and the guards start shooting back, bullets are flying in the air, but to the guards dismay all of them go down. They are over powered they have no escape, some of the gang members drive away with the trucks carrying Amor's possessions. They are happy for a job well done, 4 Lamborghini's in their possession, now all they need to do is to spray paint them and put them up for auction. Dante invites them to go and celebrate their victory in one of the nearest pub in his hood, so that when they had enough they will sleep at his place. This was almost one clean hijacking they had in years, and came back as they left, no one harmed, or dead. It does deserve some celebration indeed.



LUXOLO

I'm now sitting in the bar table drinking some cocktail I'm done with my so not exciting job anyway thinking about my messed up life, nxa fuck. I'm wearing a coat covering my half naked self the shame & embarrassment I'm feeling right now is indescribable, I feel so cheap. The way those men have been touching me was not so pleasant I felt violated, but ke I need the money. Fuck, I wipe my tears that are making it's way down my cheeks.

As I'm sitting here thinking of a way to get away from this place before I sink into deep into this dark depressing world, even alcohol won't help in this case yi hurricane situation. I smell a strong cologne from behind me it smells bad I don't want to lie. Whoever the person is settles next to me.

“Bring the lady another one of whatever she's having,” the man tells the barman. I look at him and he looks pretty young, he looks like he is around 30-32 years old he is wearing a three piece suit, he is hot maaen, but not my cup of coffee.

“Thanks,” I tell him facing the other direction.

Him: “Armor is the name.”

Me: “Luna,” from the corner of my eye he extends his hand for a handshake I give him mine, and he kisses it.

Him: “What a unique name you have there. Anyway, your place or guest house?” I chuckle, and take a sip of my cocktail.

Me: "Neither." Gulping down the remaining cocktail in my glass.

Him: "Why not? I liked how you were working that pole it turned me on. I then wondered how it would be like having you on top of me, and doing me like you did with that pole," this is the shit I don't like!

Me: "I'm not a prostitute I'm a stripper. I dance not fuck around with random customers."

Him: "I'm not a random customer, I'm Armor."

Me: "I don't give a shit about who you are. You are more like a stranger to me, now if you may please excuse me I have somewhere to be,"

Him: "I'm always here for you."

Me: "Don't you have a wife waiting for you at home, or something?" He just smirks and that annoys me.

“There you are! I've been looking for you everywhere.” Aranele says kissing his cheek. She then gives me the “WTF are you doing with my man” look. Ey, girls from this club annoy the shit out of me. I'm tolerating them because we work together, if it wasn't for that I would've roughed them up a bit. Oh, and we must keep it professional.

Growing up as a kid I was known to be a bully, and boy did I not bully them school kids? I sure did, I stopped when Muzi threatened me that he will take me to jail, and I will stay there for a week until I stop being a bully. He showed me jail videos, and how they treat newbies there, yhey kwaba no more bullying for me.

Him: “And here I am. Ready to go?” He holds her waist more like his hand is in her butt. I see Aranele closing her eyes and biting her lower lip, Oh My G! He is finger fucking her in front of me. The level of disrespect these 2 are showing me is beyond me. I wave at the barman to give me another glass of Mojito what I like about this job is that we don't pay for alcohol, we just order and drink till we've had enough, drinking with a mask on is a mission, but as long as it hides my face I'm all for it.

“Urh... Lux can I talk to you,” Aranele says to me her voice is carrying attitude. I've even forgotten about them. I turn and look at her annoyed.

Her: “Babe can you please go and wait for me in the car, I'll be with you shortly”.

Armor: “Alright sweets”. He kisses her cheek and spanks her ass she giggles like a little school girl who just started dating, Armor winks at me and walks away. Trash.

Her: “I want you to listen to me and listen to me very carefully. Stay the hell away from Armor. Don't look his way or walk in the same path with him because I will kill you, you don't know me,” I laugh. “You can laugh all you want, but I'm dead serious. You think you all that just because the gentleman liked you, and that they want to book you for their private dance sessions, doesn't mean you all that. Me & Alicia still run this place and those men you saw there are our territory. They will use you and toss you like a tasteless chappies.”

Me: “If all these ‘men’ you claim are your ‘territory’ why did your so-called ‘boyfriend’ wanted us to book a guest house or go to my place to give him a good fuck? I mean he even bought

me a cocktail. Now this can only mean one thing; you don't know your job when it comes to the bedroom.”

Her: “You filthy bitch!” She slaps me so hard in such a way that my head starts spinning, I did not even see it coming, I taste my own blood. I hold her neck strangling her she can't breath...

Me: “Do that shit again, and your ancestors will do a welcoming ceremony for you. You don't dare lay your filthy hands on me, are we clear?” She nods with tears streaming down her cheeks. I let go of her, and she coughs trying to regain her voice.

“Go and fix yourself we don't want your boyfriend questioning you about what happened to you now, or do we?” She nods and hurries away and go to the ladies room, these girls don't know that I am from the ghetto, I grew up playing rough, and playing with boys. I continue drinking my cocktail the club is half empty now, and that means it's time for me to leave and go to my shack and relax. I grab my bag on top of the bar counter and gulp down my remaining mojito then I get up from my chair, and walk out going to the transport outside I'm sure they are waiting for, and pissed off they hate being kept waiting, nxa.

6

[NARRATED]

{Pastel's house hold}

Armor is having breakfast with his fiancé and their families. His phone rings and it was Mr Big the man he delivers cars for he wonders what he wants, he excused himself from the table and go to answer his call privately, he gets in to his study.

“Biggie.”

“Don't Biggie me. Where are my cars, Armour? I've been waiting for them since last night,” Mr Big roars on the other end.

He is taken aback by his statement because he summoned his men to go, and deliver the cars, it didn't make sense to him as to why he did not receive his cars.

Armor: "What are you talking about?"

Mr big: "Don't act surprised. My cars are not delivered and I was supposed to auction them tonight at the auction!"

Armor: "I don't understand, my guys said everything went all and your cars got delivered."

Mr Big: "I'm slowly but surely getting pissed, I want my cars Armour, and I want them tonight before the auction starts."

Armor: "I'll do a follow up and find out what's wrong then I get back to you."

Mr Big: "I just want my cars tonight Armor or else your family will have to burn inside that house. You have 5 hours. 5 hours Armour." He swallows at absolutely nothing, and hangs up

because he knows that Mr big lives up to his threats. His stress levels escalate, he is feeling the heat. Just then his phone ring it's Zano one of his guys he wanted an explanation from him as to why didn't Mr Big get his cars as promised, he paid a lot of money for them. And hopefully Zano will give him the answers to his questions.

“What's going on Zano?” Is the first question he asks immediately as he answers his phone.

Zano: “The cars have been stolen and all the guards are dead we have no leads or any witnesses.” Armor shoots open his eyes, his veins are popping he feels like his brain is going to blast. He kicks the chair in his study and it flies hitting the door.

Him: “How? How did that happen? Who else knew about this?” Armor asks loosening his tie right now he feels like the tie is strangling him. He is stressed not knowing what to do. If the cars are stolen then this means Mr big won't get his cars tonight, and he will definitely kill his family, he had to come with a plan a solid plan that is. But what?

Zano: "I think someone from the inside sold us out. These people had it all planned out and they knew how many guards were going to be there," Armor scoffs.

Armor: "The culprit must be found! Question each and everyone of them, make them talk. Mr big wants his cars tonight if they're not delivered within 3 hours then we are as good as dead!"

Zano: "I will get right on it right away, Sir." Armor hangs up his phone and takes off his shirt he is feeling hot all of a sudden.. His wife Xena steps inside the library, and she finds her husband pacing up & down looking stressed, sweat dripping from his forehead.

"What's wrong love?" she asks looking at Armor with so much concern in her eyes.

Armor: "Everything!" he yells. "The... The cars have been stolen. Mr big never got them, they are nowhere to be found and no one knows who took them"

Xena: "What?! Who would do such a thing? Do these people know what they've done? Big will be coming for this family with all that he has," she says this sitting down.

Armor: "He will. He told me that our parents will burn inside the house, he knows that they are here," huffs.

Xena: "What? We have to make a plan. Big can't do such! Who does he think he is anyway threatening our family like this? You are also to be blamed truly speaking"

Armor: "What did I do now?"

Xena: "You've become too soft. No one fears you anymore. If you were still the old you, none of this would've happened Armor. They took advantage of your weakness."

Armor: "What difference will it make? The cars are gone, and my life has ended! I'm doomed. Do you hear that? Doomed!"

Xena: "Big won't do anything to us I'll make sure of it."

Armor: “Do you have a solid plan? A plan that will make him disappear for the rest of his life?”

Xena: “Let me go and make a quick call I'll be right back,” she gets up from the extra chair that she was sitting on patting Armor on his shoulder and walks out of his study, going to their bedroom to make a call.

?

“I need you to take out someone for me tonight,” Xena tells her trusted man.

“Details”

“Mr Big CEO of Charles & Charlene construction company. I want him dead before the auction starts.”

“Everything noted.”

The person hangs up. Xena puts her phone on her chest and take a deep breath, she knows that Sly won't disappoint her, she hates seeing her fiancé miserable, and not being able to do anything. She is and will forever be besides his fiancé despite the Infidelities they are both having. Everyone is messed up here!

2 HOURS LATER

{WAREHOUSE}

Mr big is sitting in a white couch fit for a king naked, he has girls fanning air for him using some tropical leaves that he keeps

frozen in his Fridge, while the other girl is giving him a blow job. He has a glass of whiskey in his right hand, and a cigar in his left. He is not enjoying what the girl is doing plus Armour is double crossing him, he puts his glass down, and takes his gun that is next to him and shoot the girl on her head and blood splatters across the walls. The other girls scream in fear, it's their first time seeing Mr big killing a female in cold blooded in front of them, most of the time he hire his guys to kill the girls for him.

“Clean up this mess and go throw her body at the river,” he commands his men. The guards hurry to the girl, and they drag her body out. The other girls are silently crying. “I hate being disappointed. She should've do me good, but no she decides to do it wrong. I hate amateurs!”

“That gave you no right to kill her. You should've told her that you wanted it like ‘this’ Charles. This is my 3rd one of my girls you've killed, I always let you go, but this time around I won't. You've crossed the line Big.” Adele tell him. Mr big laughs and his goons join him in laughing.

Big: “What are you going to do Adele? You know very well that you can't touch me just one snap and your daughter is dead,” Adele chuckles lightly while shaking her head.

Adele: “You think you are untouchable neh? You are a mafia Mr can't get Mr can't tholakala. Tell you what Big, go ahead, ‘snap’ your finger, and your mother will be joining my daughter.”

Big: “What are you talking about?” Adele nods to one of the guys to play the video and its Mr big's mother tied in a chair with her mouth sealed with a duct tape. Her eyes are blood shot red you can tell that she was crying, and fear is written in her big eyes.

Big: “You bitch!” He stands up and walks to Adele. His aim is to strangle her, but Adele's men stops him with their guns from getting close to Adele. “What the fuck Adele! That's my mother you holding hostage,” Adele laughs.

Adele: “Just like you've planted a chirp in my daughter's hair? Tracing every move she makes! How sick can you get?”

Mr Big: "I will ask my guys to remove the chirp on your daughter's hair, and drop the tracing of her whereabouts just let my mother go."

Adele: "Actually, there is something I want from you."

Big: "What is it?"

Adele: "Kill Mr Sol for me. I want that club." Mr Big swallows there is no way he is going to kill his brother.

Big: "Unfortunately I can't kill my brother you will have to hire a hitman or kill him yourself," Adele fumes, and looks at Mr Big with her head slightly tilted. She does that a lot when she's angry, and her right hand will start shaking, once it shakes it means she must shoot. She takes her gun that is tucked in her waist holster, and points it at Mr big.

She cocks it and as she is about to pull the trigger the fire alarm rings warning them of danger, everyone panics and by the time they realize that it was actually fire the warehouse is already

filled with smoke. They all bend down coughing and some running to the door, Mr big is crawling covering his mouth with a gun, he manages to get out of the door, but someone shoots him on his thigh, he screams in agony. They shoot his other thigh

he tries crawling fast since the fire has spread rapidly, and the warehouse will blow any time soon. One of his man helps him, and as soon as they are in a safe distance space the warehouse explodes. He stares at it with tears in his eyes, everything he has worked hard for is gone. Adele is busy coughing since she inhaled a lot of smoke, her breathing is shallow, help is called. Mr Big groans listening to the pains his feeling in both his thighs wondering who shot him.



TSAKANI

My phone rings waking me up from my sleep I tried ignoring it, but the person keeps on calling me, people just don't like it when I take a nap considering the fact that I haven't been sleeping for the past few days. I take it out from my pocket and look at the screen its Thato, I wonder why is he calling me at this time.

“Sure boi,” I answer him sitting on my butt.

“Ntwana your sister has been admitted at the hospital,” Thato tells me then hangs up. Thato is a surgeon at Medi- hospital, and sometimes he does his rounds in other hospitals. Shit. I quickly leapt out of bed, and go rinse my face and walk out of my room grabbing my T-shirt in the laundry basket, I pass by the lounge, and my mother has passed out on the couch. I can't tell her yet until I know what's wrong with Kedibone. Kedibone is the last born and an only girl in a house full of boys there's five of us with me being a 4th born. I get to the hospital, Steven Texted me the name of the hospital earlier on, and I walk to the reception area. The receptionist is chewing some bubblegum and painting her nails, women. This is why I despite public

hospitals the workers are incompetent. I greet and she greets back with an attitude not even looking at me.

“I'm looking for someone who is said to be admitted here an hour or so ago,” you can tell that she is annoyed judging by the way she suddenly chews the bubblegum, she lifts her face to look at me, and her jaw drops, I'm handsome I know I also drool over myself sometimes. “Excuse me miss”, she is still looking at me she can't move her eyes of me, if it was up to her she would swallow me right here right now. I see a doctor, and I quickly rush to him leaving the girl to daydream about me I'm sure she has never saw someone as handsome as me before, argh I'm kidding. I call out to him, and he stops in his tracks fixing his glasses.

“Good morning sir I'm looking for Kedibone Mabija who was admitted an hour or so ago.”

“The girl that inhaled too much smoke and her hand got burnt along the process?”

Me: "What? Where was she when she got burnt? Anyway, maybe it's not her. Can you please take me to this girl?"

Him: "Let's go," we walk for few seconds, and we step into this other room he leads me to her bed, and it is my sister.

Me: "Who brought her in, and how is her condition?"

Him: "I don't know who brought her in. And she is stable for now, but she still needs to breath with the oxygen since her lungs are now weak due to too much smoke in her system."

Me: "Her hand?"

Him: "It has been treated. Her burns are not that bad it's just minor ones," I nod. "I'm leaving now take all the time you need with her," he tells me walking out.

I still don't understand how Kedibone got burnt when she went to visit my brother on the other side of the town, why didn't my brother call me instead of Thato calling me? This doesn't

make any sense I will have to call Bongani maybe he will explain to me on what went wrong. I settle next to her bed and she is sleeping peacefully, looking at her with all these machines attached to her makes my heart ache. Her hand is bandaged I look at her and take a deep breath. How did you end up here Kedibone? My phone rings and it's my mother. I take a deep breath and answer her.

“Mama”

“Where are you because your brother Bongani is here looking for you?” what is he doing at home so late, or maybe his worried about Kedibone because she did not go back to his house. But let me test the waters I want to see something.

Me: “Looking for me? Is he with Kedibone there?”

Her: “Why would he be with Kedibone? Kedibone is at her friend's house she will be spending the night there,” so she lied to me? What really happened? Where was she? She will answer all these questions that I have as soon as she wakes up. What if she died?

Me: "I'll be home now."

Mom: "Okay. I'm sure by the time you get home I'll be already in bed," She hangs up. I rub my face with my hands. Kedibone what happened because if it's your boyfriend then you will have to kiss him goodbye. No one messes with my sister and gets away with it.

★»★«

VUYO

My younger brother Mpho asked me to come over to his house he wants us to discuss something important. I take a quick bath and wear my sweat pants with a simple T-shirt, I take my car

keys and walk to the kitchen on my way out I bump into Cindy. Our marriage is no longer the same we have drifted apart coming to think of it she is the reason for this none existence marriage of ours.

“Where are you going?” she asks.

“I'm going out,” I check the time and its 19:00. “don't wait up for me,” I tell her this with my hand already on the door handle. I walk out before she could even say any word. Her face disgust me right now, and I don't know why.

I get to my brother's house and I enter without knocking I call out his name.

“By the pool,” he answers. I make my way to where he is, and I find him sitting flat on the floor his eyes are red, it seems like he has been crying. I sit down and I notice a half empty bottle of whiskey next to him.

“What's up man? You don't look okay.”

“I lost her,” he sniffs. “I lost my girl.”

Me: “Maya is gone?”

Him: “Yeah man. That bastard took her away from me.”

Me: “Who is that?”

Him: “Big man.”

Me: “Big? As in Big our Father's best friend?” He nods.... Wawu!

Me: “I don't understand. Why did he kill her? Do you owe him something?”

Him: “I don't owe him anything bruh,” chuckling. “He was fucking with my girl Vuyo! He was sleeping with Maya old as he is!”

Me: "What? Why would he sleep with your girl?"

Him: "I don't know man I don't know."

Me: "How did you find out?" He hands me his phone and since he was watching the video I press play and the first thing I see is Maya giving Mr Big a head. It looks as if like a commotion was taking place the video did not have any volume of which is weird. I see Big taking his gun shooting Maya on the forehead, I widen my eyes and pause it. "What the fuck man? We need to take him out," he laughs.

Him: "You can't even hold a gun Vuyo"

Me: "I will learn, but Big will have to pay and he must pay in a hard way."

Him: "He must and I want to watch him die a slow painful death," I take the bottle and drink straight from it... How can Big be so cruel and sleep with his best friend son's girl? He is

one sick bastard. But then, why did Maya agree to sleeping with him naye he is to be blamed.

Me: "Did you tell pops?"

Him: "No. I don't want to stress him, he is already stressed as it is," he sighs. This is bad.

Me: "Cousin TK?"

Him: "No. That one will massacre his family & friends even new born babies. He is ruthless, so no, I will not tell him I can't be having too much blood on my hands, yes I will not kill them directly, but TK will spill blood because of me," I nod.

TK doesn't have a heart, he is not a human being. He enjoys seeing blood, and sleep well after as if he did not kill someone in cold blood. Everyone in the family, and the hood is scared of him we are never comfortable with him around, and we must always watch what we say.

CINDY

My marriage with Vuyo is falling apart rapidly, and it's all my fault. He doesn't touch me let alone be in the same room with me for too long, this house is no longer that warm household filled with love it once was. Now it is cold and filled with sadness. I wanted to surprise him by making dinner for him last night, but he had to disappoint me by telling me not to wait up for him, he came back late. And again, he woke up early this morning, and left for work he is clearly avoiding me at all cost. Sighs. I browse through my contacts list, and my scrolling brings me to a halt in Sanele's numbers I don't know when was the last I spoke to him, I've been rejecting his calls of which is unfair to him, I take a breath, and dial his numbers his phone rings unanswered, what the hell is he busy with? Or maybe he is just returning the favour. Such a jerk he is. I feel like I ruined my marriage for nothing, Sanele never loved me he was only using me for sex. I was his booty call every time he needed to release his unwanted babies I was always available to welcome them, not once did I make myself unavailable for him, even if I was on my periods I made sure that I stop them for him. My phone rings and it's my mother, I close my eyes before answering.

“Hello”

“Hey baby, how are you doing?”

Me: “Good Mom and how are you?”

Her: “I'm good too. I was wondering, but first; what are you doing this coming weekend?”

Me: “Nothing, why?”

Her: “I would like to invite you and your husband for some family lunch on Saturday,” not a good idea.

Me: “Urh... I will have to talk to Vuyo first.”

Her: “I'm sure the husband won't have a problem with coming for lunch, and besides he loves my cooking. And again, since when do you guys talk before coming here for lunch?”

Me: "He tends to work on weekend's lately, so I will ask him how his schedule look like," she heaves a sigh.

Her: "I'm not convinced Cindy. But I will take your word for it."

Me: "I have to go now, talk some other time and I will tell him Mama."

Her: "Is everything okay?"

Me: "Oh, yes Mom. Everything is just fine."

Her: "Okay. I love you."

Me: "Love you too," I hang up and sit down, how am I going to tell Vuyo that my parents invited us over for lunch this coming weekend? We don't even exchange 2 words for Christ's sake! This is messed up. But then again, it won't hurt to try talking to him right? I can only hope that he agrees to come with...



LUXOLO

Today I decided to take myself out just to spoil myself it's been long since I went out. I get to the mall, I need to get myself new clothes and maybe change my hairstyle to something wild & crazy. My first stop is at Mr price, I pick up some shorts & dresses, and some sandals I'm not a fan of sandals that show my toes I have ugly toes even nail polish doesn't do any justice for them. After paying for the clothes, I go to the salon right next door Mr Price. I opt for a hair cut, but I cut on the sides then dye my locks blue, some prices here are ridiculous I tell

you... I check myself out in the mirror and I'm looking beautiful maarn.

My last stop is at steers for lunch, I order for myself a double cheeseburger with 330 ml of coke and large chips. I browse through my phone when I feel some heavy presence standing before me, I look up and it is Sanele. He looks & smells so good, but ke I roll my eyes and continue browsing through my phone ignoring him.

“So awung'boni vele?” (You don't see me) he asks me this settling on the chair opposite mine.

Me: “Ufunani?” (What do you want)

Him: Bengishaya is'jika nje,” (I was just passing by)

Me: “Chubeka ujikeleze,” (keep on passing by)

Him: “Umuhle yakena? Ng'bhayizile ng'yazi (You are beautiful do you know that? I messed up I know) but I will claim you as mine again,” I chuckle while shaking my head.

Me: “Ukuphupha emini (day dreaming in the afternoon) is very rare yazi,” he shakes his head.

Him: “Ok'salayo this is one dream that will come true, we can bet on that. Utshela lomshishi obhizi naye ukuthi ngizom'slyza kungabi indaba za nex,” (tell your boyfriend that you are currently busy with that I will hurt him real bad) he circles his thumb around my cheek. Some white girl approaches our way looking furious and she is beautiful I won't lie.

“I'm done babe”, she kisses Sanele's cheek and gives me a nasty look. Sanele will never change shame he still fucks anything that wears a skirt, his dick is just sies maarn I don't even know what to say...

Me: “Ngizoku hlalamisa ngempama uyezwa, (I will slap you do you hear me) how dare you look at me like I owe you or I'm your friend?”

Her: "Are you talking to me?" Wuuhhh, her accent is so foreign hha.

Me: "Yes, I am talking to you it's not as if like you'll do anything to me anyway," she chuckles. Oh hell no! She is being sarcastic.

Her: "Don't let this pretty face fool you baby girl, I can make your life a living hell with just one snap and your world will turn upside down."

Me: "Feisty I like, but then again by the time you snap your fingers you'll be long dead," she laughs.

Her: "Are you challenging me?" She puts her hands on top of the table and look at me straight in the eyes.

Me: "If you see it as a challenge then it is a challenge."

Sanele: "Xolo, I think you must listen to her she will make your life a living hell."

Me: "Both of you may go now, I need to eat in peace."

Girl: "Always sleep with one eye open and always watch your back! You've just gained yourself an enemy."

Sanele: "Michelle you don't have to threaten her she won't do anything to you, she is harmless," she sneers.

Her: "Harmless or not she will feel my wrath!"

Sanele: "Luxolo you better apologize to her."

Me: "I ain't gonna apologize for shit! Michelle bring it on baby girl, I'm ready for you." Am I? Hell no, I'm not.

Her: "Game on! Babe let's leave and as for you baby girl you better ask around about me. Ask about Michelle Kruglov the

daughter of Ibrahim Kruglov, get yourself good contacts that will find you everything they know about the Kruglov family, and don't shudder by what you find. That's if you will get the information.”

Me: “I don't have to ask about you to know about you. You may be excused,” she clicks her tongue and walks away chuckling. Sanele remains behind...

Me: “And then? Masha nawe,” (leave)

Sanele: “Ngizoyenza sure ukuthy akaku fahlazi. Ngizokuvikela,” (I'll make sure that she doesn't kill you. I will protect you)

Me: “Ang'dingi,” (I don't need) I security “ngizozilwela” (I will fight for myself)

Him: “Indaba u baba ka yinsimbi yama Russia,” (thing is Michelle's father it's a Mafia Russia) and “uyabulala akahleki,” (he kills he doesn't joke)

Me: “Ngiyacava undendaba nami maar ungazi hluphi ngami ngingine protection e bhaya,” (I know you care about me, but don't worry yourself about me I have a lot of protection)

Him: “Seyavutha I tsotsi yakho nou, hhayi ngiyatheshisa straight,” (your tsotsi language is top notch, I'm such a good educator) I find myself laughing.

Me: “Impilo mfana,” (it's life boy) go before your spitting fire dragon comes back.”

Him: “Ngisagcwele ngawe mami saarn,” (I still love you) he winks at me and walk away. I shake my head. Well, I have a task ahead of me googling Michelle Kruglov, yhey I've seen in movies how ruthless Russians can be. Ey me & my big mouth haikhona.



TSAKANI

Kedibone is now awake and she is going to get discharged tomorrow. She's been avoiding me since I got here, and that was like 20 minutes ago, she doesn't even look at me straight in the eyes she is facing the window. My mother's high blood went up when I told her about Kedibone being hospitalized she wanted to come and see her, but I told her that she must rest. I'm just happy that she's not hospitalized too. "One way or the other you are going to talk," I hear her sniffing. "Your tears don't move me. It's either you tell me what happened seeing that you lied, or I will tell Sabelo to come and talk to you. Wait, I can always switch off the machines plus you are covered insurance wise, and mom has a burial society that will cook on your funeral, you know I'm very much capable of switching it off without any care in the world, or flinch right?" She turns to look at me she is scared of Sabelo. Sabelo is very strict and he doesn't take nonsense. Or maybe she is just scared to die so young, but whatever the case may be I can never kill her. Tears

run down her cheeks I hold her hands assuring her that it's okay.

“Can I please tell you everything once I'm discharged? I'm just not okay. I don't know what I was thinking,” she says wiping her tears.

Me: “Take all the time you need and once you are healed I want the truth nothing but the truth Kedibone. I will come again, and see you later,” she nods and looks outside the window again, you can see it in her eyes that she's broken, I'm about to leave when her friend Sihle steps in she has a box of chocolates and a basket of fruits with her.

“Hello Tsakani is she awake?” She asks, placing everything on top of her bedside stand.

“Yes she is,” I look at her, and she looks nervous.

Kedi: “Bhuti please ask her to leave and I don't ever want to see her again”, she is still facing the window.

Me: "Why? She came to see you as your friend."

Her: "She is not my friend It's her fault that I'm lying in this bed. It's her fucking fault!"

Sihle: "I'm sorry Kedi I didn't know that things were going to turn out the way they did, please forgive me friend," she is crying.

Kedi: "Leave. I don't want to see you ever again and I will never forgive you for as long as I live, you've ruined me. You've fucking ruined my life! I hate you, I fucken hate you Sihle!"

Sihle: "Kedi I'm sorry I had no idea, I did not plan it I'm sorry friend, please try to understand where I'm coming from."

Her: "I am not your friend. You are dead to me dead, do you hear me? And you are coming from nonsense!" I don't remember when was the last time I saw Kedibone this angry,

Ishuuu. Whatever transpired is huge for her to get this worked up.

Sihle: "I'm sorry," she sinks down and cries.

Kedibone takes the glass that in on top of the cabinet and throws it at our direction, we duck it and it scatters on the wall. "Leave right now!" She roars and the machines starts beeping, the nurses come rushing in and they push us out. Now I'm curious curious to know what Sihle did to Kedibone moreover I'm more worried about her wellbeing, I pray she pulls through... We get outside and Sihle sits down on the chairs and cry, her legs are shaking.

"What did you to Kedibone?" I ask, looking at her straight in the eyes. She does not answer me. I feel my anger rising. "Come, I'll give you a lift home," She stands up and we walk to my car. I roar the engine to life, and drive off playing bone thugs & harmony x My way.

"This is not the way to my house," she says. You can detect fear in her voice. I turn up the volume, and drive to the not so close

to home bushes. She is crying now begging me to take her home. I stop the car in the most deserted bushes around, cars hardly pass by, I take my gun that is on top of the dashboard and cock it. "Now you're going to tell me what you did to my sister or I shoot you right here, right now and go and deliver your body to your parents I'll do it the Italian's Dom style," she just looks at me nodding. "Start singing," I point the gun at her and I start counting "3...2...1...", she still does not talk, I fire one warning shot right next to her seat, and she opens her eyes in terror. "That was a warning next round I will shoot, start spilling the beans," she nods while shaking.

Her: "I was invited to a party by some girls and they told me to bring a friend. I couldn't think of anyone else but Kedibone, I called her and invited her, but she refused at first and I had to beg her she eventually agreed. Fast forward... We were in this other big mansion and there were old men there, drug lords, prostitutes and whatever illegal people you can think of. One of the girls came to me and told me that one of the man is interested in Kedibone I must make a plan that he gets her he is willing to pay a lot of money. Kedibone said she doesn't feel comfortable we must go and I told her that we will leave now I first have to check the guy we came with." she looks up, and suck in a breathe.

“The next thing Kedibone was nowhere on sight I started to panic and we started searching for her her to no avail, we went to ask one of the girls I came with and she told me that Kedibone left with her bidder, I didn't know that they were auctioning girls I was clueless. Fear took over and I was thinking of the worst then the next thing a call came through telling us that a certain warehouse caught fire and little did I know that's where Kedibone was taken to, I'm sorry it was never my plan,” I chuckle.

Me: “That's bullshit and you know it!”

Her: “I'm telling you the truth Tsakani.”

Me: “Let me go and pay your mother a visit”

Her: “Please don't. I'm begging you. I'm telling you the truth,” shaking my head. She kneels on top of the seat.

Me: “Do you know the damage you did to my sister? Do you have any idea how worried my mother was and her high blood went up?” She shakes her head.

Me: “Who are you working for?”

Her: “No one. I swear,” I tilt my head, and laugh.

Me: “Then we will deal with this my way, you will find your way back home. Oh, hope you survive this creepy bush. Any last message you would like me to convey to your mother?”

Her: “TK please,” I go to her side, and open the door and drag her out. She begs me to let her go, and I don't take any of that. I tie her in a tree with a rope, but not tightly, and walk back to my car leaving her screaming. “You can't leave me here TSAKANI you can't!” she cries trying to wiggle herself free from the rope, begging me to untie her.

Me: "I'm giving you an hour tops to find me, and tell me the truth, because if not; I will do the finding, and kill you then feed you to the dogs. You have an hour, and it starts now."

Her: "Tsakani, please. You can't leave me here," I laugh then roar the engine to life, and drive off leaving a trail of dust behind. Her story doesn't add up, something is amiss with it. I will get to the bottom of this and whoever was involved they will pay greatly with their loved ones for that matter.

LUXOLO

I get to work and I'm 30 minutes late. I am so fired, grrrr. As soon as I enter the change room all the ladies look at me, others are looking at me with disgust while some with envy, wuhhh my new hairstyle is doing the most mus. I take off my coat and take out my heels from the bag then settle down in one of the vacant chairs.

"I take it your pussy is magnet since the boss is busy asking about you Lux." She tells me this not looking at me. Okay, I thought that they were admiring my new hairstyle but I was wrong.

"What are you talking about?" I ask her strapping on the heels.

Her: "The boss was here looking for you."

Me: "So?" They all turn to look at me as if I said something funny.

Zara: "This means that since you're giving him good he will want to see you everyday before you start your shift," I laugh. What on earth are these girls on about?

Me: "What are you talking about?"

Luna: "But she must bear in mind that whatever she is having with the boss won't last, once a new girl is hired she will be old news. The boss will throw her like a used pad," a loud laugh escapes my mouth.

Me: "Y'all trying to tell me that you slept with the boss? He used y'all and threw y'all like used pads? How heartless could he get? Kanty, why didn't you ladies continued giving it to him good?" Laughing.

Zara: "Wait. You trying to tell us that you're not sleeping with the boss?"

Me: "Wasn't my laugh obvious enough? Anyway, I don't go around sleeping with anyone, especially a man old enough to be my Father. I know my worth. Do y'all even know your statuses? I am so disappointed in all of you girls honestly," Zama laughs.

Her: "It's only a matter of time before you find yourself in his bed," the others chortle.

Me: "Nah. I think TF not, not unless he drugs me. He won't do shit to me when I'm sober, yasis kunganyiwa. Phela ikuku lami li selective, duh." They gasp not believing I said that. My vagina deserves dicks that are good when it comes to marshmallows, that time I only slept with 3 guys in my whole 27 years of existence!

Armani: "I'm sure it no longer grips, and you are a tasteless bitch!" Too much anger detected on this one, let me just ignore her. I wear my coat again then check myself in the mirror if my make-up is still intact, and yes it's very much intact. I then make my way to Mr Sol's office. "Huffs," this man is surely going to fire me. That will be a dream come true for me, at least I will be free from him.

I knock and he shouts for me come in. I make my way in and I find him with some man.

“Greetings to you gentleman,” The man looks at me from head to toe and a smile curves in his ashy lips.

Him: “Ahh and the star of the show finally shows up please take a sit,” I sit down next to the man and cross my legs.

Man: “She is perfect exactly what I'm looking for,” I look at the man who is undressing me with his eyes then Mr Sol who looks really impressed.

Sol: “I told you that you will like her. Lux, I'm sure you are wondering as to why I called you here,” it's no rocket science duh. I nod.

Him: “Let me get straight to the point. This is Mr Mbethe your client, congratulations you've been promoted again,” client? I stare at him blankly words failing to come out.

Me: "My client? What client?" My voice finally came through for me.

Him: "Yes. You my dear are going to take care of his sexual needs," he grins. I laugh like a mad person. This can't be happening! He better be joking because I am so not doing this.

Me: "I'm not interested. You actually thought that I will jump to the opportunity of being a prostitute, after you forced me to agree to be a stripper? What do you take me for?"

Him: "You must bear in mind th..."

Me: "That you make the orders and I must never decline an offer when it's presented to me on a silver platter," I chirp in.

Him: "You are smart and I like that about you. Now go and entertain my guest he paid so much money for you."

Me: "Sorry to disappoint you Sol, but I am not going to do it, he might as well take his money and shove it down his arse!" My legs are shaking... I stand up, I am so angry at Mr Sol. He thinks that I'm going to jump every time he ask me jump without me asking him how high? News flash I ain't going to jump for him this time around. He might as well kill me.

Him: "Must I play you the video again?"

Me: "Actually you know what, fuck you and your stupid job. Go ahead and kill me you ruthless piece of shit I don't care!" My tears want to make their presence felt, and they will in just a few seconds there's no way that I can prevent them from falling.

His facial expression changes, he is angry now and on the other side Mr Mbethe is sitting here with a wide grin plastered on his face, guess he finds the show entertaining. Bloody swine.

Him: "Are you daring me Diamond? Are you fucken daring me?" He is on his feet. My heart is beating out of my chest, and my palms are starting to become sweaty. And yeap my stage name

is Diamond, 'light Diamond' to be precise because of my skin color. Who gives out such horrible nick names though? Arh, it's Mr fackhashit himself.

Me: "Yah and what the fuck are you going to do? Spill blood, huh? Your greed for money really blinded you old fool," he sneers, and in no time he is standing before me his fat hand on my neck strangling me, I'm unable to breathe he really wants to kill me. My eyes bulge out, and I try removing his hand from my neck but I'm failing. He loosens his grip, and drops me on the floor laughing. I rub my neck, I'm shaking with fear.

Him: "You better get up from that floor, and fix yourself then sit down. The problem with you Diamond is that you talk a lot, you have no filter," he sits back down. "That's how you deal with girls who think they have balls. You better thank your lucky stars that I didn't kill you."

Mr Mbethe: "True. That's how respect is instilled," he nods in agreement. Shit. I get up from the floor, and sit back down rubbing my neck. I don't even bother wiping my tears, this is what he wants right?

Him: "Wipe your tears you look unattractive. Now, go and make Mbethe happy you better make sure that he ejaculate inside you," I chuckle through my tears. I ain't going to do it.

Me: "No." He laughs.

Him: "You are still defying me?" He bangs the table! "William go and lock her in the freezer room she must freeze to death. No one defy me and gets away with it, she must be taught a lesson!" He roars

William is a big scary man, he looks abnormal. My instincts kick in as soon as I see him coming toward me. I pick up the chair that I was sitting on and hit William with it and it breaks in his arm. He screams in pain as he falls down I think I hit him a little bit to hard, but I was protecting myself. I'm not giving in that easily, I will die fighting if it needs to.

Mr Sol: "Get up you piece of shit. Grab her and take her to the cold room, just do what I'm fucking paying you to do!" He roars. I take the pen that is on top of the table and charge to William before he could even get up from the floor, the ghetto

in me have been woken up. I put my right knee on his neck and point the pen in his left eye.

Me: “You dare move an inch Sol I will take out his eye, I'm not joking!” My words are muffled by my tears, but they hear me. Mr Sol looks at me speechless he doesn't know what to say. He is taken aback by what I'm doing, he was not expecting this kind of event. “Cat got your tongue tied now Mr Sol?” I ask him looking him straight in his eyes.

Him: “It doesn't have to get to that Diamond, we can find a way to work this out,” I laugh.

Me: “Find a way to work this out?” Nodding. “The only way is for me to continue being a stripper and you to find Mr Mbethe another girl to satisfy his sexual needs or you can give him his money back, the choice is yours Sol.”

Mr Mbethe: “You can keep the money Mr Sol. One day this girl will come in very handy for me, she is feisty and I like it. I need girls like her in my clique thank you for the lovely free show.” He stands up shaking hands with Mr Sol and exit his office. I

remove my knee from William's neck and stand up, I fix myself. Mr Sol sits back down and looks at me with a grin in his ugly face. Mxm. I shake my head looking at him, waiting for my punishment.

Him: "You can go back to work, go and make me money. In fact take a night off."

Me: "Take a night off? Why? Are you going to pay me tonight's money?"

Him: "Because you need it after the little stunt you pulled and yes I will pay you. You may be excused now."

Me: "Thank you." I get up from my chair. What is he planning? He can't let me go this easy. How do I get out from all of this? A job that I thought was genuine turned out to be a job full of danger, and hungry for power & money.

Him: "Leave," hissing. I smile and exit his office... I head straight to the toilet, and cry my eyeballs out. Shit hurts, and very

stressful. I need to find a way to leave this place I have too before I lose myself. I rinse my face then go to the change room and I find Mapula sitting down wiping her tears, as soon as she sees me she quickly fixes herself.

“You back already?” she asks faking a smile.

Me: “Yes I am. Now, why are you crying?”

Her: “It's nothing I can't fix, I...I'll find a way to fix this Lux.”

Me: “What is it? You can talk to me I won't judge you.”

Her: “Well I recently find out that I'm HIV positive.”

Me: “Well that's not a death sentence as long as you take your meds and eat healthy food you will do just fine. Did your partner also get tested? She burst out with tears. I kneel next to her and comfort her.

Her: "You don't know do you?" I shake my head.

Me: "Know what?"

Her: "I am his sex slave and sometimes I sleep with his business associates for fun."

Me: "What? Whose sex slave? Why did you allow yourself to sleep with those men?"

Her: "I need money Diamond. My mother is very sick, she has cancer and it's on it's last stage. I'm the boss's sex slave," I shoot my eyes open, and gasp.

Me: "You do know that there is a possibility that she might not make it since the cancer has spread out through her body? So, you sleep with Sol in exchange for money?" She nods. Wawu.

Me: "So you better be prepared for anything, you will have to be strong. You gotta be strong for your mother and be strong to yourself, you need to pray hard pray like you've never prayed

before. Ask God to give you strength, plead with him to ease your mother's pain. As for Sol, we will find a way to deal with him," just then her phone rings.

Her: "It's my sister let me answer it," I nod. I have to find a way to destroy Sol he acts like he is a mini God. He acts like he owns all the girls here, they are all eating at the palm's of his hand. Thinking about it makes my blood boil. Wait, what am I saying? How will I take out Sol or make his life miserable? I'm such a joke, but one way or the other he must pay, he has ruined so many Innocent's lives. He shall suffer the consequences, I just need something to push me to the edge or maybe hire a hitman to kill him once I have money. I chuckle, what a stupid plan. I need something to make me unleash the inner beast (not an animal) in me, yes you heard that right. Apparently I carry a lot of anger inside me, pshhh that's bull right? I mean I'm the sweetest soul ever. I am brought back to earth by Mapula's sharp cry, she drops the phone on the floor and sink down.

Her: "Sh... She is gone. My mother is gone Diamond and now I have no one," her cry brings tears to my eyes and makes my heart sore, I comfort her, sitting next to her on the floor. I can't imagine what she is going through? I've never lost a loved one that I cared deeply for, but I'm sure the pain of losing a mother

cuts deep than any other pain it breaks you into pieces you somehow feel incomplete without her. Damn. I pray to God to keep my mother safe for me I don't know what I would do if she died, I'd prolly kill myself too. I stand up and go and get her a glass of water and accompany her to Sol office, she needs to take a leave.

★»★«

SOL

“William you failed just one simple thing. To take Diamond to the cold room and lock her there for few hours just to scare her,” pressing the stress ball with pressure.

Him: "Everything happened so quickly, I couldn't even react on time sorry I disappointed you."

Him: "I saw everything. That girl moves like a snake, she is slick like that I mean who would've thought that she can hit a grown man like you with a chair? Did you see how fast her instincts kicks in? She react immediately," he nods...

Me: "Now. I want you to find me information about her, anything you can get your hands on about her. And it seems like Mbethe will be an obstacle, I will have to take him out he want to come for my possession. After tonight I will do anything to keep Diamond around even if it means making her my P.A."

Him: "She really did impress you I saw it in your eyes."

Me: "You have no idea. She is what we want, clever & fast and her taking shooting lessons won't be hard. She is a fast learner," he nods. A knock comes through at the door.

“Come on in,” yelling. The door open and Diamond steps in with Mapula. Mapula's eyes are swollen it looks like she's been crying. “Take a seat,” I gesture for them to take a seat.

“Sorry to bother you sir, but unfortunately I came bearing bad news.”

Me: “I'm listening,” sitting down.

Her: “A call came in for Mapul informing her that her mother is no more, may her soul rest in peace.”

Me: “And you're telling me this because?”

Her: “Because I want you to release her so that she may go home and prepare her mother's funeral.”

Me: “Doesn't she have any family members that can prepare the funeral? She will make us short stuffed,” she snorts.

Her: "Nonsense. Do you have a mother?"

Me: "Yes, and where are you going with this?"

Her: "Won't you close down the club for those few days or ask someone to stand in for you just so you can go home?"

Me: "I would. My mother comes first she is the most important puzzle in my life," I swear I saw a faint smile forming on her lips, hold on, I think she is onto something, but what could it be? At least my mom doesn't stay here in SA.

Her: "Now, how is she different? Why can't she go home, and prepare a funeral for her mother? Her mother was the only thing she has making sense to her life," I sigh. "I know you're heartless, but for once just have a heart, pretend as if you care," what she is saying is right I can't be selfish.

Me: "She can take a month paid leave," I see Mapula widening her eyes, Mapula is a very beautiful and humble girl. She never defied me, she always did what I ask her to do sometimes I ask

her to entertain my dog and she does it without complaining. Then it hit me. Now that her mother is gone she will switch up on me I don't have anything to hold her with, she is going to be free. No, that can't happen I will have to find a leverage on her maybe I can take advantage of her poor background, perfect.

Diamond: "Good and her leave starts now. Thank you for having a heart, may we be excused?"

Me: "Yes you may, and Mapula I will help you with arranging the funeral, if you short on anything do not hesitate to call me," she smiles and nods.

Diamond: "I hope you are doing this from the goodness of your heart not because you want leverage on her," I swallow my saliva its as if like she is reading my mind.

Me: "Not at all. This comes from the goodness of my heart."

Her: "Very well then. You will have to let the stuff know," they both stand up and exit my office. I turn to look at William and I see him shaking his head

"Boss I will have to be fast with the information, she seems like she knows a lot, and noisy too," William tells me this taking his iPad on top of the table.

Me: "You read my mind. I want the information by Thursday."

Him: "Yes boss," I pace up & down and chuckle. Diamond is too clever. Who exactly are you diamond?

SANELE

Michelle haven't been sleeping very well lately I don't even know why is she so obsessed about destroying Luxolo. Luxolo did nothing wrong to her to tell you the truth, and Michelle is really thirsty for her blood. She doesn't even want to listen to me when I tell her that Luxolo is a nobody, and unfortunately for her I will not give her the information she wants. She gets inside the room kicking off her shoes.

“There's nothing on her. Fucking no information about her. Who on earth doesn't have a background history or something of some sort?” She takes off her dress, you can tell that she's pissed off. “Wait,” she stops tying her hair and looks at me. “You know her right?” I nod. “What was she to you?”

“Someone I grew up with,” shrugging. She sits down next to me.

Her: “What can you tell me about her?”

Me: "She is the only child, and the last time I checked both her parents past away they died in a tragic fire that was like 7 years ago, and she moved away too, until I saw her at the mall that day."

Her: "That's it? No boyfriend, her previous school name? Friends?"

Me: "I don't know if she is dating or what, and we attended different schools I don't really know much about her, and she had only one friend her name was Bella" she looks at me straight in the eyes searching if I'm lying to her or what, too bad for her I'm one person who can hold a stare contest without even blinking. "You think I'm lying to you?" My face changes instantly.

Her: "No. Not at all babe," she swallows at absolutely nothing she knows how aggressive I get once provoked. "And this friend of hers Bella. Where is she?"

Me: “But your look is stating otherwise, and I don't know where Bella is,” arching my brow at her.

Her: “Oh, you're imagining things,” she fakes a smile. “Let me go, and start cooking, or are we ordering in?” She is already on her feet.

Me: “Anything is fine by me. Why are you so keen in finding information about Lux? I mean, she did nothing to you not unless I missed something,” she huffs.

Her: “I just didn't like the way she spoke to me that's it. No one talks to me like I'm just some random girl. I'm Kruglov's daughter the most respected man around here, people must be taught respect, and learn to address me with respect,” I chuckle in disbelief.

Me: “So, you trying to tell me that everyone who talks to you in an uncivilized manner you will deal with him/her? And again, how will people know that you are the daughter of Kruglov?” She looks me, and shakes her head.

Her: "Not everyone, but those that I don't like," shrugging.

Me: "I take it that you don't like Luxolo; but why don't you like her?"

Her: "I didn't like the way she was looking at you. She was looking at you like you were a prey or something, and her tone was very unwelcoming," I laugh.

Me: "Too much bullshit in what you just said. Just let it go because you have nothing against Luxolo, we should be more worried about Adelaide she is too quiet for my liking," she sneers.

Her: "I'm sure she's busy sucking some dick, and not giving a fuck about a lot of bullshit. I don't really care much about her," I shake my head.

Me: "I don't think you've heard, she is also gunning for Sol's club. The very same club we want," that grabs her attention.

Her: "What? I thought she said she isn't interested in the club the last time we spoke. So, her plan is to buy the club behind our backs? Now, where the hell is loyalty in that? I thought we were one, but it looks like I was wrong, damn it! What are we going to do now? We can't confront her upfront because she will most definitely kill us."

She is right about that killing part, Adelaide runs a brothel around here, and she's into drug business too, her workers are too loyal to her, and she recruits the young girls to sell drugs for her that way no one will suspect that these young innocent girls sell drugs, and she has police on her payroll. In fact ever cartel around here have police on their payrolls. She is the only female Mafia I know in this day & age. She was trained in the early ages to kill without flinching or showing emotions, after all, her father was also a Mafia he was part of the "Bravitas cartel" but was later killed by the Italian "Sillican Mafias" a lot of blood was shed and innocent people died only because one Bravita crossed the line, and killed a Sillican Mafia in cold blood, the war was too intense and both gangs lost some members. Adelaide's father was killed the very same day the Bravita's & Sillican's made truce, each member had to sacrifice one of their own, and unfortunately in that case Adelaide's father was the sacrifice.

Me: “We will have to think of a different approach regarding this issue, keep her closer plus you are best of friends lately, find out how she is planning to take the club, and we will take it from there. It's a good thing that Sol doesn't have anyone by his side,” Sol is everyone's enemy, yet he is powerful & feared around here no one dares him, double cross him, and live to tell a tale after. He deals with you immediately the news break out. He is an obstacle indeed, but not for long though because the plan is to take him out the least he expect it.

Her: “I will see what I will do. Let me go & refresh real quick, and who knows maybe we might go, and eat out I'm craving for Lenny's Special,” she winks at me and disappears to the bathroom. My phone rings, and it's Cindy another one person that I need to deal with before she reels trouble for me.

“Yini?”

“That's no way to answer your phone Sanele after weeks of not communicating,” she half shouts.

Me: "So?"

Her: "Where the hell are you? I've been trying to get hold of you the past weeks Sanele. I miss you, I miss us."

Me: "I don't. I don't miss you, and consider yourself blocked from now going forward, I've find some fresh pussy. Try sucking your man's dick or something, oh wait. Or you can always fix your marriage. Don't ever try contacting me anymore, I have some pussy to entertain," I hang up, and immediately block her. In with the new, out with the old, oh well... Life.

★»★«

TSAKANI

I stretch my neck, and it snaps, bad sleep. The couch is never comfortable to tell you the truth, but exhaustion took over and I fell asleep, I look at the time, and it's just after 20:00pm, sighs. I get up from the couch, and walk straight to the bathroom, and

take a cold shower. My phone rings immediately as I step out of the shower, and it's Malik.

“Lik,” I put the phone on loud speaker.

“Makube ismasho saka Sol mavakga,” (let's go to Sol's later on) I don't even know when last did I go there, that place no longer hypes me, I was now, still am a frequent at Vixen brothel, but I don't buy pussy girls there are dirty I only go there for the alcohol, and the pool. Oh, and how can I forget sucking the owners boobies just for the fun of it. “TK, u game?” I snap out of it.

Me: “Sure. Tyd?” (Time)

Him: “Boma Level soe,” (around eleven)

Me: “Ngiphakathi skhokho,” (I'm in)

Him: “Yizo. Izoba phambili,” (I will see you there) he hangs up. Well, I'm going out.

Kedibone still haven't told me what happened, yes she is back home, but Mpumi Sabelo's girlfriend offered to watch over her, she thinks that Kedibone being close to another female will ease her, and she might eventually talk. Sihle? Let's just say she's fighting for her life far away from home no one in her family knows where she is, and they better not report her as a missing person I did convey the message, and trust me they won't even get close to the police van unless otherwise. My mother is also better now, that should count for something.

Few hours later we pull up at Sol's club, we decided to come with Malik's Viano we left our cars at his house.

“So, are we taking some ass with when the club closes?” Sbuda asks us, psst psstyng some cologne.

“I'm game for some new, but not new new ass, besides it's been long since we last had some pussy from here. I don't know about you gents, but I'm tired of the pussy from Vixen, those girls were starting to smell like rotten eggs,” they burst out into laughter, and I don't join them shit is disgusting that's why I never entertained them. But then again; how do you expect

girls who sleep with more 6 men in one night not to smell?
Geez, these fuckers are brave.

Me: “You always have something fucked up to say Spikiri, I think you've lost some screw,” they all laugh. “And no. I'm not going to take some pussy home if I want pussy I can always call one of my sex buddies, and they will offer me pussy.”

Tim: “Better you than us man, and Spikiri stop talking shit about those girls because you are always the first to get into their dirty underwear

” we laugh again.

Him: “But I'm telling the truth man, even those feminine wash can't erase their smell, damn. Well, they do give some mean head.” Nc nc, these boys.

Me: “Let's get them,” we all step out of the car.

Malik: “Is it me, or vele kutheleka so la? (Is it always this packed)

Spikiri: “Mzukwana bekangabi mnyama soe, ungatholukuthi kutholeke I stocko esisha,” (back then it was never this packed, I'm sure there's some new girls)

MaThousand: “Masigcwale indawo, feder basikhohliwe sisapompa ngomoya,” (let's fill up the palace they've even forgotten that we are still breathing)

We pass the long queue, and walk straight to the door. The bouncers don't give us a hard time, they let us in and damn it's packed up in here Sol must've really brought some new stuff. I look at the time on my wrist, and it's 23:00pm the strippers are on break hence the men are filled up on the dancefloor with some random bitches. The VVIP area have few people occupying it, seeing us standing before them they scurry up taking their alcohol with in few seconds the area is clear, I laugh, and we settle in waiting to be served free booze. I'm sure Sol knows by now that we are within the premises.

★»★«

LUXOLO

Mapule's mother burial went very well, she was indeed buried in a dignified manner. Mapule was very happy to see us coming to support her in this time of need, well we are her colleagues after all we had to support her. Sol came too, as the boss of course who deeply cares about his workers, hahaha right. And after that little incident in his office he has stepped back in my life, and I'm not happy about it he is planning something massive for me, fuck let me not think about his sick plans for now.

Zama gets inside the room panting, and fanning her face if I didn't know better I would've said that someone is chasing her, but nope she is such a drama Queen I'm sure this is her way of seeking attention.

“Jesus Zama. What is it?” Scarlet asks her looking her in the mirror as she is busy reapplying her make-up.

“The X-gang. The X-gang is here,” she's speaking so fast busy fanning her face. I see the others standing on their feet hurrying toward the mirror's to fix themselves.

Alicia: “Are you sure about what you are saying? I mean, wait, you mean the X-gang is here in this very same club?” She nods. “Wawu, it's been a minute. Ladies let's get to work time to impress,” she orders the others, and I ignore her, and continue damaging my lungs with this almost finished cigarette in my hand. I wonder who are these X-gang that make these ladies tatazela this much. Heck, they are even trembling! “Diamond, why are you standing there, and not fixing yourself?” The attitude in her voice irks me.

Me: “Fix myself for what? I'm fine this way.”

Her: “No you are not! Your face is oily, you need to look presentable in front of The X-gang they are very important people tonight in this club,” she huffs.

Me: “Do I look like I give a shit about their fucking presence in this club? Do you see me trembling in fear, and running like a

maniac across the room? No. This should tell you that I don't give a fuck about them. Who the fuck are they anyway?" She groans in frustration.

Her: "This is no time to be stupid Diamond, The X-gang practically runs this place."

Me: "Where the hell were they all these past weeks? Vumbukiyani out of the blue, now we are expected to run like we are crazy? No one will make me run as if my crazy, rubbish," she shakes her head in defeat.

Tsepang: "You will never win with that one just let her be. She is a hard nut to crack."

Alicia: "Her face is the one I have a problem with," she looks at me.

Me: "How is my face any of your business? Uyaphapha wena swine," I throw the finished cigarette her way spitting on the

floor, and she ducks it. Nxa. I throw in some bubblegum for fresh breath, and lotion my hands.

Aranele: "Bloody hood rat," she rolls her eyes inwardly.

Me: "This time around I will not just strangle you I will snap your neck, tsek," ai these girls are exhausting.

Zama: "The X-gang won't tolerate this kind of shit."

Me: "I don't give a fuck because they did not hire me, thank you. Next," nxa. The door opens, and Sol steps inside together with William, the ladies stand in formation.

"The X-gang is here, and you know what this means right?"
They nod, well I don't.

Me: "I don't know what it means," he shoots me a stare.

Him: "Didn't the girls fill you in?" I shake my head. "They should've filled you in. Well, this means that you must go all out, and if they ask to be with you for the night don't deny, agree to everything they ask you to do if is sex that they want give it to them," he shoots me a stare, argh. "Let's remind them what they have been missing on whatever brought them back here, we have to make sure that they stay, and never leave we must maintain the standard."

Me: "All this shit because of some gang?" There goes me & my big mouth again, yipiii. Let me just close my mouth it will stay safer this way before I say something I might regret, and possibly land me a clap or two if not a punch.

Zama: "Do you always have to run your mouth the way you see fit?" I can tell that she is annoyed, but I can't help it, this is who I am.

Me: "Ar...", I cover my mouth with my hand before I say something I might not regret.

Her: “How I wish that you could stay like that forever!” I laugh, my hand is still covering my mouth.

Sol: “Go, and make me proud. Diamond try to behave just this once don't mess things up,” he turns on his heels, and walk out banging the door behind him.

“Trash, I mummer, and take my mask on top of the dressing table, and put it on then walk out following the other girls. We get to the floor, and men wearing all black are sitting in a straight line the others are behind them, I guess this is the X-gang my eyes scans all 8 of them, and my gaze stops at this particular one he looks familiar. Oh yes, my saviour. It's a good thing that he is not focusing here even if he was he wouldn't even know that I'm the girl he once saved at the chisanyama, I don't even think he remembers that day. Ayt, let's get to work. The music comes on, and we start rocking the poles whatever happens I hope they don't choose me because wawuza, these men here look dangerous, and rough too... I check out their dick prints, thanks God they are not seeing that I'm checking out their dicks, and boy I don't like them.

★»★«

TSAKANI

I see them all, but her. My focus is solely on her, and none of the other girls she is dancing with there's something that draws me to her, a part of me feels like I know her, but the other part is disputing that. My dick throbs as she works the pole, I'm taking her home, and I'm going to fuck her. I know what I said to the gents, but my dick wants her, and if my dick wants her, I must have her it's that simple.

"I'm taking her home," I whisper in Malik's ear, he turns to look at me, and shake his head.

Him: "But I thought you said you're not going to take any ass home," he chuckles.

Me: "My dick wants her man," he laughs.

Him: "But Zama is eyeing you man."

Me: "I don't want her I really don't, tell MaThousand to call Sol for me," he nods.

In splits seconds Sol is hovering over my head. "I'm taking her home," I point at the girl that I want.

Him: "Let me get her for you," he nods, and gets to the stage, and he is having a brief conversation with the girl, I see her stealing glances at me, and nodding. Sol, gives me a thumbs up. My crew laughs.

"Ipipi umkhohlisi njayami," (dick is a deceiver) he then laughs. "Mara mngene boy, yelakho lekhekhe," he spans my ass as I pass him, then laugh. Such fools. I get outside, and I find the girl already waiting for me with a cigarette in her hand, she smokes too? Damn I'm turned on. I squeeze her waist when I get to her...

"I'm going to take you home, to my bed, and I'm going to fuck you hard. I'm going to fuck you until you scream out my name. Not cry. Not moan. Scream. And that mask must go," hissing in her ear.

LUXOLO

The drive to where we are going is rather long yazi. I only agreed to go with him because I needed some air, I needed to be out of the club, and away to the exhaustion (colleagues) of mine. His hand is neatly placed on my thigh, yena shame he ain't bad looking, and he looks like a newspaper with all these tattoos covering his arms. Look at me studying his features, well, at least there's no band mark in his left finger, the watch he has on is very ugly for someone his status.

“Do you love yourself this way? I mean, you look like a flipping wrinkled newspaper,” these words fly out of my mouth before I can even hold them back. I bite my tongue as he gives me a stare. “You look lovely with them though, they really suit you man,” moving my hand up & down his arm. “About you looking like a newspaper I was joking, I must agree, it was a very bad joke indeed,” he doesn't even look at me his focused is on the road. Rubbish. I fiddle with the car radio, and he slaps my hand, “Hhayi wena swine wenzani?” He bluntly ignores me.

We park outside this huge house gate as the gate opens by itself, the technology madoda. So, this gate has sensing abilities how cute, but will it sense me? We shall see. He parks at the garage, and steps out of the car coming to my side, he opens the door for me, and I just look at him.

“This is me telling you to step out of the car,” he tells me still holding the door handle.

“Just close the door I will open it myself, and step out of this car in my own accord so please nje don't start with me,” he looks at me, and before I can even react he already have me in his arms marching with me inside the house, he puts me on top of the kitchen counter, and get in between my legs. I'm practically trapped because his hands are on both sides, he looks at me straight in the eyes, and not say anything.

“Why are you looking at me like that? Aren't we here so that you can fuck me, and make me scream and not moan?” I return the stare back, but I don't want to lie his look is scaring me.

“Anyway, I'm not here to be fucked, and screaming I'm here to sleep,” He laughs shaking his head. “You do know that I'm a stripper right, and not a prostitute?” He shrugs.

“I don't give a fuck about what you are, or what you do. I only want your pussy that's it. Now, be a good girl and untie your coat for me,” he tells me looking at me straight in the eyes. “Don't let me tell you twice.”

Me: “Aren't we supposed to go the bedroom first?”

Him: “No. I will take your pussy at any place I want to. Start stripping,” I shake my head. His hand moves from his waist, and he comes back with a gun he takes a step back then forward, and points the gun right straight into my pussy, I can actually feel it. I swallow at absolutely nothing, he circles it around my pussy, then he breathes down my neck making my nipples to react instantly. Shit! He tears my jacket apart, and my boobs come into full view being a size 38A is a mission sometimes, and it seems as if like my plan will fail I can't go ahead with it whilst here in the kitchen, it's dangerous.

He cups my heavy breasts, squeezing them and pinching my already hard nipples, twisting them slightly between his thumb and forefinger. I shiver from his touch. He twists my nipples a little more and then pull on them, causing me to tremble and

then blow out a breath as my head tilt back, eyes closed, mouth going slack earning himself a moan from me. Plus it's been long since I last had sex... He rubs his nose with mine as he continues caressing by breasts, he growls, and he moves his left hand down my pussy, and his finger slides between my wet pussy lips shifting my string to the side, at the same time his thumb locating my engorged clit. I gasp in pleasure as he gently works over my pussy. His finger sliding in and out of my pussy. Well, he better not go down on me because I haven't been shaving for the past 2 weeks. But it's not that bushy.

“Stop, please...,” the words come out in short bursts, he doesn't listen to me he inserts another finger, and finger fucks me faster causing me to moan, and rocking my hips to his fingers rhythm, shit. My hands run down his back, and I lift his T-shirt above his head, and he is half naked hhayi maarn he has tattoos everywhere. His fingers are not doing any justice for me, my nails dig his skin and his pace increases, I can feel him parting his 2 fingers inside my pussy. “Yesss, that feels so good! So good, don't stop, faster... Faster..., Oh fuck! I'm cumming!” My legs shake, and I dig my nails digger, and my boobs are slapping his face. I arch my back, and go limb on the kitchen counter then bury my head in his neck, his fingers are still inside my pussy. Pssst, this was not the plan.

He puts me on top of the bed, wuuhhh we are taking the party to the bedroom exactly where I want him. He gets on top of me, and starts kissing me at the same time dry humping me he is left in his briefs now, I'm not saying that I'm tight or anything like that, but his dick will rebreak me again, and the plan is not to sleep with him. No penetration allowed, but with the way things are going I might give in to the temptation. So far his fingers, and mouth are good with their roles. I wrap my legs around his waist, and yet again I'm horny... I'm moaning here, and there. He stops kissing me, and looks at me straight in the eyes as he continues dry humping me, I'm lost in his eyes. His dreadlocks are dangling on the sides, his scar is not that bad now that I'm studying his features.

“Can we...,” he shuts me up with a kiss, and I see his hand moving, and in one pull he has my mask in his hand. He stops humping me, and his expression changes.

“What the actual fuck? Dammit maarn!” Okay, he's mad. But at who & why? It's now or never, I move my hand on my locks and take out the small injection that was hidden inside my locks, I inject his neck. “What the...,” he doesn't even finish his

sentence when he's eyes starts shutting down slowly he is trying to stay awake, but he is failing. And that's how fast "barbiturate" knock one off. He better wake up slowly once he wakes up, not in a hurry because he will go on full body convulsion. He slurps on top of me, I push him off, and lie him on the other side. Second plan in motion, Sol better come through for me even if he gives me 2 weeks I'll be fine. You know, lately I feel like there are people watching me it's creepy, and scary at the same time.

On my way out I pick up my jacket on the floor, and cover my body with it. The wall is a little high for me, shit. I have to be out of here within 5 hours that's how long the injection will knock him off. I walk around the yard, and there's no way out; it's either I jump the wall or stay here until he wakes up, and kill me. Shit! I look at the wall shaking my head, fuck this I'm doing it. I throw my heels outside the yard, and start climbing the wall in 2 minutes I'm out of the yard, and running to the direction we came with, with my heels in my hands, damn, I enjoyed every minute spent with him though. But some things are never meant to be...

★»★«

VUYO

I'm woken up by Cindy sniffing she has been at it for the past couple of hours now making it hard for me to sleep, we are sharing a room since her parents have come to visit, but I'm sleeping on the floor. I sit upright

and rub my eyes, from where I'm sitting I can see her, she is giving me her back.

“What's wrong? You've been crying since last night,” she continues sniffing. “If you don't want to tell me what's wrong then cry silently because you're disturbing my sleep I have to be up in exactly an hour, and 30 minutes from now,” I lie back down since I don't get any response from her. Cindy is going through a lot, and her shutting me out is not helping at all. I know that things are not good between us, but she must communicate with me, and again I can't really force her to tell me what's wrong with her if she doesn't want too, sighs. The time is exactly 04:45am. I get up from the floor, and fold my blankets then put them on top of the dressing table.

An hour later I'm out of house, and I'm driving to Vixen club I need to blow off some steam. I need my nut bursted before I lose it, masturbation ain't doing it for me any more. Vixen club never closes it operates 24/7 with shifts changing. I make my way inside the club, and walk straight to the bar area, Adelaide is busy wiping tables guess she is knocking off. I settle down, and she looks at me.

“It's not 07:00am yet, and you already look like a dead zombie. Need some coffee?” I laugh.

“Coffee? No. I need something strong, and some pussy I need to offload,” I look around the club, and there are only few people present here.

Her: “Ain't the wife giving it to you?”

Me: “We last had sex many moons ago, she doesn't want to have sex with me. What kind of a wife is she that denies her husband sex? We are not in good talking terms yes, but I'm sure sex was going to help us,” she laughs pushing the glass of whiskey toward me, I can't help it, but notice her cleavage, and

I get turned on instantly imagining her slapping me with them. Damn. She clears her throat dragging me out my fantasizing session about her.

Her: "Don't wish for these," showing me her boobs, she has actually taken them out of her bra, they're so full as if she has milk stored in them. "Because you will die young boy, and they already have an owner," she puts them back in her bra.

"Someone is waiting for you on room 12. Go, and release some babies and remember to use a condom," winking. I give her a nod then gulp down the whiskey, and make my way to the room. Stepping in I find a girl not older than 18 on the bed naked waiting for me, her pussy is on full display. As much as I am horny I don't see myself fucking her, she's young and I'm 34 years old! I will really tear her tiny pussy apart, shaking my head. Adel is just not fair, why is she prostituting these young girls?

"What are you waiting for daddy? Come & take me, I'm yours all yours," she says playing with her pussy.

Me: "Cover yourself up at this instant," she just stares at me. "I said cover yourself up, dammit maarn!" She quickly takes the

sheet, and cover herself with it. Oh, shit. Almost forgot that there are cameras in these rooms. I take off my clothes, and join her in bed I'm not going to do anything to her, she looks terrified. "Why are you doing this?" Covering ourselves with the blankets.

Her: "I... I need the money," her voice is breaking.

Me: "Money for what? Why don't you go to school, and strive to live a better life?" She shakes her head.

Her: "I can't. My Mom will kill me Sir, and we really need the money."

Me: "Why would your mother kill you? For wanting to go to school?" She nods. "What? Why?"

Her: "She says that school is not important, school won't feed us, and it won't buy her alcohol it's all just a waste of time."

Me: "Wait, wait. You trying to tell me that your mother is the one forcing you to do this job?" She nods tears already running down her cheeks. "What an evil woman she is. Have you tried reporting her?"

Her: "It always ends with me being punished."

Me: "What is your father saying about all of this?"

Her: "I don't have one. He passed away last year," shrugging.

Me: "I see. Apart from your mother; who else are you staying with?"

Her: "My little brother."

Me: "Hmmm. You will have to leave this job before you get hurt, or getting introduced to the other dark side of this business. Sex starved men are rough, imagine a man coming to you frustrated by whatever frustrated him comes, and take out his frustrations on you? You will get hurt because he will be

fucking you with the aim of relieving his frustrations. You're still young, you have a bright future ahead of you leave this life while you still can because once you are in too deep there's no coming out.”

Her: “Even if I do want to leave this job, where will I go? What about my little brother? What will become of him because Mom sometimes bring her drinking buddies to the house?”
Shaking her head.

Me: “Don't worry yourself about that I will think of a plan, just give me your numbers, and I will sort everything out. I will take you out of this dangerous, and filthy world you deserve better,” she nods. I pick up my pants from the floor, and give her some cash. “This will do until I take you out of this place, don't tell anyone about this, and behave normal don't change anything we don't want them suspecting anything.”

Her: “Thank you so much Sir, but why are you doing this for me? I mean, you don't even know me.”

Me: "Because when I look at you, I see a child who needs some love, and you look so bright. Those very men you sleep with everyday in exchange for money, their children are at school, and very well taken care off you also deserve that," I need to take her out of here before its too late. Or before Adele introduces her to the dark side of this business. A lot of girls died because of it.

★»★«

TSAKANI

I can still feel the stinging sensation on my neck, and these ice blocks aren't helping. I don't know what kind of a drug is it that the girl used to inject me, but all I can say is that shit did knock me out because I didn't hear the gents knocking, when I opened my eyes they were already surrounding my bed, and the first question they asked was; "Did you hit it?" Hahaha, I couldn't answer them because I was still out of it, I don't even know why did she inject me. I don't want to lie, I was really shocked when I saw her face after taking out the mask, it was the girl I've been looking for, for months. When I saw her, everything stopped moving for a few seconds I never thought

that our second encounter was going to turn out the way it did, with her in my bed, but no lies I was still going to hit it just to satisfy my dick cravings, then kick her out so early in the morning. And bitch did me bad unexpectedly, this was the first time in history me bringing a girl home, and not hit it, I'm shocked honestly. Guess there's always a first time for everything, this was the first for me, and most definitely the last time. Nxa, I did not even get to make her scream, but one day is one day. She is one bad bitch with some balls to do what she did, she's very brave I must applaud her. I find myself laughing alone, yah ne life.

“Thinking about her even though you didn't hit it?” Leon asks me this question then laughs.

“Fuck man!” The others laugh.

Spikiri: “Hhayi ngilele ngawe bruh wami,” (I'm disappointed in you bruh)

Me: “Ngiyacava nginilalisile, mara malanga mangaki ngizopopa. Izovuka ingwenya,” (I know I've disappointed you guys, but one day I will get her, I will rise again)

Leon: “Did you at least get to see her face?” I chuckle.

Me: “I did, and you won't believe who it was.”

Malik: “Uzos'jutha manjer,” (he will lie to us now) I laugh.

Me: “Nah Majita I won't.”

Leon: “Who was it then?”

Me: “My investigation. Do you guys remember the girl I was searching for all those months?” They nod. “It was her.”

Malik: “No way man! Damn, what a second encounter you guys had,” he laughs.

Fence: "I don't trust him."

Leon: "I do trust him, but we want proof."

Star: "I'm still caught up on the fact that she is a stripper, Lee loves strippers; how come he didn't check her out?"

Me: "He didn't know that she is a stripper, even if he did check in all these strip clubs how was he going to know that she's the girl I was looking for? She covers her face with a mask wena sdwedwe," he shrugs.

"Look at what I found inside the car," Lee tells us stepping inside the house he has a cell phone in his hand. He gives it to me, and it's bad bitch's phone I laugh. "Now that you've found her, what then?"

Me: "Nothing."

Him: "So, I was researching for nothing?" He sounds disappointed.

Me: "No man you weren't, I will tell you as times goes by."

Leon: "Is it safe to say that you've finally met a female version of you?" I look at him, and give him a faint smile.

Me: "Nah."

Lee: "You got your match, and good luck with winning her, and getting her back in your bed again," he laughs.

Malik: "Are we going back there tonight?"

Me: "No. We go to the usual I have a feeling that she will not go to work tonight," I look at her picture one last time, and slip the phone in my pocket. Let the games begin wena bad bitch...

11

★Insert 11★

{SHORT}

CINDY

I walk into the kitchen, and I find my mother busy preparing breakfast, I greet her, and settle down. I have a very splitting headache I guess that's what crying thw whole night does to you. My mother looks at me, and I shrug.

“What's wrong? You don't look okay my child.”

“I'm fine Mama. There's nothing wrong with me.”

Her: “Don't make me a fool Cindy. Nothing is good in this house! Don't you think I've noticed how you & Vuyo were acting like toward each other last night at the dinner table? You

hardly exchanged words, and your Father noticed the tension between the 2 of you,” I sigh.

Me: “It was one of those days Ma we had a fall out in the afternoon,” defending myself.

Her: “Stop lying. Is he having an affair?” I shake my head. “Then what is it?” What is it vele? Nothing. Yazi I'm busy stressing myself & shutting Vuyo out because of the threat that, that man made months back. I think he was trying to scare me, and he succeeded shame. And by the look of things he hasn't told Vuyo anything, so I was just stressing myself unnecessarily.

You see if Vuyo knew about my infidelity, he would've long confronted me about it. Or worse divorced me, I'm such a fool maarn. I've been dying inside for rubbish, and I've almost lost my husband for a fuck boy like Sanele who still finds pleasure in enjoying new pussy, but I don't want to lie; what he said really hurt me, it really did. That young boy is useless honestly, he really showed me flames yhey. No more young men, in fact no more dating outside my marriage for me it's all useless, and a complete waste of time, nothing good comes out of it.

“Cindy!” I shake away my thoughts full of regrets as my mother screams my name. “And?”

Me: “What was the question again?”

Her: “Is Vuyo cheating on you?”

Me: “No Mama, he is not cheating on me.”

Her: “Don't defend him, men cheat Cindy it's in their genes.”

Me: “Don't tell me that Dad is cheating on you Mom!” Banging the table. She shakes her head.

Her: “He's not cheating on me I was just saying. Your Father will never cheat on me Cindy.”

Me: “But he did once, and left a seed in that woman's womb.”

Her: “Yhey, that woman was never pregnant, and it were only rumours, rumours that were never proven, so please Cindy,” clicking tongue.

Me: “Yet, your husband still get nightmares. Still, your husband is haunted by his past, and you still believe that dad doesn't have any child outside besides us?”

Her: “Shut up Cindy!” Banging the table. “You don't know what you're talking about, you don't know anything about your Father's past! Stop talking about things you have no idea of!” Clicking tongue, and she walks away leaving me with my mouth hang opened, wawu. I shrug getting down from the chair, and continue with preparing breakfast. This is always her reaction when I bring up the “abandoned child” topic, but she never went off like she did right now, today she did which means she is really pissed off no lies about it. It was going to be better if all the prophets, sangomas, and pastors we went too never said the same thing about the abandoned child, maybe, just maybe I would've believed them (my parents) when they say dad doesn't have any child outside. Things are not going very well for him, kuyanyiwa in all angles of his life I think his ancestors are angry at him, not so long ago he lost his job he was a truck driver. Kubi...

Ai, they can wait though. Tonight I need to fix things with Vuyo, I need to fix my marriage hopefully Vuyo will give me a chance to redeem myself again, and be the wife I always was before getting tempted into sin of dating young boys. But in order for me to fix things I have to sort myself out first, and my parents must be gone when I do. And bad friends must go.

I get done preparing breakfast, and dish up for the 3 of us I take my plate, and go and sit in the lounge, and turn on the TV. Mom joins me without saying any word to me, I wonder where dad went because as far as I know he doesn't know anyone around here, and I won't ask my mother because she will spew absolute nonsense for no apparent reason, Sighs.

★»★«

LUXOLO (LUX)

I make my way inside Sol's club pulling a hoodie over my head, wearing baggy pants, and my slow walk with parted legs is top notch. I chuckle as I pass the half drunk people, it's not even

15:00pm yet, but some are already dead drunk and they've passed out on the tables, I used to deal with this shit too, cleaning their alcohol smelling vomit until I got promoted to my not so exciting job. Yhey, sike sahlukunyezwa sibancane. Life. So, when I got home in the early hours of the morning, oh yes. I got a lift from a very good Samaritan yhey I acted like a damsel in distress claiming that an ungrateful customer dumped me here after having his way with me, and didn't pay me after. Shame, lovely woman was kind enough to drop me off in my hood, but the judgment in her eyes spoke volumes argh, whatevs. Fact is, I got home safe after risking with my life like that... As I was saying, when I got home I searched for my phone, and it was nowhere to be found I even searched in my pussy, but still nothing and when it finally dawned on me that I left it at that wrinkled paper man's house my clit throbbed, and nipples hardened, joking I felt like dying, or fainting? Yeah, anything that involved closing eyes, I don't even know how I am going to get it back. Hmmm, I did mess up, but I'm not a prostitute mus I was protecting myself, and the way he was shocked when he saw me Haibo, it conveyed a lot of unspoken words, I wonder what were they.

“Come in,” Sol's shout from the inside after knocking. I open the door

and luckily for me he is alone. I get in, and sit down without waiting for him order me too, I put my hand on top of the table, and balance my face on top of it, and start groaning. “Hey, hey what's wrong Diamond?”

“The man you gave me last night. He... He fucked me all night without stopping and he was rough. I tried telling him to take it slow, but he didn't want to hear it, he had sex stamina for days I couldn't keep up. You know Sol. I'm a stripper not a prostitute, so he had to be gentle with me, and not fuck me like I'm a prostitute.”

He: “I'm sorry that you had to go through all that, but look on the bright side; You are still able to walk even though your walk is a little throw off, but you keeping it steady. Look, the plan was for him to fuck you gentle, and he didn't. He clearly likes you hence he fucked you like his life depended on it. In fact you should be glad that he chose you out of all the strippers, they were all hoping to be chosen by him, but he chose you instead.” Ai, this man.

Me: "You're not hearing me Sol. I'm saying that he teared all 2 of my holes he was big! My pussy couldn't take him all in, he forced himself on me."

Him: "A pussy stretches Diamond, it accommodates any dick sizes, but he had no right to tear both your holes. Let's leave the issue that he fucked you roughly, a warm bath with soothing salt can help with that. Will you be able tow work tonight?" Hhayi! Didn't this man heard all that I said mara? All he cares about is me bringing his club money? And not about my health? Or state of mind? Wawu! "I'm asking because I want to tell him to be gentle with you this time around if he comes again tonight, and ask to take you again." I chuckle, he can't be serious.

Me: "I won't be able to work Sol, I've even forced myself to come here, my pussy is flaming Sol I will not be able to work the Poles tonight."

Him: "But business must go on Diamond. I work with money, this is not a play ground!"

Me: "I know. And the last time I checked, I'm still a stripper not a prostitute, I only did you a favour last night by agreeing to leave with that man, you begged me wena njandini! I didn't come to you, you came to me Sol. And I'm telling you that I will not be able to work tonight, I need a week off I've been working my ass off here without a break, I don't know how many times the others rested for a week if not 2, what about me?"

Him: "That's because you're bringing in money for us Diamond! I can't give you any off weeks, do you know how much I will lose that week because of you not being there? Those men come here because of you Diamond, and for as long as you work for me you will not get any off weeks. You will work until you die I don't care!" Banging the table making me to jump a little.

Me: "You're right! I bring in money because I am a stripper not a prostitute! Stop abusing your powers Sol, and you most definitely don't own me! Let me do my job as a stripper, and not be a prostitute on the side Sol that's fucking exploitation! That's not what we agreed on when I signed the damn fucking contract!" Sol is really testing my patience you guys.

Him: "A contract? Don't tell me about that fucking useless piece of paper! That shit doesn't work in my world of business!" I laugh.

Me: "It is indeed a piece of paper, and which means that I can also take a night off without telling you, that contract clearly doesn't work it was for the show, and in my line of work that shit doesn't work for me too!" He growls getting up from his chair.

Him: "Don't test me Diamond! Don't you dare fucking test me! I'm the one who pay you!"

Me: "And I'm the one who brings in that very same money you pay me with! This club is running because of me Sol, I'm the rubber that holds this fucking club together! Without me its nothing!" What I thought was going to turn to out to be a good agreement about me taking a day or 2 off between an employee & employer is turning into a royal rumble, Sol is fucking with me honestly, enhlek I need a smoke.

Him: "You are still a child Diamond, you don't know how this world works. This is a man's world Diamond, we rule this world. We take things into our own hands in this men's world, don't

fight me because you won't win little girl, and stop defying me, and going against my rules,” I laugh.

Me: “That shit will change very soon Sol. Tables will turn, new era is coming be on the look out, and thread carefully. I may be young, but you don't know what is buried deep within me. And I will not allow you to bully me just because you think that you're superior than me, that doesn't make you any better than me. Look, you need me because I bring you money, as for me I don't need you because I ain't gaining shit from you!” He looks at me defeated, nah man. These men have been in power for far too long, they think that they are superior & untouchable, it's a men's world they always say, always side lining us because they think that we are weak, we have no backbones, and our place is in the kitchen, and popping out babies. But things are about to change, the women cartel will be known. We will hold power, but first I need to do some research, and I have a lot of training to do before I rise the female Mafias cartel. Now, the biggest questions are where will I start? Who will help me? And where will find loyal ones? I mean, loyalty is everything in this so-called men's world of theirs.

Him: “Stop fooling yourself Diamond. Men will forever rule this world, this is our world not yours.”

Me: “Yet, God created a woman first before creating a man. Do you know what that means?”

Him: "I don't read book of lies. You know what, I like how feisty you are Diamond, and how you can stand up for yourself better than most men I know. But females will never rule, you can take 3 days off it's okay. And who knows?" Shrugging. "Maybe your line of duty will change for a better when you come back. Now leave," I just stare at him.

Me: "So, every time I want something I must exchange rough words with you first, and it is only then you can grant me a go ahead?"

Him: "Seems like it. Leave," I get up from my chair as he sits back down whistling smiling as if nothing happened, he is weird. I make my out, and I bump into Zama right at Sol's office door step about to knock, she is wearing a very short dress guess she has come to satisfy her boss sexual pleasures. I laugh, and pass her without saying anything. She is going to ask herself what I was doing in Sol's office, oh well life.

I get outside, and head to the taxi rank it's not that far from Sol's.

★Insert 12★

TSAKANI

What kind of a girl is she that doesn't have a password/pattern in her phone? Because as far I know every woman I've been with, and still going to be with their phones have patterns, even my mother has a pattern in her phone. Oh, well. Browsing her phone I see nothing interesting all I see are pictures of her, and some woman whom I assume is her mother judging by the strong resemblance I'm seeing between the two of them. I know that it's invasion of privacy going through someone's phone without their permission, but hey curiosity kills. I don't know about it killing a cat though. So, why not satisfy my curiosity? WhatsApp, nothing. All chats are cleared, and it seems like she also doesn't have messenger, and her Facebook is dry, she never posts, ever. Her friends are less than 100, she's weird no doubt about that. I toss her phone to the side, and make myself some protein shake I really need it.

A knock comes through at the door, I wonder who is it. Why can't people stay in their houses, and do some excersises, or feed themselves with food than to disturb me, and my peace? I

yank it open, and there's a thud on the wooden floor, yeah my kitchen's floor is wood bahlali. I look down, and its Spikiri he looks really messed up, I pull him inside, and check the coast if he was not being followed.

“What happened man? Who did this to you?” I open the cupboard, and take out the first aid kit box and crouch before him. He coughs clenching his chest, and he spews blood his eye is black/purple, and his lower lip is cut.

“Ar... Armor's men... They...,” coughs. “Did this.”

Me: “Why? And where were you?”

Him: “They were questioning me, about Armor's cars,” Fuck!

Me: “What did you tell them?”

Him: “Nothing. They... They were hoping that I will talk after all that torture they've put me through, I didn't tell them anything,” he laughs closing his eyes, he is definitely in pains. “I

would never sell out the gang, I'd rather die than to sell you guys.”

Me: “Relax chanas, we will find them. Bazodla igazi labo,” (they will eat their blood). I finish cleaning his wounds then give him sleeping pills, and settle him on the couch. “Rest njayami, ngizoyiqondisa mina,” he nods, and closes his eyes. I get up, and walk back to the kitchen I need to gather the gents, and deal with this. But then, if we deal with this they will now be sure we the ones who took the cars, and of which we did of course, Akere they're still speculating they are not sure. What I need to do is to approach Armor straight, he must know that I never send my men to do my job on my behalf, I attack you straight on. It seems like he has forgotten about me, its time I reminded them who am I.

I'm about to walk out of the kitchen when an unusual ringtone comes on, damn bad bitch be listening to some bone thug too? She is a bad ass, I'm sold. I watch it ring, and it's a private number. Whoever was calling decides to hang up, and it rings again. I answer it, and put it on my ear and not say anything.

“Listen here you slut. I know that you can hear me. Now that you get to sleep with TK you think that you are all that & more? Bitch you're nothing. TK, will never go for ghetto bitches like you, he will never go for unruly, gangster wanna be girls like you. He goes for ladies with class, like us. The muti that you are using to lure these men will expire, and you will go back to what you used to be before your voodoo shit. And stop trying to put your claws on Sol's back, he ain't yours, he ain't your friend, and he never will be. You better be careful Lux, we are watching you, outchea acting all brave, you don't even know that you are making yourself enemies everywhere, ngithi mina sisi sikubhekile sibanengi ned one minor mistake, and you're gone! No one will ever miss you, and if I was you- I would never close my eyes when I sleep because we are everywhere. You've been warned you slut!” She hangs up. Wawu, what a threat that was. But that Lux sure has a big mouth, she talks a lot.

Wawu! The girls amantombazana you guys are a strange bunch, hhayi. What did the poor girl do now? And what's wrong with her sleeping with me? Laughing, no. Girls, hhayi maarn. Why the hate toward each other? You need to be united and be one, but no, instead you're fighting amongst each, you fighting for men who don't see your value, men who disrespect you every now &, then. You choose to make another woman suffer

because of a man who doesn't lose sleep because of you? Nah man, you ladies can do better than that. Try fixing each others crowns, and building each other instead bringing each other down, attack the man not the other woman unless otherwise.

I look at the blank screen, and shake my head. A warning has been sent to Lux, and Lux doesn't have any idea that a warning has been sent out to her, it didn't reach her ears, and now I have to play the hero and protect her from a distance, and without her knowing. Sighs. This is some messed up shit, and I must find out who are her enemies, yah neh. But the person who just called now is definitely working with her, and jealous of her. I slip the phone inside my pocket, and walk to my bedroom. I need to visit Armor. He needs to shake in my presence, I take out my phone, and send Lee a message.

“Keep an eye on Lux for me. They want her dead, and don't ask who, just make sure that she's safe at all times.”

I know that Lux can handle things herself, I saw her at the chesanyama handling those boys, but right about now she doesn't know that she's been threatened. I must also find out

who called her, and return the threat, unlike them I don't do idle threats I live up to my threats, I enjoy seeing blood.

★»★«

LUXOLO

I get to my pozi, and throw myself on top of the bed, and heave out a sigh. Where to from here? I know that Sol is keeping an eye on me, he wants to make sure that I don't run away or something, as if I will dare him, ai. Oh, I've also called in sick at my daytime workplace and told them that I will not be coming to work for the next three days, a Dr has given me an order to rest because I have fatigue, I diagnosed myself anyway, and I'm fatigued indeed. Yazi, I still don't understand why is Sol behaving the way he does towards me, yet he never behaves like that to the other workers he sure knows how to push my buttons, and for him to allow me to talk to him anyway I want with him is freaking me out, I know him as someone who never allows someone to challenge him, you challenge him you die few days later, and weeks later if you are lucky, well that's how much I've gathered on my research has gotten me with Sol. He has no family of his own, his parents abandoned him when he

was only 3 years old, and a good Samaritan took him to an orphanage. Growing up he was known as the quiet person, now I don't know what changed, but I'm still searching about him I need to know who exactly am I working for, and for the fact that he is a loneman, he has no men working for him is what puzzles me more. Dangerous man like him have people working for them, they just sit behind the desk, and give out orders. But with him is different, I low key want to be like him when I'm finally where I want to be. Be in charge, and take people straight on.

I roll off bed, and on to the floor I stretch my hand and take out the box that's under the bed it holds my, and my mother's very important documents. I sit down on the bed, and blow the dust that has found a home on top of it, I need to do some spring cleaning here when I get time. Let's see what we have here, I twist it open, and the first thing I see is the shandis that Bella gave me, shit. I've completely forgotten about it, I work my hand on top of gun, and pick it up, it's quite heavy, but the way these gangsters carry it around it looks like its light in ones hand

but nah. Feeling its rough texture does something to me, hahaha, not sexually, but any other feeling that's out there. I put it aside, and open the envelope, hmm. Ammunition! Then

diamonds, I pick the little black bag, and untie it, I take a peep, and wawu there are too many of them. I quickly tie back the bag, and put it back on the box, sighs. I wonder how much one diamond cost.

My eyes grow large, and my mouth hangs open as I see how much one diamond cost, bruh its millions! Why did I not think of selling 2 of them when I still had time? It's not as if like they would've notice that they're gone, in fact they belong to me now since I don't know where Bella is! She must be dead by now, RIP. I would be somewhere abroad drinking champagne, and eating prawns with my mother giving her the best time of her life, and memories to remember with the money I would've gotten from selling 2 of these diamonds, but now look at me. I'm stuck in working as a stripper, a whole millionaire is a stripper nina bahlali in a club that I can buy with half of the money hahaha, but that will change. Soon. I need to sell 2 online, then I will take the money, hide it somewhere safe just incase the real owners of these things starts digging, phela they can't leave this issue lying down. There's a lot I will do with the money honestly, in fact I have a few things in mind already argh, they will not see me coming. They are not ready for me all of them... Speaking of my mother I need to go, and see her, and I'm leaving today let me search for nearby guest houses, shame

my bank balance never looked this good. Now, I can move out from here, and go stay in a place that have electricity, and clean running water.

★»★«

TSAKANI

He stops on his tracks when he sees me sitting comfortable in his chair with my legs settled very well in his table, drinking his expensive whiskey using his favourite glass, and a cigar in my other free hand, and my gun on top of the table right next to the photo frame of his mini family. Sweat is already forming on his wrinkled forehead.

“Bra... Bra TK. What a surprise,” he is trying to act tough, but the tone of his voice is stating otherwise. “What brings you here?” A bloody Russian Mafia afraid of a man like me, a black man. Instead of me being afraid of his presence it's the other way around. I don't fear all these foreign Mafias, and they know it that I don't even flinch in their presence, but I don't do business with any of them.

“You tell me,” taking a sip of his whiskey. “You can sit down,” he looks at me, and sits down shaking. “Drink?” He shakes his head. “Do you have anything to tell me?”

Him: “Like what Bra TK?” I tilt my head, and look at him through the glass.

Me: “Like why did you send your boys to attack my boy in that manner? Why do you like to make my dick throb unnecessary?” He swallows at absolute nothing.

Him: “I did not send anyone Bra TK. Why would I send my men to attack your boy?”

Me: “You tell me, and don't you dare say you don't know what I'm talking about.”

Him: “I'm telling you the truth Bra TK.”

Me: "Bullshit!" Banging the table. "Don't you dare piss me off!" Throwing the glass against the wall, and pick up my gun. "Why did you do it?"

Him: "I swear Bra TK, I didn't send them I would never send my men to attack yours. I know your works Bra TK, I didn't do it," he clasps his hands together, more like pleading with me. Hahaha, he sounds like these nyaope boys who asks for forgiveness when they double cross you, and you pointing them with a gun.

Me: "If not you? Then who did?" He shrugs, he looks sincere.

Him: "I don't know Bra TK," I nod.

Me: "Very well then," I fire a shot right next to where he is sitting he jumps up almost falling, I chuckle, and shake my head. "You better not be lying to me Armor," I take the photo frame, and look at it. "I believe you, I believe that you had nothing to do with my boy's attack," he nods.

Him: "I'm not lying Bra TK. I swear to you," I'm already on my feet.

Me: "I know," I walk around his side, and nigga peed on himself. Is'nyefu madoda. An old man peeing on himself, NC nc nc "Go, and change old man. Yerrr, you don't have brakes mto mdala," I laugh, and pat his shoulder as I walk out of his office. He didn't do it, I believe him. Then who did? Spikiri will tell me exactly who did this to him once healed.

★»★«

CINDY

I'm here at the mall to look for some very sexy lingerie to wear tonight, it's time I take control of my life and fixed my marriage. My parents left, well the reason is my mother obviously, and its good riddance to rubbish.

"This is the one chommie," Sasha says to me holding out a very beautiful one piece lingerie.

“It's beautiful friend no doubt's about that, but I want something that will cover my bums,” she huffs.

Her: “You might as well wear tights, and a sport bra Cindy. And trust me Vuyo will be turned off as soon as he lays his eyes on you,” I softly laugh.

Me: “He won't. He is an African man Sasha.”

Her: “So? You need to be sexy for him just this night Cindy, you haven't been intimate for months, and its been months without him seeing your body. Let him lust you, and give him that lap dance we've been talking about. Bring back that spark, and give him lots of sex men love sex Cindy. Claim your husband back, or you will lose him to these young girls; that's if you haven't lost him already, and that's a big If. So, what is it going to be? You claim your husband back, or you watch him slip away from your fingers?”

Me: "Claim him back babe, I need to claim my husband back chommie, let's do it," I look for the lingerie, and it's no longer there. "Sasha, where's that piece of lingerie?"

Her: "It was...," she stops talking when she sees that it's not there. "But it was here now now, someone must've took it."

Me: "That means we must look for another one," she shakes her head.

Her: "No. We want that one. Let's go around maybe we might see someone having it in their hands."

Me: "We're going to snatch it from them?" She rolls her eyes.

Her: "Obviously, duh. Remember that we saw it first which practically means it belongs to us," I nod. My eyes wander around until they land on this other girl, she has it in her hand, and she looks so I don't know. How is she going to afford it?

Me: "There it is chommie," I pull her with her hand, and we walk to where the girl is. I give a light slap at the back, and she turns and looks at me.

"Can I help you?"

"Yeah. You actually have something that doesn't belong to you," she tilts her head, and stares at me.

Her: "And that is?"

Sasha: "That one piece lingerie in your hand," the girl looks at it.

Her: "Oh, this? I found it lying around, and I took it."

Me: "We saw it first baby girl, it belongs to me. And how are you even going to afford it because you don't look like you can afford a burger?" She chuckles, and gives us her back as she continues browsing for underwear. "Can I have it back? Don't make me call the guards on you, and tell them that you are shop lifting," she laughs, and turns to look at us.

Her: "Go ahead, call them. Wait, niyangazi mina nina ma fong Kong? Like, niyangazi ukuthi ngingu bani? Ngiyayishaya impama mina bo girl, muntu no muntu akahlele ku lane yakhe masingasukelani," (do you know who I am you fakes? I mean, do you know who I am? I panel slap girls, everyone please stay

in your lanes) I blink, she's raw, but still the lingerie belongs to me.

Me: "I don't care who you are just give me the lingerie!" Half shouting her, and poking her chest. She chuckles, and a hard slap lands on my cheek, and my ear goes zwiiii. I touch my cheek not believing it, she slapped me? Tears prickle my eyes, I look at Sasha and she looks scared.

Her: "I dare you to follow me. I dare you to call the guards on me ngizonishaya nonke, zonke bonke zwap, in fact this boutique will close down with immediate effect. Nijwayelana amasimba nina, nijwayelana idodi bloody coconuts with your broken English, RHA! And for your information I can afford this, I can even buy you this boutique, tsek!" She clicks her tongue, and walks away leaving me with tears streaming down my face. Sasha pulls me into her embrace, such embarssment I've just been subjected too, phew wawu. I sit down in one of the chairs, I've been served.

13

LUXOLO

I'm finally in Mpumalanga, Engodini that's where my mother is said to be according to google map of course. I get myself checked in- in some finest bnb near where my mother is residing, Sol paid for all the expenses I guess is his way of making sure, that I don't escape him. Sighs, I need to refresh then go to the given address. I want to get there, and surprise them plus they don't know that I'm coming, I want to catch them on the act if they're mistreating my mother, yhey kuzonyiwa.

My palm is still painful from that slap I gave that girl back there at the mall, she deserved it though. Uyaphapha. I should've slapped her friend too, phela the lingerie was lying around carelessly, I loved it, and took it. So, I don't know where did they get the audacity, the brave to come at me like that. Argh... I know that I'm not dating or anything, but I bought that lingerie because I love it, anyway who said that you wear a lingerie only if you're dating? Hhayi nina. You sometimes need to spoil yourself, and look sexy for yourself not for a man who will tear it like its nothing, and besides since I'm a stripper it will

come in handy one day, and I will still buy more & more phela it's my money I'm using. I quickly freshen up, and wear something comfortable I've noticed a club nearby, I'll check it out later when I come back from visiting my mother.

The driver, yes Sol hired me a driver too, his name is Lee. But there was a first driver who was driving me, I don't know what happened to him because we were at the garage he said he needed to make a quick call, hawu jikijiki this Lee comes, and tells me that he will drive me because my driver suddenly started getting a runny tummy. I demanded that he must call him because I don't trust him, he called him, and he did assure me that he is not feeling well, but he trusts Lee to drive me. He highly recommends him, and that with him I'm safe. Hehe, you see I'm the most expensive stripper around, kahle kahle I'm important in that club. I'm the Ramaphosa of that club, hha!

Lee parks right outside this huge house, a house bigger than Muzi's house this house deserves to be somewhere in the suburbs, but it is located in the busy streets of the hood it doesn't help that it's a corner house. I step out of the car, and walk toward the gate, I make my way inside and around the house the butler is closed, but the door is slightly open, I knock

twice, and a girl close my age or few years older than me appears she is chewing a bubblegum.

“Hello. Can I help you?”

“Hello. I'm Luxolo, and I'm looking for my mother.”

Her: “Your mother here?”

Me: “Yes. A woman named Bavumile came to fetch her months ago,” she scoffs.

Her: “You mean the burden that's inside the house? I hope you're here to fetch her because we are tired of taking care of her. Our lives have stopped because of her,” rolling eyes. Did she just call my mother a burden? Hhe, let me compose myself before I cripple her. Or send her to any early grave amncane.

Me: “Can I see her?”

Her: "Sure," she unlocks the butler, and allows me in. "Right this way," she leads me to the lounge where my mother is. I find her watching TV, and she looks so much better. "I wish I can leave you with her alone, but I don't trust you, I might find all the furniture gone," she chuckles, and sits down. Hmm, if only she knew.

"Mama," she turns her head, and looks at me, the smile she is giving me, how I miss seeing it, she gets up from the couch, and attacks me with a hug.

Her: "Luxolo, my daughter. Is this really you?" She studies me.

Me: "In the flesh Ma. This is me."

Her: "You look so grown up I almost didn't recognize you," I laugh. At least the humor is still there. "Please sit down."

Me: Sitting down. "And you look so much better. Better than the last time I saw you."

Her: "I feel better my child. Lindiwe, can you please make us some tea?" She rolls her eyes.

Lindiwe: "I'm not a maid wena mama ndini," I chuckle, and shake my head.

Me: "Its fine Mama, I don't want to die young I still have a lot to do for you," Lindiwe shoots me a stare. "How are you holding up?"

Her: "Truly speaking, not good Nono."

Me: "Why? What's wrong?" I look at Lindiwe, and she is looking at us too.

Her: "Nevermind Nono, I'm just happy to see you."

Me: "I do mind Mama, I really do."

Her: "The medication is treating me good, but the treatment I'm getting in this place is not nice Nono. I'm being treated like a stranger, like I don't deserve to be taken care off," her voice is trailing, and she wipes the lone tear that's rolling down her cheek.

Lindiwe: "Stop lying wena. You're too old to be talking lies!"

Me: "Shut the fuck up. Weren't you the one calling her a burden few minutes ago?"

Her: "I...,"

Me: "Don't you start with me, don't you dare fucken start with me. You are the one who said my mother is a burden, and your lives have stopped because of her presence her. Are you denying that you said that?" She shakes her head when she notices how serious I am, and my tone is not doing any justice to her.

Her: "No... No. I was just...,"

Me: "You weren't saying anything. Mama, please go, and fetch your clothes we're leaving."

Lindiwe: "You can't leave with her without talking to my mother first, you can't."

Me: "This is my mother, you don't get to tell me shit when it comes to her. You don't, masingacabani plus we don't know each other."

Her: "What is my mother going to say when she learns that you've taken her sister without her permission?"

Me: "She will not say any shit, and she will be pleased to get rid of the burden just like you will be. Mama, get your bags we're leaving." I don't want to lose it in front of my mother, I don't want her seeing this bad side of me.

Mom: "Sh...,"

Me: “No. Get your bags Mama, or you enjoy being treated like a nobody?” She shakes her head. “Then get your bags,” she doesn't wait for me to tell her again, she is already marching away.

Lindiwe: “How dare you come here, and throw your weight around this house as if you own it? Do you think this is your shack where you live?” I give her a backhand slap, but not that hard just enough to make her yelp. “What the actual fuck!” She attempts to return, I step aside, and her hand comes in contact with the wall making me to laugh.

Me: “You don't want to go down that route with me baby girl, you just don't,” she clicks her tongue.

Her: “You slap like a man, yoh. We should exchange numbers I have few people I want you to deal with on my behalf, I can handle them alone, but they will overpower me,” haibo! What the actual fuck? She's weird.

Me: “You want to exchange numbers with me? As in, you want to call me?” I furrow my brow.

Her: "Of course. We can make a tag of mean friends, I like the fact that you can speak your mind without giving a fuck," I nod at her. Well, I can exchange numbers with her, but friends? Nah. That's out of the equation. "So, those numbers?"

Me: "Give me yours, I currently don't have a phone."

Her: "Don't worry I have 2 phones, I will give you one, and I will call you since I know the numbers by my head. Don't get me wrong, I just don't trust that you will call me," I chuckle, and shake my head. "Wait here I'll be back," she disappears in the passage. I laugh sitting back down, yazi she can also make a great candidate in this new era female cartel dream of mine, I can already picture her as my second in command.

"All set and ready to go," my mother says wheeling her suitcase. I get up from the couch, and take it from her. "I hope you were taking care of the shack Nono," I laugh.

Me: "Shack? Oh, no. We're not going back there wena Sthandaswami," giving her a smile.

Her: "What? Siyaphi me?" She looks at me confused.

Me: "You will see. Let's go," I wheel out her suitcase, and we walk out of the house. Haike, I will have to look for a place to stay before tomorrow comes.

"Hhayi hhayi uhamba njani without me giving you your temporarily cellphone?" I laugh, and stop in my tracks. "Here you go, I've already stored my numbers there you will see when I call you, I stored them as your big sister," she grins. Hhayi Nina, this girl! She is almost like me shame. We walk out of the yard, and the driver step out of the car, and walk toward us, he takes the luggage from me. "Hhayi girl, why didn't you tell me that you have a personal driver? Anyway, is he single?" She whispers in my ear. I laugh.

Me: "I don't know, but I can ask him for you. Urh...m driver," he turns to look at me. "This girl right next to me is asking if you are single, or what?"

“Single, and no I'm not looking,” he closes the boot, and Lindiwe scoffs.

Her: “Awusembi nje,” I laugh. My mother shakes her head, and steps inside the car. “Look, I'm sorry for how we've been treating your mother, but it was not that extreme, and it was peer pressure from my mother,” why is she justifying their shit? Mxm.

Me: “Argh

it's cool,” no it's not isazobonana with her mother. She hugs me, and I hug her back.

Her: “Go well, and I can't wait to see you again,” Lee hoots. “Mxm, uyadika lo,” she rolls her eyes. I chuckle, and step inside the car waving a bye to her. She pretends to be wiping her tears, she's full of it, and funny too. Lee hoots then he roars the engine to life, and drives off leaving trail of smoke behind.

“She's not that bad you know, she only treats me bad when her parents, siblings, and neighbors come by. But when we are alone we get along just fine,” my mother tells me.

Me: "That's the pretending I don't like. Is she scared of her mother?"

Her: "Everyone is, including the husband. That woman is evil Nono," shaking head. "Hhayi ukhohlalakele, and she is going to throw a fit if she doesn't find me in that house, but I'm happy that you came for me. So, how far before we get to the new place?"

Me: "We are going to spend the night at the bnb, and we will leave tomorrow I'm still looking for a good place to accommodate us, I'm sure the paraffin was the one making you sick, phela manje you look better."

Her: "I think it is too," I nod. No clubbing I guess. But this Bavumile woman, hehe Jrova ongcwele.



TSAKANI

We are at Vixen with the gents discussing a way forward on finding out who exactly attacked Spikiri because it's clear that it wasn't Armor, but someone else did not unless he is two timing us.

“My guard tells me that he messed up with someone, and that someone moer him black & blue, but why did he go to TK's house?” Batista tells us his theory.

“No. I think that maybe he was here at Vixen, and had his one way of the prostitutes and did not pay her, then the girl

reported her, and Adele sent his men to moer him,” Rasta says his too.

Leon: “We all have different theories about this, and the only person who knows what really happened is Spikiri himself, and the parties involved.”

Me: “You're right about that, but why did he lie about Armor attacking him? It doesn't make sense.”

Kortes: “I would like to believe that he is not double-crossing us, but I would be lying. I think that he is working with someone else, he is an insider for that particular person,” we all look at him, he might be right. But why would Spikiri want to betray us? If that's true; then who is he working for?

Me: “Spikiri wouldn't betray us like that after everything we've done for him? He is who he is because of me, because of us,” Kortes chuckles.

Him: "He long broke the gang code. I don't know how many times I caught him trying to hack my computer, and he will always defend himself by saying that he wants to check his Emails."

Me: "Why you never said anything to us Kortes? Why you never mentioned it?" He shakes his head.

Him: "I didn't think that it was a big deal, but after what you told us now more than ever I'm sure that he was trying to hack my computer," shaking head.

Leon: "How much does that person he working for knows about or plans & deals? How much is he telling this person about our business? Phela if that's the case, then that means that whoever he is working for knows that we did a heist with Armor's cars," I circle my finger around the top of the glass, I'm angry. I'm pissed off.

Talon: "Ngithi mina makancandwe afakwe esjezisweni Kube kanye, ngathi ukukhohliwe ukuthi ungubani wena," (I say; let's take him, and crucify him just once, he seems like he has

forgotten who you are) clearly he has, and I will remind him. You see, all these 5 men that I'm sitting with here including Spikiri & Lee I take them as a family, I found them in the streets doing those petty stealing, pick pocketing, and stealing cellphones. But Leon aka Rambo I recruited him while we were still in university. I own them all, and they know that if you betray me, then you pay greatly, you pay with your life. One day I will tell you a story on how I became a gangster, how many lives did I take as part of the initiation, one day I will let you in my life.

Me: "Masivayeni," (let's go) we all get up from our chairs getting ready to leave.

"Leaving already?" Adele asks, standing before me the others walk out.

"Yeah. I have something to take care off."

Her: "So, when will I see you?" Pouting.

Me: "I will tell you when I'm free, I'm really busy lately."

Her: "But I miss you. And it's been long since we last had sex, don't you miss me?" Sighs.

Me: "I do miss you, but as I said I'm busy lately," truth is I no longer want to sleep with her, she is boring me all of a sudden, and slowly but surely I'm losing interest in her, after 6 years of being fuck buddies I'm officially losing interest even her cleavage doesn't excite me anymore.

"TK," she calls my name dragging me out of my thoughts. "Did you hear what I said?"

Me: "Excuse me, I have an emergency to attend to, bye," I walk away leaving her there.

"I thought that you were getting a quickie," Leon tells me, and the others laugh.

Me: "Not today gents, not today."

Talon: “Wena njayami uvimba ama jum jum? Wena wonke skhoskho sami?” (You, my man refusing sex? A whole you) he is shocked.

Me: “Imbayi ne mbayi ine sqalo kanye nesiphetho,” (everything has a beginning, and an ending)

Him: “Hhayi, ifike kahle kwezizwayo,” (I hear you very well)

Few hours later we are inside my house, and Spikiri is not where I left him. Something tells me that he is snopping around, and my first instincts takes me to my study. The door is slightly opened, and I left it close. I push it slowly, and lean against the door frame crossing my legs, and as predicted he is snooping around, in fact he is busy putting papers in his pants, the others come into a halt behind me. I watch him as he walks toward the safe, yeah he knows the code that's how much I trusted him. He turns the switch around, and it clicks... He opens it, and takes out a stack of cash he looks really proud of himself, he takes all that he needs, and he stops on his tracks immediately as he turns around when he sees us at the door.

Sweat starts dripping from his forehead, hands shaking, and lips quivering.

“Uyenzani skhokho? Uyenza maphi amasimba manjer? Why ungingyela umlomo?” (What are you doing man? What shit is it that you're doing? Why are you taking a poop in my mouth) he shakes his head.

Talon: “Feder feder awuna dankie ntwana yami, nex skhokho,” (you are not thankful my boy, nothing)

Him: “Ng... Nginga'bambisa majita,” (I can explain guys) his voice is breaking.

Me: “Bambisa yamasimba! E pontshi njengamanjer, ngizokukhombisa owaka nina ntwana yami. Uzozibhoshela straight,” Batista & Talon rushes toward him, and grab him plus they are big men.

Him: “Ngiyacela TK ungayitshuni daai dang ngiyintwana yakho TK,” (please TK don't do this to me, I'm your boy)

Me: “Leon, makube I chillies.”

Him: “Sekwenzekile,” (it's done) he walks away. I open my drawer, and take out my finger knuckles, cutter, and walk out, my phone rings, its Lee.

“Lee, Masha masinya,” (talk fast)

“Udinga idwadlo u girl noma oledi lakhe,” (She needs a place to stay together with his mother)

Me: “Batholele eli grand safuna ukujulukisa u Spikiri,” (find them a good place I need to make Spikiri sweat)

Him: “Kuhambeni?” (What happened)

Me: “Ngizokubeka nawubuya, (I will tell you when you come back) “make sure that ba safe,” he hangs up. Stepping inside the garage I find him already stripped naked, and tied in a chair. Batista offers me a chair, and I sit opposite this motherfucker looking at him sweating. “Hamba,” (talk) his body shakes in fear, but he refuses to tell me why he is doing what he does. He

shakes his head. "Talon, do your job," Talon nods, and walk up to him, he wears the knuckles, and punches him on the mouth, and blood oozes out of his mouth as Talon is busy punching him. "Stop," few teeth just dropped to the floor. "Ngithi hamba wena!"

"A... A... Ngicishe TK, ngicishe skhokho," (kill me) he tells me this through tears, and blood coming out of his mouth.

"Ek'se uSabelo no Kedi bazwakele," Leon tells me stepping inside the garage, fuck! Bad timing.

Me: "Damn it! Keep him alive," I get up from my chair, I wonder what do they want they never come here nus. I find them in the kitchen making food, I chuckle, and shake my head.

"Welcome," Sabelo shrugs without looking at me, and Kedibone gives me a smile she looks so much better. "And?" Sabelo looks at Kedibone.

"She wants to talk," he says already walking away with the plate of food.

"I'm ready to tell you the story, let's go somewhere private," I nod, and lead her to the pool, finally I will get to know the truth, but Spikiri must stay alive.

TSAKANI

We've been sitting here for over 5 minutes now, and she ain't telling me anything she is busy playing with her fingers.

“Hhey, talk young girl there's an important matter that I need to attend to stop wasting my time,” she looks at me, and her eyes are already glossy. She better not start with the tears.

“And don't you dare open your tap shower, don't, or else I will deal with you.”

“Ninga se ya mahlweni, ni pfumeleli ni kombela ku rivaleriwa eka mavunwa hinkwawo, na leswi ningaswi endla akuri ku tshikeleriwa hi tintangha. Ano fositeriwa ende ni kombela ungani kwateli kumbe ku kwatela vanga ni xi-ave eka leswi,” (before anything else, allow me to apologize for lying to all of you, and all that I did it was peer pressure, I was forced, and please don't be angry at me, or the parties involved)

Me: “Vula vula kunene, nina swa nkoka leswi ni lavaku kuswi endla, amatshanweni ya swona ulekuni onheleni nkarhi, vula

vula mani,” (just tell me already I have important things to take care off, instead you're here wasting my time talk maarn)

Her: “Ni... Hi... Ahi ye entlangwini, kumbe niku fundraiser/swa ntlangu wa charity hiku hi leswi aswiri swona. Mina, Sihle na tintombi tinwani lava hinga... (I... We... We went to a party, or should I say a fundraiser/charity case function because that's what it was. Me, Sihle, and some girls that we... Our friends) I look at her attentively, and she wanders her eyes around, and bite her lower lip. “Hi rhambiwe hi munghana va hina wunwani. Aswi fanerile leswaku ni hembra hikuva aniswi tiva leswaku awungata pfumela leswaku niya loko aniloku byela ntiyiso,” (we were invited by another friend of ours. I had to lie because I knew that you wouldn't have allowed me to go if I told you the truth) my nose flares. “Aniswi tiva ku nitaswi kota kuya mahlweni, Ni... Ni kombela uni rivalela,” (I don't know if I'm ready to continue, pl... Please forgive me)

Me: “Bullshit Kedibone! You said that you wanted to talk to me right? Vula vula,” she is making me angry right now. I also have to deal with Spikiri, and here she is wasting my time with absolute nonsense. Time that I don't have. “Loko unga lavi ku vula vula na xisitu xa pilangu, tlakuka kwala xitulwini xexo

ufamba,” (if you don't want to talk, then get your flat ass up from that chair, and leave)

Her: “Nakombela boti, mingani endli sweswo. Ni chava kum byla ntiyiso, na chava hikunene ende nyungibyisi. Aniti nyungibyisi hi lwesi ninga swi endla,” (please brother, don't do this to me. I'm scared to tell you the truth. I really am, and quite frankly I'm not proud of myself. I'm not proud of the things I did)

Me: “Stop wasting my time Kedibone. I have serious things to take care off, if you're ready to talk to me, you know where to find me because I'm not going to waste my time with you,” I get up from the chair.

Her: “Boti,” I look at her, and she bites her fingers, tears are already streaming her chubby cheeks. Nc nc nc, I walk away scratching my dreadlocks they need some conditioning now it's a sign, if she doesn't want to talk me then I see no point of her coming here, and I can't force her if she doesn't want to talk.

I pass Sabelo in the lounge he's watching soccer, he is a coach in our hood he coaches a team of under 12 years together with my cousin Mpho. I step inside the garage, and I find the gang singing for Spikiri they're singing his favorite song "Kwesta x Ngudu" and he is zoning in & out.

"Ugawulekile ne? Bheka ubutepetepe njani," (He's hungry? Look at how weak he is) I tell the guys sitting down, they bust out with laughter. "Esinye phezukwesinye majita," (thank you gents)

Talon/Mathousand: "Akuna nkingooo skhokho esethu lespani," (there's no problemoo, and it's our job) I nod. He loves being extra.

Me: "Spikiri ntwana yami, kuhambani kanty?" (What's going on) he sniffs.

Him: "Hade Bra TK bengingana skhetho," (sorry Bra TK I had no choice)

Me: “Ringa nami ntwana yami ngizindlebe njalo skhokho,” (talk to me my man, I'm all ears)

Talon: “Bhodla njayami, bhodla uzaze unuke umlomo,” (burp my man, burp, you will end up with a bad breathe) the others laugh.

Leon: “Uyonya nou mus,” (he will start shitting now)

Me: “Yekelani ukuba bo lovie, ziphatheni,” (stop behaving like women, behave yourselves)

Them: “Hade bhoza,” (sorry man)

Me: “Simengawe ndoda, is'khathi samasha,” (we're waiting on you time is moving) I take my gun from my waist gun holster, and place it on his lap. “Nawungafuni ukuringa uzozicisha, uzobhoda, futhi ke umfula uzowazi,” (if you don't want to talk you will kill yourself, you will die, and again you will know the river) he shakes his head sniffing. “A grown man crying, hhayi umhlaba uyabhubha,” (the world is ending)

Talon: “Ringa ndoda mele ngojola mina manje angisi sonor phela mina,” (talk man, I need to go, and check out my girlfriend I'm not single) I laugh.

Him: “Please don't kill me Bra TK,” his voice is really low ai., but you can hear what he's saying.

Me: “Ringa, and be safe it's simple as ABC/123.”

Him: “I... I had no choice, I was cornered, and they held Zano (his girlfriend) hostage, they were torturing her man. They sent me videos of her being brutally tortured, she was crying pleading with them to stop, but they weren't listening to her. She will hate me men, it's all my fault.”

Me: “Get straight to the point. Who are those people, and what do they want from me don't even think about lying, because I will do worse than them,” he nods.

Him: "Ngiyacava," (I know). "Just don't kill me," I nod. "I... I'm working with... Working for... TK bra wami don't do this, don't make me talk," I get up from my chair, and walk up to him, crouch before him then squeeze his cheeks making him to look at me straight in the eyes, I want him to see the coldness of them.

Me: "I want these eyes of mine to be the last thing that you see before you depart from this world, I want you to remember them even when you floating in that river. I fed you, moved you out of the streets, and took you as my little brother then you do me like this? You betray me in this manner?" I tighten my squeeze in his cheeks. "You've forgotten who I am, you got so comfortable that you even jumped at the opportunity to betray me without even thinking twice. I will kill you, and I will find whoever you're working for, and kill them too. You will meet at the river, let's say it will be your gang reunion. Leon, give me the pang I'm done talking," he widens his eyes as Leon hands me the pang, I get up surveying the pang. "Untie him, one leg I will give to my dogs, they miss tasting fresh blood."

"Adele. I'm working for Adelaide!" He quickly tells me, he has already peed on himself. I stop surveying the pang, and look at

him. And I'm not surprised about him working for Adele, they are fucking each other anyway.

Me: "What did you just say?"

Him: "I'm working for Adele."

Talon: "Yah. Ngasho maarn! Nifakana amalimi njer kanti nifuna ukuwisa u TK? Nifuna ukuwisa I African Mafia? Hehe, nithatha ama chance nales'gogwana sakho. Enhlek uyadelela wena, you deleling period," (yes. I did say. You're busy inserting each other tongues because you want to betray TK? You want to betray the African Mafia? You like taking chances with that old woman of yours, you are very disrespectful, very disrespectful) I laugh once, and keep my straight face on.

Me: "Why?"

Him: "She wants to take you out, she wants everything you own."

Me: “For how long have you been working for her?”

Him: “Almost a year now,” I laugh. His bravery, for half a year he was taking us for fools, we were doing heists with him while he was selling us out, this means Adele knows that we the ones who jacked Armor's cars. And again it makes sense as to why police were at certain place where we will be doing heist, and jackings, he was giving them a tip. He laughed with us knowing very well that he was busy making deals with Adele, hehe. It's true when they say ‘never say you know a person’ yhey umuntu akusi wakini, I've seen it today. Spikiri betrayed me like Judas did to Jesus.

Me: “Basically Adele knows all our moves & plans, right?” He nods. “Now, what good will it do to keep you alive? You've sold us out mus njayami.”

Him: “Hade Bra TK, nomayini TK not ukung'cisha,” an evil grin creeps out of my lips.

Talon: “Mina ngine plan,” we all look at him. “Ngiyicava ngiyaflopa malanga amaningi, mar leli ngithunyelwe madlozi,”

(I know that I flop most of the time, but this plan was sent to me by my ancestors) I laugh.

Leon: "Jesus is coming back bafethu."

Him: "Tsek wena," clearing throat. "I will say it in English because my ancestors went to model C's school just like me, but we're not there now. So, instead of killing him, why don't you turn the table around, and make him to spy on his sugar Mama on our behalf? What do we have to lose? Phela magogo will still think that he's working for her, whereas in actual fact he is working for us. All we have to do is to feed him with wrong information while we acquire the right information from him, let's just say he will be our inside man, if akavumi mcishe," I nod. He is right, in order to catch a thief you must use another thief, but in this case it's the same thief.

Leon: "For the first time in all these years that I've known you this is my first time hearing you talking sense I'm impressed," clapping hands.

Him: "I'm booked phela mina ntwana yami ngincwadile blind," they laugh.

Me: "So njayami, game plan?" He nods. "Full blast."

Him: "I will spy for you magenge."

Talon: "Wasibhayiza uzo cimwa yimi mathupha, syezwana?"

(You mess us up I will kill you myself, am I clear) he nods.

"Good. Ng'sayojola manjer," he winks at us and walk out.

Batista: "Wawa ecruiter amahlanya ntwana yami," we all laugh.

Me: "Tell me about it. Clean him up, and clean this place I want it clean," they nod, and I walk out. I head straight to my room I need to clean up.



LUXOLO

I give my mother her medication we've just finished eating, she cooked a full meal, but I was really not in the mood for pap phela I'm maintaining my figure, I have a body to maintain. Anyway, I ended up eating because I didn't want to disappoint my mother, and I've missed her cooking. I don't even remember when was the last time I had a fully cooked meal it's always salads, fruits, and lots of water how can I forget cocktails mara? I settle next to her, and we watch TV.

“This BnB is quite expensive Nono. How are you affording it,” she looks at me straight in the eyes.

“Well, They're running a promotion I guess it's their way to recruit more people, I think they were losing customers. Phela Mama you must remember that; people tend to lose interest in a lot of things. So, they are trying to win back their customers, and besides my boss is the one who paid for all these,” she nods.

Her: “But still. What kind of work are you working again?” How do you tell your mother that you're a stripper in one of the finest clubs in town? I don't want her knowing how I make money.

Me: “I'm a waitress, but I only work night shifts,” she widens her eyes.

Her: “What? Couldn't you find an afternoon job? By night; from what time are you talking about exactly?” Hmm, my mom though.

Me: "18:00 - 03:00 everyday, and afternoon jobs are scarce Mama. Things are bad out there, we have to take whatever comes our way beggars can't be choosers."

Her: "03:00am? Exactly the time where witches are at work?" I laugh.

Me: "I don't know about that Mama because I've never seen them at work."

Her: "Your safety? What do you use to go to & from work?"

Me: "Stuff transport Mama. Don't worry yourself about me Mama."

Her: "I have every right to worry about you Nono, you're my daughter, and I don't want anything happening to you I wouldn't survive. It was hard being away from you for months, imagine if it was forever? We live in a cruel world Nono, a world where female are not safe, and they live in fear kubi la

ngaphandle mntwanami,” I take her hand into mine, and brush it, then heave out a sigh.

Me: “I know that you're worried about me Mama, but nothing will happen to me, nothing. The God I trust never sleeps nor slumbers, he is always watching me together with the Ntuli ancestors.”

Her: “That doesn't ease the worry I have about you, but if you say that you're safe then who am I to dispute that?” Shrugging. “Anyway, did you finally find a Mkhwenyana for me?” I chuckle.

Me: “No. Not yet, and besides my line of work doesn't allow me to date,” honestly who in their right mind will want to be in a relationship with a stripper? A woman who shows all of her asserts to different men every night? A woman whose body is touched by different men? Who will date me? No one, at all. Sighs, guess it will just be me & me.

Her: “What do you mean? Is your boss refusing you to date?”

Me: “My boss doesn't interfere with what we do outside work,” she shakes her head.

Her: “Let me go, and rest the pills are already playing their role,” she gets up from the couch. “Are you going to work tonight?” I shake my head.

Me: “No. I'll be with you for the next coming 2 days,” she nods.

Her: “What happened to your phone? Every time I call it, it rings unanswered,” eish. Scratching my head.

Me: “I lost it at work, but since you say it rings unanswered I will have to look for it hard at work,” she nods, and walks away. Damn you wrinkled newspaper, why is the phone switched on? I will have to call him, and tell him to bring back my phone, I can already imagine him standing before me looking at me straight in the eyes with his glare of the devil, a sneer of a murder, and a body of something sexy, telling me where to get off with his deep almost growling voice, dammit. Why am I even thinking of him like that? He is few years older than me, but... Hhayi the devil is a liar, I refuse to be tempted. Even with

his tattoos he is edible, he even makes me want to add 6 - 7 inks to these 3 inks of mine already, fuck.

I get up from the couch, sleep is overcoming me, and it's just after 21:00pm. I go, and stand near the window, and watch as people go up & down drunk, staggering, and having fun. The phone that my proclaimed sister gave me rings, and it's her obviously, I walk toward the couch, and pick it up "my big sister" fills the entire screen, I laugh shaking my head.

"Hey."

"Hey, little one. I have news for you, I hope you're sitting down," I roll my eyes.

Me: "Khuluma, and I'm in bed."

Her: "So early? Anyway, mommy dearest came back from work fuming, angitsi one of the neighbors called her, and told that her sister is gone she was fetched by some young girl together with her boyfriend, lebantfu babita I boyfriend yami nge

boyfriend yakho, ave beyisa. Oh, yes. She was shouting for the whole neighborhood to hear, haike she started interrogating me, and asked me why did I allow you to take their sister. Haibo, that's her daughter, and she was here for her mother I told her, haike the dragon in her woke up as I am talking to you right now I'm outside the yard that woman chased me out, what a drama she is. Anyway, let me go to my boyfriend's place ngisayonyiswa lipipi yeva, I'll see you tomorrow," she hangs up before I can even answer her. Laughing, I think she's suffering from bipolar this one because she ain't close to being normal! I settle down. Lee said that he will sleep in the next room, but I don't think he will, he is out here playing my bodyguard.



VUYO

Cindy's face is still swollen from whatever she ate in the afternoon when I asked her what's wrong, she said that it's allergy, but funny enough only her face is swollen the rest of the body is still fine, and the last time I checked she's not allergic to anything clearly she's lying, yet she sent me a text saying that she wants us to fix our marriage, how are we going to fix it when she's still lying? This will clearly not work out, divorce is the only option now for the 2 of us. See, this, the lying & cheating is what led me to divorce my first wife. She was lying, and I was cheating she couldn't keep up with my cheating, and I couldn't stand her lies kahle kahle it was a disaster, we decided to call it quits, and we were not married in community of property just like I have with Cindy. When we part ways, everyone leaves the marriage with what she came with.

Anyway, when I came back from work I found her curled up in the couch covered in a fleece blanket, imagine how hot she was feeling in this hot weather it can never be me, or any of you

because we will faint, but her nope. I finish soothing her face, and give her painkillers.

“These will help you with subsiding the pains.”

“Thank you,” her voice is cranky. “I'm sorry, about everything.”

Me: “Focus on getting better. What is it that you said you ate again?” Hhayi, she has been moered this one, but by whom and why?

Her: “I forgot the name Sasha ordered it for us, and it was my first time eating it, and definitely the first thing I'm allergic too,” I nod. “How was work?”

Me: “Work was fine, I had a productive day,” my mind drifts back to that young girl, I'm not one to reach out to people that easily, to help them, but with her it was easy. Seeing her lying in that bed naked young as she is, she moved my heart, but moreover it was the birthmark on her left thigh that caught my attention I have the exact same birth mark in that very same

thigh. Could it... No, I don't think so. It can't be, I mean Anna ne... Oh, shit. It can't be, it definitely can't be, but it's possible. Wait, why am I even thinking about the fact that she might be my daughter? No, and all of a sudden I feel hot, and my stomach tightens.

“What is it? You're sweating, Vuyo, are you okay?” Cindy asks me with so much concern in her voice.

Me: “I'm fine. Please excuse me,” I get up from the couch, and rush to the bathroom I need to rinse my face, I need to wash away those thoughts. But how could she be my daughter whereas the Dr's told me that I have a low sperm count I can't make babies, now this? It just doesn't make any sense I need to get to the bottom of this, yerrr. What if I slept with her? What if? This is bad. I step out of the bathroom and head straight to my room, I need to think, I need revisit the past, tap into old memories; maybe just maybe something will come up. I throw myself on top of the bed facing up- looking at this ceiling won't help, but I need answers, I will have to rescue her fast, and find the truth.

15

LUXOLO

I'm woken up by my mother opening the curtains of the room that I'm sleeping in, in fact the sun penetrating the curtain, and into this bed is the one that woke me up. She shakes her head as I groan in frustration, and step out of the room. Kanty what time is it? I push off the blankets, and put on my slippers then step out of the room. I find my mother cleaning up I don't even know what she's cleaning because this place is clean.

“Morning Mama,” yawning.

“Morning ngo 10:00am Nono? It's unlike you waking up this late. What changed?” Stripping, most definitely it, but I can't tell her that.

Me: “Yoh Mama, I'm used to sleeping in the afternoon since I work night shifts,” I settle down in one of the chairs, and rub my face.

Her: "That's not right Nono. Why don't you quit? I can always go back to work I don't mind," I shake my head.

Me: "No, Mama. You're approaching 50 years already, you need to sit down, and relax. Allow me to take care of you just like you did with me for the past 27 years."

Her: "Bu...,"

Me: "No Mama. No buts. You've been a super woman all your life making sure that I get everything I need, just stop worrying about me I'm a big girl, and stop cleaning they have people for that here. Have you called for food service?"

Her: "No. I sent that driver of yours to go, and buy us fat cakes I know how much you love them," I give her a smile. I love this woman shame.

Me: "Thank you Mama, but I no longer eat food that contains too much cholesterol they make me sick," she laughs, and claps her hands.

Her: “Wiyibo, what happened to my Nono? The one who used to cry when I didn't leave money for fat cakes? Do you remember how I used to find you sad, and refused talking to me when I come back from work old as you are?” Yoh, lomama ukhipha Ama files manjer, ma secret a serious phela lawa.

Me: “Hhayi woman, I don't remember any of that.”

Her: “I still have the videos yazi,” I shoot my eyes open, and look at her in total shock.

Me: “No ways. You're lying Mama,” she laughs.

Her: “I will show you once we get to our new place, hope my laptop is still in a condition as I left it.”

Me: “Really Mama? What can I possibly do with it? I mean, I have my own laptop that I love so much.”

Her: "I was just saying, don't bite my head off. Any plans for today?"

Me: "Nah, but I will have to go, and check our room if it's fine," this means that I'm going to hunt for a room, but you wouldn't know that because you don't read minds.

Her: "Will it be a problem if I'm coming along with you? I'll be bored here alone," well...

Me: "It won't be a problem Mama, you are very much welcome to tag along."

Her: "I wasn't going to go with you if I had a sewing machine here," I look at her, this is a first.

Me: "Sewing machine? What were you going to do with it, because the last time I checked you weren't owning one?"
Furrowing my brow.

Her: “Well, Lindiwe taught me how to sew. She may be a little bit crazy, but she really helped me in terms of nursing me back to health even though she was shouting at me, and blaming me that I've stopped her from enjoying her youth. And again, she will get angry when I tell her to leave, she'll be like ‘I'm nursing you back to health, and now you're telling me to leave? You are telling a whole me, your nurse to leave?’ Yoh, Haike bese iyasuka. She will start screaming for no apparent reason, and I will just ignore her, then she will come back later and apologize,” I laugh.

Me: “Are you sure that she's normal? Like, it's her mind really working properly?” She laughs.

Her: “She's normal, but a different kind of normal. She tends to lose it here & there, but overall she's such a character,” I nod in agreement.

Me: “I forgot to tell you, she called last night.”

Her: “Where did sh... Oh, almost forgot that she gave you her phone. What did she want?”

Me: “She was telling me about how mad her mother was when she came back from work, apparently someone told her that they saw you leaving, and then your sister started questioning her, and ended up chasing her out of her house, she sounded not bothered about it yazi,” she laughs.

Her: “Her mother chases her out of her house after every 2 days, and she will go to his boyfriend for a sleepover, when she comes back she will complain about her boyfriend not spending enough time with her. Yuhhh Nono, she's a lot of work, and she is so loud” we laugh. A knock comes through at the door, I look at my mother she shrugs then attend the door, and it's Lee.

“Sawubona Mama, can I please have a word with Lux?”

Her: “Before you have a word with her, where are the fat cakes that I've sent you to buy?”

Him: “Eish Ma'oledi, the queue was so long, but I've substituted your fat cakes with bunny chows, and I will fetch them in 10

minutes they will be ready by then,” I wonder where did he buy them, they were my absolute favorite while growing up.

Her: “Bunny chows? What are those?” I get up from the chair clearing my throat.

Me: “It's half bread stuffed with hot/mild mince meat, chicken livers, kidneys, it differs Mama,” she shakes her head.

Her: “The food you young generation eat, Ai,” she shakes her head, and excuses herself.

Me: “So, how can I help you Lee?”

Him: “I overheard you saying that you're looking for a place to stay, and I've found you one,” I blankly stare him. “Ek'se sisi, ifikile emadlebeni?”

Me: “Ur... Urhm, yeah. Ifikile, But I did not ask you to help me look for a place to stay, and I definitely don't remember talking about this issue in your presence.”

Him: "I can read your thoughts. So, want to check it out later?"

Me: "What's in it for you?"

Him: "Sisi, ipozi or?" (Sister, do you want a place to stay) I heave out a sigh. I really do need a place to stay, but why is he offering me one? Something just doesn't add up, oh well, it won't hurt to give it a go ahead right? It was going to be better if he was not working for Sol. Phela now, Sol knows that I have a mother he obviously told him, if I dare cross him he is going to come for my mother. Ey, saze sazithwala izono sibancane.

Me: "What time?"

Him: "Any time is time sweetie, just tell me what time I'll be around here & there. Let me go, and fetch those bunny chows," he winks at me, and walks away. I close the door after him.

"He looks like a good young man, and handsome too," my mother tells me joining me in the kitchen again. I laugh.

Me: “And Lindiwe will most definitely kill me,” she looks at me confused. “Ask no questions. Hear no lies. Let me go, and take a bath we're going to check out the place, and erase whatever thoughts you have about me, and Lee because nothing will happen between us,” I walk away leaving her smiling alone, she better erase any thoughts njer.

★»★«

VUYO

I'm in my office going through some paper work, my body is here, but my mind is far away with thoughts in a way that I didn't notice my boss standing before me until he banged the table making me to acknowledge his presence. He is furious I must say.

“In my office right now Vuyo!” He walks away immediately he said that, I have no choice but to follow him. He enters his office first, and I follow after him, he settles down, and I remain standing. I know that he's going to complain about my work performance lately, I never told him that I'm going through a lot, and now there might be a possibility of me having a daughter is weighing down on me heavily, my shoulders are heavy maarn, and my mind is about to explode. Sighs. “You may sit,” he points at the chair.

“I'd rather stand, thank you,” he nods.

Him: “What's going on with you Vuyo? Your mind is hardly here, you don't even attend stuff meetings anymore, let alone have lunch with your lunch squad. They are worried about you, and so is the management. What's wrong with you?”

Me: "I'm going through some personal stuff, stress is attacking me, my problems are piling up on my shoulders. My past is trying to make a come back in my life in a cruel manner, and I know that all this is affecting my work, but you need to understand that I'm going through a lot right now."

Him: "Then why didn't you come to me

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and report that you are going through a lot you need few days off to fix your personal life? We are not prophets or sangoma's Vuyo to know what's going on with you, we are none of that. I would advise you to take a month paid leave because you will make us lose valuable clients, and we don't want that. Go home, and sort yourself out," I nod.

Me: "Thank you. Will it be okay if I leave immediately?" He nods. I walk out of his office.

3 hours later I'm driving down in the road of my home, where I was born & bred. I told myself that I will never ever come back here, but here I am driving in this very route, I broke the promise I made to myself. But then again, I need answers I had

to come here, as I turn on the corner I can see the house all the way from here it is the only house that looks old, and the paint is wearing off the weeds in the yard are covering half of the house. By the look of things it looks like no one stays there anymore, if that's the case where did they relocate to? And Anna's home is just 5 houses away from mine I wonder if she still stays around here.

I step out of the car, and walk toward the gate only to be met by a big lock at the gate, sighs. I look around, and people are in their houses of which is strange considering the fact this place used to be lively while I was staying here you will find kids playing in the streets, I know it's close to 20 years since I moved away from here, but the setting is still the same.

“There's no one there,” I turn to see who the person is, and it's Mam'Zanele daughter Naledi, her mother used to be best friends with my mother. She looks so grown, and beautiful let's just say she bloomed out really well considering the fact that she used to look like something nasty, and ugly back then with pimples filling her entire face, no one wanted to associate themselves with her, she was a loner. She is standing right next door.

“Where are they?” I don't think she notices me.

Her: “They moved to Zithobele village,” fixing her glasses. Well, the nerd in her is still there.

Me: “Zithobele what? Where on earth is that village, and why did they move there? When was this?”

Her: “The healthcare workers from that village came here, and took everyone who is sick with, and took them to that Zithobele village. It is said that, that village is very powerful, and very sacred only the pure are allowed to stay there, and that was like 5 years ago.”

Me: “Bullshit. Do you have any idea where this Zithobele village is situated?”

Her: “Nope. No idea. Anyway, what's your relationship with the Masango's?”

Me: "You don't recognize me?"

Her: "I wouldn't be asking if I did."

Me: "I'm Vuyo," she widens her eyes in shock.

Her: "Vuyo? The very same Vuyo who used to insult me about my looks back when we were young? The very same Vuyo who abandoned his family? Is that really you?" Why aphapha all of a sudden? I shrug. "Wawu. So, after 20 years of going AWOL you finally remembered that you have a family?" So sarcastic.

Me: "Don't start with me. Where's Anna?"

Her: "Haven't you heard? She passed on 10 years ago," my heart starts beating abnormal when she tells me this. But how? What happened to her? What could've killed her?

Me: "Wh.. What happened to her?"

Her: "She was sick."

Me: "Wawu, tha... That's bad. Did she have any children?"

Her: "Not that I know of. Or maybe she did with her ex-husband." I nod.

Me: "She remarried?" She nods. Now what? Who is going to answer my questions ke if eshonile yena? I wonder what was wrong with her. "And her parents?"

Her: "They are at Zithobebe village too."

Me: "Why are staying here whereas almost everyone have relocated to that Zithobebe village?"

Her: "Because I'm not sick, and I'm still young. It's only us the youngsters, and those who are not sick left in this place," I nod.

Me: "So, what does the municipality do with these vacant houses?"

Her: "They wanted to sell them, but the Princess of Zithobele village told them not to she has plans for these vacant houses."

Me: "I see. Do you perhaps have a spare key with you?" Most houses here use the same keys in their kitchen doors.

Her: "Let me check. So, you are going to jump over the fence?"

Me: "I have no choice, or do I?" She shakes her head, and walks away. Fuck, where is this Zithobele village anyway? Guess I will have to investigate this myself, I need to get a sample of her hair or something. I wonder how many men did she sleep with, what harm did they do to her tiny body? I don't think I will forgive myself if she is indeed my daughter. And if she is my daughter, how is she going to look at me knowing that I sleep with prostitutes? Moreover, how is she going to welcome me? And again, how did she end up staying with this woman called her mother? This is one messed up situation huh. I have a lot of questions, but no one to answer them for me.

“Here you go,” Naledi hands me the keys.

Me: “Thank you,” I jump over the fence. “Can you also lend me some cleaning materials?”

Her: “Sure,” she walks away. I open the kitchen door, and I'm met by dust I have a lot of work to do around here, hopefully I might stumble upon something.

★»★«

LUXOLO

This is not a room, this it's a 4-room house with full furniture, and the fridge is already packed with food, the cupboards too. I like it, I really do plus it's closer to work it's a walkable distance, but this is going to make my mother asks me questions again about how am I affording this whereas I'm just a waitress at a nightclub just like she did a day ago, yhey, I'm not ready to be questioned by her. Well, at least Lindiwe is here she won't ask me in front of her, and Lindiwe only came with because she wanted to see Lee apparently she dreamt getting married to him, and having lots of babies and all the babies looked like Lee, not her. Hhayi no, this girl you guys, haikhona. She needs to be checked.

“How are you finding it?” I ask my mother.

“It's fine. I love, but I have questions,” here we go.

Me: "I know, and unfortunately for you, I don't have any answers except that this is all my boss's work he really cares about his employees."

Her: "I see. When can I meet this boss of yours, I really need to think for all that he's doing for you, for us," Lindiwe laughs.

"Haike Mamzo, you'll get her fired, plus I'm also looking for a job where she works. Anyway, asijike la ka Zweli," she tells me already pulling me by my hand.

Mom: "We are not done njalo Nono, we will pick up where we left off," I laugh.

Lindiwe: "Usenjeni sesi," we laugh.

Me: "I know. How far is Zweli's?"

Her: "Safika nyalo just 2 minutes. Awutshele mine la, kutseni Lee angenta so?" (Tell me here, why is Lee doing to this me) I scratch my head.

Me: "What is he doing?"

Her: "Awuboni njer wena?" (Can't you see)

Me: "Angiboni lutfo mine sesi," (I don't see anything)

Her: "You need to eat more carrots Luxolo," I laugh, yahlanya lo. "And we're here," well, this place looks beautiful for it be selling Kota's & African food it was supposed to be a restaurant, Kasi restaurant that since it's situated deep in the ghetto, and it is clean I must applaud. We greet the lady whose behind the counter, and we order what we came for.

"You may sit down your orders will be ready in 5 minutes," she's friendly too.

Lindiwe: "That's the wife Thabile, and did I tell you that they have friends who are royalty? I mean, the Queen, King, protector, seer all that you can think of when it comes to royalty, and the Queen is very beautiful yoh. Her name is

Nobuntu, and God isn't she the sweetest? She's the best if I was royalty I was going to be just like her, and the prince? Hehe, he's a pastor married to a prophetess that woman can sure prophecy no manga manga business with her, I trust her," I know all that she's telling me, well except for this girl being the owner if this joint wife, but I know that the owner was once a prince only to find out years later that he's just a commoner married to a real princess, a princess who found love in his best friend, shame life I mystery you guys.

Me: "I've read about Nobuntu, and all that she does she's an inspiration indeed. Who would've thought that someone so young can be this powerful?"

Her: "It can only be the ones that were birthed inside the water," I laugh. "Let me quickly dash to the ladies, I'll be right back," I nod. I look at my phone, and dial my numbers hope I will find it switched off, but on the other side I need to hear his voice. Nah, that's just cerebos telling me otherwise because ku dry down there, I wonder if there are male escorts though I would've long serviced my vagina shame... I can hear someone breathing from the other side, that can only be him, he answered, but why isn't he saying anything.

“Can I have my phone back?” I just get straight to the point, no greeting, no nothing.

“You know where I stay come, and get it yourself,” hanging up. Did he just hang up on me? Yuh, this wrinkled newspaper nina uyinja maarn, ungu njandini straight. Thabile calls our order number, I go and fetch it then wait for Lindiwe to come back from the ladies, she's been gone for a long time. Let it history not repeat itself like it did with Bella.

I find her smoking in the toilet, she's doing drugs. I silently leave quietly as I came, I don't like the fact that she uses drugs, but who am I to tell her what to do? We all have choices in life, and hers is smoking drugs.

TSAKANI

Where did she think she was going to end up? You see if Lee didn't send me the current numbers that she's using I wouldn't have answered her call, and if she really wants her phone she will come here, and fetch she's the one who left it after all. And this time around she will end up in my bed... Leon ordered false teeth for Spiki, I still can't believe that he betrayed us like that, I would've understood if it was someone else, but Spikiri mfethu? Hhayi mfana, phela he was the one that I trusted the most out of all the guys in the gang, and now I don't even know how I will look at him because pretending to be cool with him is out of the equation. I really wanted to kill him, but Talon advised otherwise I hope Spikiri will stick to his word, as for Adele I will deal with her when the time comes. Right now I want her to know that I don't know what's going on, she was having full blast with my dick Kanty swine wants to wipe me clean, RHA. Her sbindi, hhayi shame siyavuma mfana.

Since I have no plans today I decided to go to the mall, one thing you should know about me is that I don't walk around with bodyguards everywhere I go, but the respect these self-

proclaimed Mafias have for me is out of this world, and no one dares come my way I don't even know why, shrugs. The stares that I'm getting from these women I'm used to them, they no longer amuse or make me feel somehow it's just how it is.

Growing up I was never an easy child. I was hard-headed, and pretty much stubborn I might say, I never listened to anyone even now, I still don't listen to anyone, I make my own rules especially when they include my life, but when it includes the gang I have to listen to the others views, that's team work. My first stop is at news café I need a drink or two, the truth is I don't know why I came here, but here I am, alone for that matter. At times, I wish that I had a girlfriend you know, someone to cuddle with, and spoil, but then who will date someone a like me? A King pin? A ruthless Mafia as most people call me. No one. I've tried dating, dating women who said that they will love me, and handle all the baggage that I come with, but a week is enough for them, they change in a blink of an eye once they see me in action, and some couldn't handle my appetite for sex no matter how much money I've given them, they just couldn't stand the sex that comes with it. I love sex, I really do, I don't want to lie to you guys. The only woman who seemed to be almost in the same level with me when it comes to sex is Adele, but sometimes it gets too much

for her, and she pretends as if she passed out, that is her way of telling me she's tired, argh. But otherwise, I'm glad that none of the women I've been with knew my line of work they were just happy to receive money, money of which they don't know where it came from. Even my mother doesn't know my line of work, but she knows that it's something illegal. My phone rings, and it's Lee I wonder what does he want.

“Lee.”

“Ek'se TK. I think I saw someone who looks like you here at the mall.”

Me: “It's not someone who looks like me, it's me,” he chuckles.

Him: “Hhe ntwana, a whole you here at the mall? Hhayi I film, I movie straight le. Amajita ayacava?” I laugh.

Me: “Tsek maarn. Where the hell are you?” He sighs.

Him: “Se Clicks njayami,”

Me: "Kuhambani daar?"

Him: "The women are here to buy toiletries, and get some decoration for the house. Your woman says the house looks manly, so she wants to turn it into a warm, and welcoming home. Women," I laugh.

Me: "She's not my woman, and who gave them the permission to change my house?"

Him: "Why don't you ask her yourself? I'll go, and give her the phone."

Me: "No. Don't. By the way, what's your role there?"

Him: "Following them around."

Me: "Come, and join me here at news café I'm bored," he laughs.

Him: "Get a girlfriend. Kidding man, I'll be there now now I just need to alert the ladies that I'm excusing myself for a while," he hangs up. I laugh, and shake my head yah neh. Lee hates the mall I wonder how did they convince him to tag along, argh almost forgot that he's the chauffeur guy. And again I wonder if Lux know that I'm behind all this, not Sol. But even if she doesn't know it's still fine, as I said before I'm protecting her from a distance. Sol is not a threat, not unless he sees that you got potential, then that's another story.

"Long time no see stranger," Sasha says settling down. She too, beautiful as she is can't stand my sex appetite such a bore. She takes a sip of draft, and I just look at her. "So, why were you avoiding me? I've been trying to get hold of you all these days to no avail, and you are never in your house."

"I'm busy," taking a sip on my draft.

Her: "With what Tsakani because your gear business ain't blooming," she only knows that I sell drugs.

Me: “Trying to revive my gear business, I really need it to pick up before I get paralyzed completely (broke) things are bad,” she chuckles.

Her: “That's because you are a fool Tsakani! You are stupid, in fact you're a twat!” And here I was thinking that all these words mean the same thing, guess I was wrong. “That's another reason why I will never date you, that's because you're a loser. Look at yourself, you even drink at news café where everyone who earns peanuts drink, I'm glad I met someone better, someone who is loaded,” she takes another sip of my draft.

Me: “Yet, you are out here busy taking sip on my draft? Isn't that you're showing that you can't afford to buy your own alcohol? Women your age are securing the bag while you here busy boasting about someone else's money. Now, do yourself a favour, and get your flat ass on that chair, and leave

” I pick up the half-full glass, and splash the remaining draft in her chest, she gasps earning us a few stares from some of the noisy customers.

Her: “You are such a dick Tsakani! I hate you,” she shows me her middle finger, and storms off leaving me laughing. Women

and drama. She came for me, she thought that I wasn't going to retaliate to all that name-calling she did? Pshhhh.

“Sasha is angry man, what did you do her?” Lee asks settling down.

Me: “Nothing. How's the shopping going?” He shakes his head.

Him: “I need a strong glass of shot, I've never been this tired in my whole entire life. When you see me shopping with a woman again, kill me. Wuhhh, kill me please,” he is pissed off. I laugh.

Me: “Hade man. Were you forced?”

Him: “Your mother-in-law asked me to come with them, she doesn't trust malls that much because they are full of criminals.”

Me: “She's right though. One needs to be vigilant when coming here. So, is she suspecting anything?”

Him: "Nope. And that's only because her cousin is keeping her occupied."

Me: "She has a cousin?"

Him: "A retarded cousin for that matter, that one needs some serious ovulation in a psychiatric facility because wow," I chuckle.

Me: "She sounds like trouble."

Him: "She is trouble!" We both laugh, at least now I have someone to keep me company.



LUXOLO

My feet are killing me. I can do with some foot massage right now. My mother & Lindiwe are still enjoying the shopping, yet my mom said that we are only to get some house decoration, and buy her- her sewing machine, but instead they are hopping from shops to shops window shopping. I excuse myself from them, and go to the ladies room I really need to rest my feet. You see in stripping is all about working your legs on the pole, and not walk around as if you are lost or something. And again my mother knows that I get serious headache when we get home if we were here at the mall, that's why I don't like them. I really hate crowded places, sometimes I do get headaches when working the pole, but I still push because I need to make money.

Lindiwe sends me a text telling me that they are ready to leave I must call Lee, thanks God. I punch in his numbers, and it rings thrice I'm about to hang up when he answers.

“Sugar my darling.”

“We are ready to leave, come and fetch us.”

Him: “I'm on my way give me 3 minutes,” he hangs up. 3 minutes it is. I step out in one of the toilets, and wash my hands from the mirror I can see someone standing behind me looking at me straight, I don't even know her, but her look is unsettling, and she's wearing all black. I tilt my head, and look at her, I see her approaching me from behind taking out something from her back, a silver knife is on her shaking hand. Amateur, she lifts it up, and we hear some shuffling, and people talking outside they are clearly coming here, she drops the knife on the floor, and runs away. I hurry to where the knife is and kick it in one of the toilet's door thanks God there's some tiny space underneath the door, I get in too then pick it up, and put it on my waist then walk out as if everything is fine. I wonder who was she, and who sent her. Why would whoever send her, send an amateur? A whole flipping amateur! Now I don't know who

wants me dead because it seems like I've made myself enemies unaware, my big mouth must go, period.

Lindiwe: "What took you so long?"

Me: "Constipation was showing me flames," what if she's the one who sent her? I'm not saying that she did, I just don't trust her.

Her: "You should stop it eating soil."

Me: "But I don't eat soil," shrugging.

Mom: "It's probably white bread plus you don't drink enough water," oh no.

Me: "I doubt," Lee comes to where we are, and he helps carry some of the shopping bags, and walk away together with my mother we are following behind them.

Her: "I don't know if it's me or what, but I feel like someone is watching/following us," I feel the same too, and that can only be that girl not unless she is with people who she works with.

Me: "My sentiments too," she stops on her tracks, and moves her eyes around until they stop at a certain person.

Her: "Shit! Hold these for me I'll be back, in fact walk straight to the car, and don't look back if I'm not back within 5 minutes tell Lee to leave," she hands me the shopping bags.

Me: "Where are you going?"

Her: "I need to sort out something fast, and I already smell blood my nose never lies." She pushes me to leave, and she takes another direction. Where the hell is she going, and what did she mean by she sm..., oh shit. Don't tell me that she's a killer, I mean. Hhayini, fuck it. I pick up my steps, and head straight to where the car is. From a distance I can hear gunshots, and I see people scattering all over the mall screaming, I quickly step inside the car, and Lee brings the engine to life. Lindiwe. We can't leave her.

Mom: "Wait, where's Lindiwe?" My mom asks with so much panic in her voice.

Me: "She's coming Mama."

Her: "Oh, umntana ka sis wami bandla," she puts her hands over her head.

Me: "She's fine Mama don't worry," my legs are shaking.

Lee: "Let me go, and check her out."

Me: "No. Don't. I trust that she's fine wherever she is," wuhhh. Who am I trying to convince? Shit. Lee, is about to drive when I see Lindiwe running toward the car wearing another T-shirt covering the bloodied one. Did she really kill a person, or maybe blood spilled on her? Damn. She gets inside the car.

“Drive!” She orders Lee, and Lee roars the engine to life, and speeds off without asking any questions. What just happened. I look at her hand, and I see a small gun in her hand, wawu. Who are you Lindiwe? I look at my mother, and she's concentrating on the road, she exhaled a deep breath when she saw Lindiwe. Lee, is looking at in the rear mirror.

Me: “What happened?” Whispering.

Her: “I'll fill you in when we get home,” she whispers back. I nod. Lee phones ring.

“Sir.”

“Yes they are.”

“Okay,” he shakes his head I guess he noticed the blood in Lindiwe's T-shirt. Police vans pass us in a speed ringing their sirens, these old bill are forever late, ai...

LUXOLO

I step inside the toilet with Lindiwe leaving my mother to unpack the shopping bags, she takes off both the T-shirts, and wrap the one that is bloodied.

“I will have to burn it,” she says filling the bathtub with water.

“What happened back there?” I ask her sitting on top of the toilet lid. She shakes her head as she strips naked she has a beautiful body neh, mara the scars. No, hha. Ah. They show that she had been in some serious knife fights, fights that leaves one dead, but her face is clear. How though? Or was she always wearing a mask? Or maybe they were never allowed to touch the face, Erhh...

Her: “Well. Should I start by telling you what happened back there, or must I reintroduce myself first?” She gets inside the bathtub, and lean back.

Me: "Reintroduce yourself I'm interested in knowing about you. Who exactly are you woman?"

Her: "I know this is going to come as a shock to you, but my real name is not Lindiwe. My name is Nandi Maepa, the daughter of the late Grace Maepa," I widen my eyes, uthini lo nina? Hhe, so she's not her biological mother's daughter? What am I even saying? Shit doesn't make sense.

Me: "What exactly are you saying because I'm not following."

Her: "As I was saying, my name is Nandi I've never met my father, I don't even know how he looks like. My mother ran a taxi business, and was known as the Mafia Queen, and she sure was until fate remembered her, see I didn't know that my mother passed on because I was sold to slavery by her enemies, she, too, just like you created enemies for herself unaware." Haike, where do I enter here? Mxm. "I was basically paying her debts unknowingly, like heck I didn't even know that she was a gangster until she hired a helper, yhey that helper was bad news. She still is together with her friend throat slayer, and I'm still scared of them even today though they said they've changed they are no longer into gangsterism, and shit. Maybe

that's why a lot of men are taking over. Anyway, that's a story for another day.”

“So, I managed to escape where I was held as a slave with the help of one of the guards of course in exchange for sex obviously. 3 days later of hitchhiking I was finally back in South Africa, I've never thanked God like I did that day. When I got home I found Linda, Linda was a helper too, but more of a spy she was hired after Lorna was fired, and I treated her like a nobody little did I know that, one day she will shelter me in my own home. I became a house helper in my own home that was built by my parents, but I'm grateful because she did not throw me out. Picking up the pieces of my life was very hard, but I eventually did. I went, and ask for forgiveness from Lorna & Anthea, and they forgave me. They taught me how to shoot, they taught me self-defense they basically introduced me into the world of gangsterism, and showed me the dangers that it comes with they weren't into drugs though, but men sure did fear them.” This story needs a glass of gin.

Me: “Hold the conversation I'll be right back. You can sommar drain the water, and refill the bathtub again,” I'm already closing the door behind me, I take a deep breath, and shake my head. If what she said it's true; how come her mother didn't

notice that, that's not her daughter? This is confusing maarn, but she sure will give us some clarity because I know that I'm not the only one confused. I get to the kitchen, and I find my mother already preparing dinner.

Her: "What were doing in that bathroom all this time?"

Me: "Constipation, and I'm here to get a glass of water."

Her: "And Lindiwe?"

Me: "She's keeping me company," she searches my eyes, and goes "hmmm."

Her: "Let me go, and check if I don't have laxatives medication in my bag, it will really help you," she walks away. I open the cupboard, and takeout a bottle Mayfair dry gin then go back to the bathroom. My mom knows that I drink, but I never drink in front of her, that's how much I respect her.

Me: “You can continue with your story, and don't worry we're going to drink straight from the bottle, but you can always use the bottle cap,” she laughs throwing her head back. “Akube njalo,” twisting the bottle cap open.

Her: “I'm not really a fan of gin, I'm more of a black label/castle lager girl. But I can always make an exception,” shrugging. Ishuuu, this child drinks some heavy beers yong.

Me: “I ain't saying anything.”

Her: “So, I met a few girls back in college those girls were corrupt hey, they always caused havoc back at college terrorizing the teachers & students, police tried interfering, but it always ended in blood shed since the girls had other members outside the college, whenever we saw them coming from a distance we would all go, and hide plus I was far away from home. To cut the story short I befriended them in return for protection since there was another group of upcoming ruthless girls in the making. The group of the girls that recruited me called themselves Amazembe, they introduced me to their boss, and funny enough their boss was a man a whole entire man with a pot-belly, and hair that falls on his shoulders!

Anyway, in order for me to be fully a member I had to kill a girl, and sure enough I found myself a prey, and I killed her, I had to take the head to the boss as proof that I did really kill her. What I didn't know though was that they were going to make a mask for me that looks exactly like the girl I killed, plus we had the same body structure. I was given her identity, and given all her family information, I had to train my voice to talk like her, and walk the same way as her,” wawu!

I gulp down the gin one time, hhayi, and pause then burps.

Me: “Pardon. Hhayi girl, uyingozi wena, u dangerous nyani. So, you walk around all day with a mask? Hhayi, you are the woman of woman's geliza, o brave! So, your boyfriend is actually dating an entire mask?” She nods, and I laugh. “Why do I feel as if like you're lying? Uyang'jutha moghel.”

Her: “I'm not. Want me to show you?”

Me: “Duh...,” she nods, and moves her hand to her neck, and I can see the weave going up slowly, wuhhh nina manini she might be telling the truth. I gasp when I see her real self, my lips

part open, and I freeze I'm not even blinking, the gin bottle slip out of my hand, and inside the bathtub. I try talking, but my voice is failing me. Ayifuni ukuphuma, it's blocked. Wawu. Well, she looks better as herself than with the mask. So, her mask boyfriend is sleeping with another woman unknowingly? I find myself laughing, and shaking my head. Hey, girls are a mystery yazi, I wonder how things are going to unfold between her, and Lee should they decided to try something. Fireworks I tell you. "Girl? I vum' you yasis, you are the Ish uhamba wedwa wena, you go alone shame!" She puts back her mask.

Her: "That's just about it."

Me: "Hhe, girl I still can't believe it yazi, but you don't look like you have a mask on. Whoever made the mask is good, I fucken give it to her/him. So, wena sisi we mask, all the amazembe girls have masks on?"

Her: "Nope, only us who are afraid to reveal our real identities," guys this girl will come in handy in this cartel of mine, she can always change faces, and I need to meet the girls she mentioned they sound like a force to be reckon with. Wuuh, I can already picture us causing havoc everywhere we go.

Me: “Now, where is your amazembe gang?”

Her: “Dead. They killed each other because of a position. Ken, our boss wanted someone who will take over, and he had already chosen his candidate. Erhhh, it became world war 77. The girls attacked him, and killed him, as for me, I gathered all that I could lay my hands on, and ran away because I knew that we were going to turn against each other, and end up killing each,” she shrugs. She did good by running away, and saving herself. Imagining dying because of some position? Hhayi shame it can never be us.

Me: “Back there at the mall what happened?” She sighs.

Her: “I saw a blast from a past, actually I saw the girls that I'm in a gang with, at first I thought that my eyes were deceiving me when I saw one of them exiting the toilet in a hurry I knew that something was off, and when you come out of the toilet fixing yourself I knew that, that girl was sent to you because I also saw the knife on your waist, the back of the knife on your T-shirt was visible, but no one was really paying attention to you. And when I saw two of them having a heated conversation I

had to react, and yes I killed them, but the one that wanted to attack you got away, I think it's one of the newly recruited girls, amateurs, and she will most definitely be killed.”

Me: “You are in another gang? Who is your boss?”

Her: “Michelle.” The name sounds familiar, then I remember...

Me: “Michelle Kruglov?” She nods, and gives me a stare.

Her: “How do you know her?”

Me: “Well, she once threatened me, and that time I did nothing to her.”

Her: “She just came to you, and threatened you?” I chuckle taking out the bottle from the bathtub, what a waste.

Me: "I was talking to my ex-boyfriend, yoh, and she came out from out of nowhere fuming, and started threatening me," she shakes her head.

Her: "It might be her, and she's very dangerous you will have to be alert at all times, this is only the beginning, and you are lucky that she sent an amateur for you, if she sent one of her trusted girls you would probably be dead by now," I laugh.

Me: "Wrong. I would be here with you chatting like we're doing right now, but now that you've mentioned it, I will have to be alert at all times." I think it's time I started taking shooting lessons they will come in handy very soon.

Her: "Because I will not be here to always protect you, in 2 weeks time I'm flying to Colombia I'll be there for 2 months, but before I leave I must teach you how to use a gun, and how to defend yourself. You will really need all the skills you can get, and when you shoot you must shoot to kill not to give out a warning, because sometimes the person you shoot will retaliate, and end up killing you. They are more likely to survive. This world is not for the weakling Lux, you need to be strong, and fear fokol!" I nod in agreement. "I can tell that you have it

in you to become a notorious female gangster like the likes of Monica Masari, or Antonietta Di Costanzo, unlike us who were forced into it. You must find someone from Russia or Italy who can teach you how to be ruthless, and kill without even flinching, and teach you to shut down your emotions. We need a strong South African Mafia woman, a woman who will make the men shake when she approaches from a distance, not like Adele who sleeps with men in order to get deals, and getting information using her body, we need a woman who will represent us, and face her opponent heads in, and find all the information she needs without dropping their underwear, that woman is you. I'm Prophesying njalo," I give her a joker smile.

Me: "Hmmm," do I really have the traits of being a notorious gangster? Haha, this is funny. But it sounds good in my ears.

"Hey hey, kanty what's going on in there? You've been in there for a long time now, even the food is getting cold," my mom is busy banging the door shouting. "Don't make me call Lee to come and kick this door down, food is ready. I don't want to come back here," we giggle. Lindiwe steps out of the bathtub, and we both go to my room, I throw myself on top of the bed, and listen to her telling me how powerful I'm going to be if I become a Mafia Queen.

Me: "Why don't you become one?"

Her: "I prefer working on the sidelines," I nod. "Anyway, where can I order sex?" I laugh.

Me: "I didn't know that you guys order sex. Why don't you go to a club? I'm sure you will find some loose guy ayalahla namajita phela, umswiphe ntwana," she laughs.

Her: "I plan nalelo, and you also need to get laid I can see webs down there all the way from here," I grab the pillow, and throw it at her.

Me: "Uyanya wena," she laughs.

Her: "Mele ngixove mnax."

Me: "What?"

Her: “Stone, black halls, and green pepper killer combo baby girl.”

Me: “What do they do?” She sneers.

Her: “You dance all night,” I look at her still confused then my mind registers what she actually means.

Me: “Sies wena!” She laughs.

Her: “Let's go, and eat before your mother comes here,” I stand up, and follow after her, she's busy laughing. RHA...



TSAKANI

I was shocked to learn about the shooting because it wasn't long I left the mall, the shooting took place exactly 10 minutes after I left, and for the fact that no one knows what happened, or who got shot, and why it's frustrating. But I was more worried about Lux, when Lee told me that she's safe I became at ease. On the news they confirmed two females dead bodies but their identities are yet to be revealed I wonder who are they, and who killed them. I'm in the kitchen making myself something to eat when my door flies open, and it's Lee. He walks straight to the fridge, and takes out a bottle of Heineken, he opens it, and takes a big gulp of it, I just stare at him as he paces up & down.

“She's a killer man. That retard girl I was telling you about? Lux's cousin? She's a killer man,” he takes a swig. “Ndoda,

ubabhodisile bafo, and she thought I didn't see her covering the evidence njayami.”

“Uringa ngani skhokho?” I stop peeling the carrots, and look at him.

Him: “She killed those two women at the mall njayami, ubacishile, babhubhile,” I chuckle, and shake my head.

Me: “Hhayi ndoda uyang'jutha.”

Him: “Nex njayami. Her T-shirt was full of blood, and so were her hands. The way people are scared of dying I don't think they noticed anything, and she was walking as if nothing happened. She is like me after I'm done killing a person,” he wiggles his brows.

Me: “Imagine someone who needs psychiatric evaluation shooting you in your sleep?” He stops pacing up & down and looks at me.

Him: “Hhayi fuck maarn Tsakani fuck. Let me go to Sol's I need to blow off some steam, I need to burst a nut. Are you joining us?”

Me: “I'll come once I'm done cooking.”

Him: “At least you won't leave us tonight like you did the last time, phela your project is not there. So, you will be with us throughout, I need to forget about today,” he walks out banging the door after him.

Me: “You will pay for the door you bitch!” I can hear him laughing outside I'm sure he's jumping up & down like a little kid seeing a lollipop. So, Lux's cousin is a killer? I wonder who is she working for, and she better not introduce Lux to this dangerous life that revolves around us. Lux is a strong girl, but I don't want her knowing how to kill because once she does all hell will break loose, she will be very dangerous her character says it all, and again it would bring me joy to see a woman kill Adele for me in cold blood. Oh, well I really don't know what I want her to do, ai fuck let me not make decisions on her behalf.

An hour later I'm done cooking, bafethu ngiyalishaya ibhodwe, and I'll be eating this food for the next 3 coming days I don't like wasting food. My phone beeps indicating a message, I view it and it's from Batista telling me that they're waiting for me, I send him my response, and slip the phone back in my pocket then go, and take a quick shower.

I'm about to step out of the house when I find Lux standing on my doorstep, and by the look of it she was about to knock. She's wearing a short dress, waitse nna my dick likes misbehaving when it sees her, and my blood becomes hot. I'm still holding the door looking at her, and she also holds the gaze, and I swear I see her nipples hardening, and she crosses her legs, her chest is going up & down. I lick my lips, and she breaks the gaze a naughty smile creeps out of my face.

“Can I help you?” Lifting her chin making her to face me with my thumb, I'm still keeping my gaze at her, she bats her eyes.

“I- I... Phone,” I brush her lips with my thumb parting them apart, she closes her eyes, and heaves a breath. Perfect. I bring my face to hers, and start kissing her at first she doesn't respond, but as my right hand rests on her breast she responds,

the power of touch. I pull her inside the house, and kick the door close. No, not the kitchen last time she did a number on me, but wait how did she get inside the yard because the gates are locked? Lee makes sure that he always locks the gate. Arh, then it hits me. She came in the very same way she left the last time when she was here, another act of bravery from her.

We step inside my bedroom, and I lay her on top of the bed not breaking the kiss. Her hands are wrapped around my neck, and her legs wrapped around my waist, I don't think she's wearing any underwear of which it's a good thing if you ask me. I pull up her dress, and yank it over her head as he unbuttons the buttons of my shirt, he takes it off my body, and throws it far away. I cup both her breast's with my hands, and play with them. Her hands move to my back, and she draws circles with her nails, then she nibbles on my ear sending some electrifying feeling all over my body.

“Take off your pants,” she tells me in between the kiss.

“You have hands use them,” I lick her face as she unbuckles my trouser, they fall down, and get stuck right on my feet, fuck. I get up from her, and take it off, and she's lying there taking

note of every movement of me, her eyes goes down to my underwear then back at me. I crawl back to bed, and part her legs apart, again my lips meet hers...

Legs spread wide. Her knees bent every so often and her heels dug into the covers as her hips lift, rubbing my stiff fingers back and forth across her distended clit making her moan. Her nails dig my skin as my mouth cover her nipple, sucking at her tender nipples as I slide my middle finger in & out of her furnace-hot pussy and probing deep, and retract them.

“Yessss...,” I run my thumb over her nipple as I look into her eyes and push one of my thighs between hers when she starts twitching, rubbing them together. She moans and press her pussy hard against my muscled thigh.

“Rub your pussy on my leg,” I tell her, and she widens her eyes at me. “Just do as I say,” whispering in her ear, and nibbling on it, I can feel her shiver beneath me. I add my fingers to the mix, rubbing her clit as I suck her tit deep into my mouth, I brush my

fingers along her slit, but don't go in this time around, just teasing her, earning myself a moan from her. I take my fingers away from her and make my way down her body. Pushing her legs apart with a little force, I lower my head leaving trail of wet kisses on her neck, and sniff her pussy. I love sniffing pussy, and I must say that evry pussy smells different, separating her folds with my fingers and take a peek inside her wet pussy's inner lips.

“Who was owning this pussy before me?” Blowing air inside her pussy, then look at her straight in the eyes.

“No- no one,” she says breathless, her chest going up & down. She's lying, I know. But now, her pussy belongs to me. I've slept with many women before, but I've never asked who was the last person inside them, not even one. I give her a grin, and slide my tongue inside her pussy she's wet. She squeezes her legs around my head and rubs her pussy in my face. I hold onto her ass lifting it up a little bringing it closer to my mouth, and lick into her cunt while fingering her clit, her legs starts shaking, and she pushes my head deeper in her pussy with her hands, she screams as I proceed licking her pussy.

“St... Stop- please,” she fists my sheet as I lift her ass higher, and my dreadlocks keep on dangling on the sides. My thumb is circulating around her clitoris, and I slip my finger inside it pressing her Skene's gland, perfect. Her legs vibrate over my hands, she tries getting up, but I press her Skene gland with pressure, and she yelps. I circulate my tongue in his pussy, she eventually cum in my tongue, I pull my head out between her trap, nibbling her inner thighs teasingly, and watch her trying to catch her breath ncoahh bakithi, she's not ready for me. That was just a warm up. I climb between her thighs rubbing my cock back and forth over her wet slit teasing her once again, my hands caressing her boobs, and my lips working hers. The way her nails dig my skin does things to me honestly.

My heart beat against my chest and I appreciate how fucking lucky I am to be finally having her in my bed without her trying something funny, to be at the entrance of this woman's pussy excites me.

“I want you- please. Make love to me,” her voice sound soft in my mouth.

“All in good time. I'm not in a hurry, and I'm going to fuck you, not make love to you; remember my words? Or you've forgotten them?” She shakes her head. “I'm a man of my words, and no we are not going to use a condom. I want you raw.”

“I- I have STD,” she tells me, and I laugh.

“I don't mind, I can always get it treated, and again you wouldn't have come here if you had any, even if you told me that you are HIV positive I would still fuck you just like I'm about to do now,” breathing down her neck, and she swallows at absolutely nothing I can feel her nipples arousing again. Without a warning I push myself in, she opens for me and put her hands on my shoulders. I shove the first few inches inside her and I'm pleased to find her tight as fuck then I slid the rest of cock slowly into her, and she winces and flinches, I start moving inside her slowly.

“Whose pussy is this?” She doesn't respond. I pinch her right nipple, and she yelps.

“Yours,” she responds. I look into her eyes for the truth of her words, longing to believe her, and she mos def not lying. Her pussy is mine she said it herself, I will make her forget all the

guys who've she slept with before. I push my face into her neck and bit into her flesh as I fuck her. I didn't expect her to last, so I found her clit again and tease it with my finger as I speed up the thrusts of my cock in her pussy. Her moans grow louder until they turn into screams as I fuck her harder, the bed rocks as she also moves her lower body trying to level up with me. Her nails dug into me, the way she grunts as she rides her pussy on my cock, I increase my pace, hearing her moaning, and my name escaping her lips makes my cock twitch inside her. I grab her ass and feed her lips my tongue as my cock leaks pre-cum into her. She clutches me harder, digging her nails into my back, making me to hiss, and I lick her cheek.

I wrap my arms around her shoulders, bringing her closer to my chest, my hips grind into hers, driving my cock, the cock that had drawn her to my bed, into her deeper and deeper. Now, I can safely say that she's the only woman who knows how to tame my cock, many tried but failed. Her pussy seems to have an added secret compartment that actually opened up and let me in without any hassles. Is it too early to say that she's tailored for me? Another thing is that; she can fuck. She isn't just laying here like a chicken making fuck-me noises like some, she actually gets into it, which makes me want to cum inside her too soon. Like now! And the aim is not to make her pregnant. She nibbles on my ear hardening my cock, I groan as I stiffens on top of her, my dick swell up inside her pussy, I thrust

thrice, and the first shot of cum blasted into her. Her pussy opened up and accepted my seed as she sucked at me. I stay on top of her, our lips locked together and I feel my cock which hadn't gone down much, start to harden inside her again, she starts moving her lower body beneath me, and rakes her hands all over my back digging her nails here & there she doesn't have to tell me anything, and we are at again... She flips me over, yhey she has strength maarn, she rides me going up & down on my cock making me squirm like a little girl.

She directs my hands on her buttocks, and plays with her boobs biting her lower lip, up-down-left-right, circular motion. I spank her buttocks, and she yelps going faster on top of me, I'm at her mercy, and her at mine. She's wild, she's a freak and most definitely have energy, and that fuels me more, her loud moans are fucking turning me on. Using her feet she manages to lift my legs, and they settle on top of her feet she leans her upper body forward her chest coming into contact with mine. She looks at me straight in the eyes, as she continues riding me, I hold the gaze too, and she smashes her lips into mine, pulling my lower lip with her teeth she increases her pace licking my face, and pulling my dreads as she trembles on top of me her boobs growing bigger, her nipples hardening once more...

“Ju... Just one more thrust, I'm cum...ming,” she says burying her head on my neck biting it, and her juices slide down my

dick, I squeeze her buttocks, and again my dick swells inside her, I shoot my seeds in her again, and she lies limp on top of me catching her breath.

“We are not done yet,” I turn her over and drag her body to the edge of the bed, legs dangling over my broad shoulders giving me the clear view of her pussy, and I go inside her once more. She screams, squirms, and grabs on the sheet as I dick womb her... Drops of my sweat drop on to her body, we are both drenched in sweat. I flip her over, hands on the bed, and her ass bending directly on my still erect dick I enter her from behind loosing myself in her pussy, this feels like heaven. I wouldn't mind taking her again, and again every fucking day. This pussy right here belongs to me, and me alone I just need to mark her so that any guy who tries to sleep with her will know who she belongs.

“T... TK,” her voice comes out as a whisper.

“Just few more minutes baby, just few more,” I tell her as I pound her fast & harder. There's still a long night to go, every time she closes her eyes, I want to be the only thing she sees, and remembering this day, and more days like these to come.

LUXOLO

My vagina is so sore, I never knew that sex can be this tiring hehe, no more mxovo for me even those soothing salts that TK gave me didn't help at all. I slip into my dress, and walk out of TK's bedroom, the sex was mind-blowing, it took me to places I never knew existed, wawu he left me breathless, and brothers have a very huge sex appetite if it wasn't for the mxovo I don't think I would've kept up, but hey I did. As much as I enjoyed the sex I don't think I will ever do it with him again, it wasn't supposed to happen in the first place. But the way he was looking at me, I couldn't help it, but imagine him having his way with me, my legs stretched like I'm doing gymnastic, his glare is fucking murderous in a sexy way though. Fuck, I rub my thighs together as I remember last night's events... Yhey I sex imnandi nina, I lekker. Now all he needs to do is to give me my phone and part ways with him forever, he must never to be heard of again.

I find him busy preparing an enormous breakfast shirtless I wonder whom is he preparing it for because I'm not going to eat. Who prepares breakfast for their one-night stands

anyway? He's strange. His tattoos are just too many I'm sure they all have a message behind them, well, too many messages I must say.

“Hi.” He turns, and looks at me no smile no nothing.

“Sit down.”

Me: “Can I have my phone back I need to leave.”

Him: “I said sit down bubbles.” Bubbles? Am I foam bath or Champagne darling? And he is commanding me, not asking me this man lacks some manners. Who's his mother?

Me: “I don't want to. My phone please,” he grins, and walks up to me. He picks me up, and place me on top of the kitchen counter I try pushing him, but he ain't budging he puts his hands on either sides of my waist, and squeeze it, I yelp. He shakes his head, then breathes down my neck sending some blood electricity in my whole body, I know where this will end up, but I will not allow it. Nope, the devil tempted me last night,

not today Satan not this morning. “Suka maarn wena!” I try pushing him again, but his grip tightens.

Him: “No.” He moves his hand down to my thigh, and parts them apart, and rubs my clit up & down using his finger, I arch my back pushing my lower body forward, and cling on his back as he rubs it, teasing my entrance, and nibbling on my ear. I bury my face in his dread locks, and a moan escapes my lips. He slips it in easy since I'm wet, and starts finger fucking me. I wrap my legs around his thighs.

Me: “Mhmmm... Hmm, ahhhhh,” my breath escalates as he quickens his pace. His thumb finds it way to my clitoris, he circles it, and he vigorously rubs my clitoris. He bites my shoulder digging his teeth into my tender muscle at the base of my neck as he continues to assault my pussy, he pulls out his fingers from my wet pussy, and push against my G-spot rubbing his palm harder against my clitoris. “Fuck TK fuck!” My moans change into screaming, I'm cursing digging my nails deep within his flesh. My thighs begin to quake, my eyes flutter close as my pussy contracts around his fingers, I dug my teeth deeper into his neck, my climax builds up, my toes curl, I throw my head back, and he retracts his fingers from my pussy making my eyes to flip open.

“Your phone is on top of the fridge,” he tells me walking toward the sink, and he rinses his hand. Did he just deny me orgasm? I mean, I was on a verge of spamsing, and he does this to me? He is evil. I just stare at him blankly not believing it, at all. “Oh, before I forget take this,” he hands me 2 morning after pills, and a glass of water. “Drink up, and leave my friends are coming.” Wowza, at least he too, just like me doesn't want a baby. I drink up, and get off the kitchen counter, he hands me my phone, and continues preparing his enormous breakfast. Mxm, Satan's firstborn. I yank the door open, and I bump into his friends or whatever at the door, they seem so shocked to see me.

“Yoh, baby girl. Besenicedile nge marshmallows?” (Were you done having sex) One of them asks me, he looks cute with his bald head I must say. “Baby girl, siyashisa siyazazi. Sibukele asinas'thashalala.” (We're hot we know. Look at us, we don't have a problem) he is a joker too.

“Ndoda umdlile?” (Did you fuck her) Another shouts obviously asking TK. “Hhayi girl ukuvayile yiva I wallpaper iyajampisa,”

(No girl. He really fucked you, your face says it all) I shake my head.

Me: “Can I pass?” They just stand there, and look at me.

Guy 1: “Udlile girl? Like did you eat?”

Guy 3: “Ugcwele bafethu aniboni?” (She is full gents can't you see)

Guy 1: “I'm not talking about that, I'm talking about proper food. Like did you have breakfast? I know that TK is stingy with his food, but did you at least eat?” I shake my head.

Me: “Angidli emzini bazazebangicishe ngegawulo,” (I don't eat in another people's houses they will kill me with food) they laugh.

Guy 2: “Injalo sbabubala nami angigawuli emzini, mara la ngiyagwula sweet heart angixoleli,” (It's like that, I also don't eat in another people's houses, but here I eat, I don't forgive)

“Ek'se nina zinja anivule indlela ahambe loyo olapho enyango,” (hey you dogs move out of way so that one can leave) I laugh shaking my head.

Me: “Bye guys.” They make way for me, I can feel their stares as I walk away.

“I'm single just incase!” Another one shouts. Stepping outside the yard I'm surprised to find Anton (my first driver before Lee) leaning against the car busy with his phone. Could he be...? Hhayi, I shake away those thoughts, but why? Hehe, ai this men's world of theirs is a joke, a whole joke.

“Hi Anton,” he greets with a nod, and opens the door for me, I step inside he closes the door, and walks around the car going to his driver's seat.

Him: “Your off ended so early, now it's back to driving that grumpy old man around, how he pisses me off at times. Anyway, let's go. Are you ready to go back to the pole again?” I shrug. “I must tell you that the club was boring without you,

and not enough money was made during your absence,” he laughs. “You see, that club will shut down without you, yes it was generating money before, but ever since you started working hhayi maarn the sales are going up Sol must give you a raise,” I laugh.

Me: “How's your tummy?” He laughs.

Him: “Much better than the past 2 days,” he whistles, and I shake my head chuckling. But I can't erase the fact that, that devil's claw denied me an orgasm? Wawu. At least I will not get to see him ever again, he is rubbish, nonsonso sies! Then there's my mother who is going to ask me where did I spend the night, and I wonder if Lindiwe/ Nandi is back since she said she was going to a house party with her friends.

Yhey, I can't believe that she actually killed my cousin, and lived her life after as if nothing happened, to her all this seems normal sis even attends house parties, but how do you pretend to be someone else without being bothered for so many years? But I can never ask her that she might kill me too, and have a mask of me made then come back here, and play happy family with my mother, and get to feel TK's dick hhayi, she is going to

be me reloaded, and I don't want that. I find myself laughing,
hhayi shame kushushu ku H for Hektik out there!

★ » ★ «

TSAKANI

The gents are looking at me with questioning eyes, Talon is leaning his arms on top of the kitchen counter his hands on both his cheeks, the very same position where I finger fucked Lux a few seconds ago. I've marked her, and she doesn't know it, I can't wait for everything to unfold. And I guess it is finally

safe to say that I met my match, someone who handles my sex appetite. But I don't want to lie she drained me, she sucked the stamina in me, yhey she showed me flames she showed me something I've never experienced before. I'm 35, and I've never had wild sex like I did last night, she's unmatched. Hearing her moaning in my mouth really did things to me, and the gaze, the look, that sex connection was there, I felt it, she drew me closer to her. Damn, thinking about her makes my dick throb

plus now she's mad because I denied her an orgasm. She refused to sit down, and eat, and I denied her orgasm we are even now. I'm dragged out of my thoughts by someone hitting me with a swab on my front that can only be Leon because he is right next to me. The last time I checked he was leaning against the fridge eating a sausage that he took from the pan, I don't know when he took the swab. The others laugh. Batista is sitting down dishing up for himself, and I lean against the wall, and cross my legs rubbing my chest.

“Tsek maarn!”

“So umdlile vele? Wamudla vele TK?” Leon chuckles.

“Ungahleki Leo mfethu, lo usijwayela amasimba, siba ku waiting list simele lomasimba lo kanty yena udla ama marshmallows?”

Udla ama marshmallows thina si busy sibukelene na marago? Amarago esingakawa dlanga? Sisase majita wakho mara? Ndoda, how are you?" (Don't laugh, this one is taking us for a ride, he is bullshitting us, we were waiting for him, but he was busy having sex? Having sex while we were busy watching booties? Booties that we didn't get to chow? Are we still your friends) Batista laughs, and he chokes on the eggs he is eating, wuhhhh drama. "Hhayi ndoda, ziphathe umdala," (No man, behave. You're old) Talon bafethu ngithi u Talon magenge, hhayi ngeke.

Him: "Ngizakuchacha ntwana yami uzadla amageu nge straw ceda aku choke slam mese uyafa, dead, and never to be heard of again. Akekho ozoku misa skhokho," (I will panel beat you my boy, you will eat mageu using a straw then you choke on it, and then you die. No one will miss you)

Leon: "I trust you," he laughs.

Talon: "Mxm, skhokho usenzele I flop yong. But otherwise, umnandi girl?" (You really failed us)

Me: “Ang'cavi skhokho angiyanga daar,” (I don't know man, I didn't have sex with her) Leon laughs.

Him: “Bruh, did you see her? Did you see her walk, and how flushed her face was? Dude, I think she's pregnant.”

Talon: “Eh baba ungadlali njalo please, asikho ready for incosi soba busy kakhulu,” (don't joke like that we are not ready for a child we are going to be very busy) I shake my head.

Me: “Relax. U vha u Spikiri?”

Batista: “He is with Lee wherever he is.”

Me: “Akasenzeli phansi?”

Him: “Nex ntwana. Leon managed to insert a chirp in his arm, so we will know if he is double-crossing us or what.” I nod.

Me: “Did he see you Leo when you inserted it?”

Him: “Nah, he was passed out. He only woke up after I did everything complaining about the pain in his arm.”

Talon: “Mina bafethu isang'phushisa nzima lento etshunwe u Spikiri, ingibalekisa igazi skhokho,” (I'm still hung up on what Spikiri did, it makes my blood rush)

Batista: “Bruh, that time TK bekam'tshunela izinto ezibhaya am'thatha njengo ncosi yakibo encane skhoskho. Yazi namanje ngisazibuza ukuthy uphushwe yini. U Adele umjuthe njani, phela u Spikiri akanikeli easy.” (TK was doing everything for him taking him as if like he is his little brother, even now I'm asking myself what pushed him. How did Adele pursued him to betray you?, I mean Spikiri is not one to give in easy)

Talon: “Hhayi ikhekhe skhokho akukho okunye. Shuthy becashisa u Adele, bekaku 28°c kanty inja ifudumele yenza ibhayiza,” (No man. There's nothing else other than pussy, clearly Adele was hot, and the dog felt the warmth of it, and he agreed to do it)

Me: “Asijindeni lendaba seyinyongo emphimbweni wami, seyanuka.” (Let's drop this issue, it has now become like bile in my throat, it stinks)

Him: “Ufuna sikhulume nge kuku laka diamond the stripper?” I laugh.

Me: “Anything, but that skhokho.”

Batista: “Let's talk about soccer then, and we need to go to the stadium is been long since we went there. We need to unwind madoda,” all three of them nod in unison. I take out my phone from my pocket, and go straight to my gallery see I stole a few pictures of her while she was sleeping. She's an angel when sleeping, but once she wakes up it's world war 77.

Talon: “Yoh ndoda u diamond the stripper lo? Yah, umdlile, you've eaten her. Hhayi ndoda I hope usihlalisile skhokho,” (I hope you've impregnated her) I laugh. Haha, wasn't he the one who said that I must not get her pregnant, we are busy? See amamenemene? Anyway, why is he looking at my phone? Ufunani?

Batista: “Wena futhi?” (You again) Leon laughs.

Him: “Mental institution is needed here, there's a lot of crazy people surrounding us,” we all laugh.

Talon: “Ubong'qonda skhokho, qond me.” (You should face me, face me) we all laugh. I can never trade these gents for anything, not unless they betray me. We all get up from our seats, and walk to the lounge to watch some soccer, but I know that my mind will drift to a world of its own...



LUXOLO

I flip my eyes open only to find my mother sitting on a chair next to me looking at me, I rub my eyes, and sit up right. Yes, when I came back she was not around, and so was Lindiwe, but I'm so grateful that I have a key of mine.

“Mama.”

“You leave without telling me. Do you have any idea how worried sick I was about you?” I nod. Hell no, I was busy playing adult games with some stranger, she did not even cross my mind.

Me: “I'm sorry Mama I didn't want to wake you up, you were sleeping peacefully, and besides I was not planning on staying out till late, but I had a little too much to drink.”

Her: “Either way. At least Lindiwe had some decency to tell me that she's leaving she doesn't know when she'll be back.

Haven't you heard about those two girls who were found at the mall dead? The very same mall we went to?"

Me: "I heard about them. And I'm sorry for worrying you, I truly am. I hope you got enough sleep."

Her: "I did get enough sleep. Anyway, it's time for you to get for work wake up," I groan covering my face.

Me: "Do I really have to?"

Her: "Yes. You need to pay up rent for this house remember?" I nod, and heave out a sigh.

Me: "What time is it?"

Her: "Half past four."

Me: "And Lindiwe is still not back yet?"

Her: "She came back to change shoes, and left again," I nod.

Me: "And you? Ubuyaphi?"

Her: "I was right next door," I look at her, and furrow my brow.

Me: "Doing what there? Who do you know?"

Her: "I was outside sewing when our neighbor came out from her house, I think she was going to throw away some trash. She greeted me, and invited me over to her house, she is seamstress too," I nod. Nope, she ain't. She might kill you, and make a mask of you.

Me: "She sounds like a great person."

Her: "You have no idea. Now, wake up, and go and take a bath. Do you carry lunch boxes at your work?"

Me: “No we don't, but you can prepare me one if I don't mind, and besides I'm tired of the food from work,” she softly laughs.

Her: “Plus I've cooked your favorite meal Spaghetti & wors with cabbage on the side,” I lick my lips.

Me: “Another reason why I love you.” She gets up from the chair laughing, and walks out. I shove the blanket off from my legs, and walk to the bathroom. I'm really not in the mood to go to work, I don't. Life, but I need the money as my mother says, I don't need it.

I step inside the bathtub after filling it up with water, the soreness from my pussy it's still there, but the soreness is subsiding slowly but surely. Hopefully I will be better when I get to work.

Few hours later I make my way inside Sol's, and there are not many customers it's just your regulars, they greet as I pass by. I knock twice in Sol's office, and yells for me to come inside, I open the door slowly, and I see him pacing up & down,

immediately as his eyes land on me, he hurries towards me, and gives me a smile, a genuine smile that is.

“Thanks God, you're back. Go, and get ready my star it's time to work, and I hope you've enjoyed your 3 days off. You are excused,” I nod, and walk out of his office laughing. What the hell just happened? He is so happy to see me, ahh it's the money. He was losing me, and now his star is back to make it for him again, sighs. I push the door of the change room open, and all eyes land on me. The relief on some others faces is never to be missed, gzus. Only those few are not happy about my return, of which is very much fine with me. What exactly was going on here?

“Luxolo.” Mapule calls me appearing behind me, we hug. She looks so much better.

“Hey love, how are you?”

Her: “I'm good, and you?”

Me: "I'm good too. Thank you. When did you come back?"

Her: "Yesterday. How I missed you."

Me: "How I missed you too, phela you've been gone like forever," she laughs.

Her: "I know, and truly speaking I wish I never came back, but I need the money," I nod.

Me: "Don't we all?" She laughs, and shrugs. We continue chatting about random things. My role in this club is vast maarn, who would've thought?

19

LUXOLO

Immediately as my head hits the pillow someone knocks on my window, and whoever they are seems to be in pain judging by the way they are hissing. I get off bed, and walk toward the window, I slightly open the curtain, and I see Lindiwe clenching her teeth, she seems to be in serious pain. I step out of my room, and go and open the door for her, she gets inside blood coming out of her thigh but it's not much, I widen my eyes, and take off my PJ top, and press it on her thigh.

“What happened to you?”

“Gun battle,” hissing.

Me: “Gun battle? Where? And how did you get shot?”

Her: “I will tell you when I'm feeling better.”

Me: "Don't you need medical attention?"

Her: "The bullet have been removed, I just need to lie down. Mind getting me anything to numb the pains?"

Me: "Tell me what happened first, and I will get you those painkillers," she sighs.

Her: "Let's go to the bedroom before your mother comes here," I nod, then I help her up. She's limping, but the mask is still intact, strong mask this one. We get to the bedroom, and I tug her in bed.

Me: "So, what happened?"

Her: "Why are you up anyway?"

Me: "I was bathing. Masha."

Her: “Well, remember I told you that I'm going to a house party right?” I nod. “I did go, then boma 01:00am we received a call that there will be gang shooting taking place just outside Middelburg around 02:00-3:00am, anyway Mich told us that we are leaving immediately after the call came through, I didn't want to go, but then again I couldn't let the gang down. We took our weapons, and vruuuh. Satheleka ke kule game ye nyawo, by the time we got there besekuqhuma is'bhamu vele, ahh nathi safika sathela left, right & center, then someone threw teargases on the floor, and that's when I got shot I don't even know who shot me, but I'm glad that I'm still alive.”

Me: “What was the shooting all about? All of you guys went there just to shed blood? I'm sure innocent people have lost their lives.”

Her: “No, it's not like that. We went there because Mich had a score to settle with the Black Chain gang.”

Me: “Still. Innocent people lost their lives because of this stupid Mich of yours. Why couldn't she set a day, and settle the issues she has with this black gang than to mingle herself with the other rivals? That's called being a coward in my vocabulary.

She's a bloody coward, taking advantage of the situation; how disgusting can she get? She's full of shit, and wena next time learn to choose battles wisely, don't go whichever way the wind blows you. Uzaze ufele amanyala, for example; look at yourself now, you got shot because uthanda indaba zabantu, you got yourself mixed up in a battle that was not yours Lindiwe!”

Her: “I've learned that the hard way, and besides even if I refused going with them, Mich would've put a bullet on my skull. You never say no to her, ever,” she shrugs.

Me: “At least you ain't me, I would've told her where to get off, bekazonya sesi lakimi strong futhy. Anyway, I've been meaning to ask,” she nods. “How did you end up being part of this M.K women's nonsonso gang?”

Her: “Well, let's just say I wanted some action in my life since it was boring, plus Anthea & Lorna were busy with their families they hardly had time to participate in this gangster shit anymore, so one night when I was bored I decided to go to Michelle's house. Yoh, Michelle used to make my life miserable back in high school, making fun of me, and everyone at school will laugh even if the joke was not funny they were supposed to

laugh, or else they would've been suspend. She had the school eating at the palm of her hands, after all her uncle was the principal," I guess she means as Nandi not Lindiwe. "I knew that the security there was very tight, kanty nging'bani mina? I jumped over the fence, and used tazors to taze the guards, they never saw me coming, and I made my way inside the house, the sliding door was slightly open. Bitch was fucking with some big pot-belly dude on top of the couch, I laughed clapping hands when I saw the man squeezing his wrinkled ass going deeper as Michelle was telling him, and Michelle's legs were stretched out. Michelle screamed when she saw me, and she pushed the man off her. She started shouting at me, and asking me who I am, and how did I gain entrance whereas there were guards outside. I told her straight up, that I killed them. The man stood up, and disappeared in that house." I nod.

"I reminded her about how she used to bully me back in high school, and how she made fun of me before the students, and her peers. Haike, since she was bullying a whole lot of us she didn't know who I was, well, literally. She tried running, but I pulled her by her hair, and she fell on the floor, we started exchanging blows uyashaya yena shame. We fought, and fought till my hands grew wary, and so did hers... We laid on the floor, tired. She was really impressed about me, she started

telling me about her gang, they were still in the early stages though she needed more ladies, and since I wasn't doing anything interesting in life I agreed, that's how I became part of the gang. But Anthea & Lorna weren't impressed, they wanted me to further my studies and make something out of myself, but me & school were never really best of friends, so yeah. One thing I know though is that once they come back in the game is game over for me, and the others out there. They will slaughter us, and feed us to Simanye, by the way don't ask who Simanye is because he is unexplainable." I nod.

Lindiwe sounds like a person with a lot of baggage, or maybe learning about the passing of her mother and her brother, not forgetting being sold to slavery disturbed her somehow, or maybe it's just me, but she seems like a troubled child.

Me: "Oh, for how long have you been part of the gang?"

Her: "2 years now, we've been traumatizing innocent people for as long as I can remember. We shed blood for the fun of it, but now I have fear- fear of the unknown."

Me: "Fear? I didn't think of you as someone who fears something," she shakes her head.

Her: "The gates of bloody war have been opened, this morning the warning was sent, people better brace themselves because it's going to rain bullets, and people baptized with blood. Can you believe me if I tell you that there were more than 5 gangs present there? Everyone was thirsty for blood, it's been long since rivalry blood was shed," my nose flares.

Me: "So, in this oncoming blood shedding war, innocent people are going to get killed? People who don't know anything? Who have no business in this gangsterism shit of yours?" She nods. "Now that's bullshit, you all better find something else to do, or better yet, go and book a stadium for this blood shedding war of yours, and leave innocent people out of it, ngathi ninokunya nyana kulama gang wenu," shaking my head. "Anyway, let me go and fetch you those painkillers." Wawu, I get up from the bed, and walk to the kitchen, I remember seeing my mother putting pills in the cupboards earlier on. I get her a glass of warm water, then walk back to the room, and give it to her.

Her: "Thank you."

Me: "You don't have to thank me," I get under the blanket, and get lost in my own thoughts, something must be done about this blood shedding war that's coming it sounds quite scary if you ask me. But what can be done? Hmm, I just wonder, and whatever the case may be. My mother must be moved away from here before afela amasimba angawazi. I look at Lindiwe, and she has closed her eyes. I shake my head, and lean my head on the headboard...



VUYO

Today I'm going to the club again, I've finally found a way to get that young girl out of that place. I'm in the kitchen making myself something to eat when Cindy steps into the kitchen with a notepad in her hand she looks shaken.

“Babe have you seen this?” Yeah, we are working on fixing our marriage, it's still early ages, so I can't really say where this is going, but I'm hoping for the best

and should it happen that- that girl is my daughter, she will have to accept her, I still haven't told her about though. I, first want to make sure if she's really mine.

“Seen what?” She hands me the notepad, and it's a video. A massacre video, a massive shootout taking place in some club. Damn, what the hell is going on. “Where's this?”

Her: “Club Gazol, just outside Middelburg.”

Me: “Who initiated the shootout, and why?”

Her: "I think it was some gang rivalry of some sort, but someone said that they are sending a message. Blood will be spilled, and people will die we must brace of ourselves."

Me: "What the actual fuck? Brace ourselves for what? We have no business this gang bullshit of theirs!"

Her: "I know. But no one it's safe, no one." I watch the video again, and a man wearing all black with 3 thick black chains around his neck appears, he grins, his teeth are fucking messed up, and they are chocolate too.

"I'm from the black chain gang, and this is us sending a message to you, to all of every gang members out there we are coming. Blood will be shed, and all the women & girls will be shipped, and sold to slavery. The men and the young boys we will recruit them to be part of our gang, be prepared. This that is happening here it's us sending a warning, you won't see us coming, but we are coning!" And the screen goes blank. WTF just happened?

Me: “This is some messed up shit, and you know what's more scary about this?”

Her: “We don't know when they will attack, because it's very clear that it won't be soon because people are already alerted, and they will tighten their securities, and stuff. Just when we are relaxed, boom. They start attacking.”

Me: “Exactly. These people are clever, right now they are instilling fear in us, and I think it's working.”

Her: “I'm even thinking of taking leave, or resign all at once.” I shake my head.

Me: “Don't. What if they start attacking after 2-3 years from now?” She chuckles.

Her: “That will never happen, that's too far. Give them a year, if not 6 months from now.”

Me: "Yah neh, this is a mess." I need to save that girl and move her far away from here before this blood shedding war starts, and I hope my parents are safe there at Zithobele village the war won't affect them, I still need to fix things with them.

Her: "I need to check up on my parents, I will see you later," she kisses my cheek, and walks away.

Few hours later I'm at club Vixen. I make my way inside, and it looks as if like they are moving, or something, and the club is empty.

"What's going on?" I ask the barman who is busy wiping the tables.

"Adele wants to tighten this club's security for the war that's coming, haven't you heard? It's all over the news."

Me: "I heard. We are living in a fucked up world."

Him: "Tell me about it," shaking his head.

Me: "Where's Adele?"

Him: "Sh... Oh, here she comes."

Me: "Thank you." I walk up to her. "Adele."

Her: "How can I help you Vuyo?"

Me: "I wanted some morning service."

Her: "I've moved the girls from here this place is no longer safe for them since the black chain gang is initiating to start war, I don't want them getting caught in the crossfire." Fuck, now what?

Me: "So, we can't get any more services?" She nods. "What must we do when we want to release?"

Her: "You have a wives Vuyo."

Me: "They refuse giving us sex, hence we come here."

Her: "You will have to wait maybe 3 months before the business takes off again, we are really not sure when these gangs will attack. And besides I also have to sharpen my members."

Me: "Fair enough. So, the girl you gave me the last time. Is she also gone?" Adele really doesn't waste time, the shooting was announced this morning, and she's already moved the girls? Wow, talk about serious protection ahead.

Her: "Yeah, she too. Why would I leave her? Anyway, she wanted to spend some more time with you, I wonder what did you do to her. Your name was always on the tip of her tongue, always Vuyo. When things go well, you will be the first person to have her," she gives me a smile, and I nod. I'm so disappointed. "Oh, before I forget she left you something, and told me to give it to you. I'll be right back."

She comes back, and hands me a small box wrapped with a beautiful wrap.

Me: "Thank you, and goodbye."

Her: "You are welcome, and please be safe."

Me: "You too." I walk out of the club, and step inside my car. I unwrap the box, I open it, and it's a strand of her hair, head of a toothbrush, and a small paper, I open it... And it's an address, accompanied by a message that says I must save his little brother, and keep him safe at all times. I close my eyes, and bring my engine to life then I drive off, since I failed rescuing her, I might as well rescue her little brother. She loves him, a lot. I wonder where did Adele take the girls too.



TSAKANI

I'm home to see how my mother is holding up after seeing the morning news. I can't believe that the black chain gang have initiated a blood shedding war with everyone, I thought that it was only last night where they were said to attack the Slayers because a forbidden relationship that took place, it was always known that the slayers must not date in the black chain gang it was their mantra, I guess feelings escalated, and they caught knowing very well that it's forbidden, in fact they were not supposed to cross each other's path because it always ends up in death. Now, everyone will suffer for things they have no idea of, things they don't know only because a dick & pussy got united. I was also surprised to learn that more gangs joined the party, this is messed up.

What I'm sure of though is that, even if they sent out a warning they won't attack immediately, and as for me, I will not run around securing my house, and looking over my shoulder that's not my style, but I will have to move my mother, and my siblings away from here until these fuckers starts attacking. I drive inside the yard, and park my car in the driveway, and step out of it, I find her sitting in the kitchen drinking tea unbothered by anything.

“Mamzo.”

“Boy boy. How are you?”

Me: “I'm good mom, and you?”

Her: “I'm fine too. Are you here to check if I'm safe, or you are here to ask me if I saw the morning news?” I laugh.

Me: “A bit of both. Where's everyone?”

Her: "Kedibone left few minutes ago, she's going on a vacation with friends."

Me: "Friends? What friends?"

Her: "I don't know."

Me: "And you agreed?"

Her: "I didn't. She left me a note," I shake my head.

Me: "What? How dare she?"

Her: "Stop bickering. Kedibone is 29 years old, she knows exactly what she's doing stop worrying about her."

Me: "I can not be not worried about her Mama, have you seen the news?"

Her: "I did, and if she dies I will gladly bury her I'm covered insurance wise. Stop worrying about her, and start worrying about finding a girlfriend before we all die from this war that's coming, it's still fine if you are playing for the same team you can introduce him, I just want to see your partner." I laugh.

Me: "I'm not seeing anyone currently Mama."

Her: "But is there someone that you like?"

Me: "No, not really."

Her: "So, you are going to die single?" She wiggles her brow.

Me: "No Mama. I won't die single."

Her: "Guess I should take your word for it, but I really want grandchildren, in fact I've found a perfect girl for you. Her name is Amogelang, and she's a churchgoer, very humble, and beautiful too. Plus she greets you 20x a day. You will most definitely like her, and I've already told her about you. She

seemed intrigued by you, and I think she loves you.” I shake my head.

Me: “I hear all that you are saying, but the biggest question you should be asking is; will I be able to mark her?” She shifts her lips to the side, and look at me.

Her: “You know what. Forget about her. When are you moving me away from here, because I know that's why you are here for Tsakani.”

Me: “Very soon.”

Her: “Good, because I can do with some fresh air, and hopefully when all this upcoming war is over you will be having a girlfriend. Are you aware that you are the only one who doesn't have a girlfriend, let alone a child out of all your brothers?”

Me: “And you know the reason why.” She shrugs.

Her: "Coffee?" I nod. The door flies open, and it's Sabelo with his wife, and their 3 kids her womb is blessed, oh, and she's expecting again, these two are a perfect example of 'be fruitful & multiply' or whatever the saying is. "Running away from the upcoming war?"

Sabelo: "Better safe than sorry. Did you see all those bodies on that floor? And those people mean business!" Sabelo is such a coward nina.

Her: "I see. Get yourself settled then, I was about to make coffee for this single man here, can I pour for you too?"

Sabelo: "Yes please. When are we leaving?" I laugh.

Me: "Leaving to where?"

Him: "Place of safety, I know that you are capable of finding us one until this is all over, and my wife here must give birth peacefully.

Me: "I will let you know." Guess, I have work to do, and plane tickets to book.

LUXOLO

Weeks later everyone is still busy securing their houses, businesses, and place of worship for the upcoming war that is still making rounds. Everyone is living in fear, people are even scared to go to the malls, towns, and clubs. Sol have also been tightening security in his club, the fence is now an electric one, including the doors. The guards are fully armed this time around, and their uniform have changed, I don't know how Sol did it, but their uniform is bullet proofed, and they also use double glass face shields now, and now there's a limit of how many people are allowed in the club, and again they strip you off your clothes, and check if you don't have any weapon with, they even check us the workers too. I'm just glad that, there are no longer many people coming here this club is so chilled now, I mean I can now concentrate on work without being disturbed, but the girls still can't stand my sight, they just can't stand me, I don't know why or what I did to them for them to hate me this much, and it looks like they've recruited Mapule too in this hate game of theirs, if only they knew that I never lose sleep because of them, I even snore.

Lindiwe left for Colombia 3 days ago, and I already miss her. Hopefully by the time the war starts she would've come back, well 2 months it's a long time I was so used having her around, she was like a sister to me. Before she left, she taught me how to use different guns, and told me their names she was training me secretly though every day for 8 hours, and in a very secluded place, I'm not a pro yet, but I mos def can shoot to kill. And in order for you to get there, you must pass streams jump a very huge deep hole, and pass by the forest then tada you've reached your destination, that place can be a good hide out for this coming war, it's a little bit scary I know. But knowing my mother, she would never go there. It's actually a huge house, it has no furniture, but it's full of guns, and all kinds of illegal things you can think of, I'm sure those weapons were used by a certain army, well, I don't know how they ended there though. Anyway, Lindiwe said that no one knows this place except for her, and her deceased boyfriend Papi. May his soul rest in peace, but how will it when he was brutally killed, and Lindiwe had to witness her boyfriend being killed, on top of that they raped her. They made her boyfriend watch her being raped before killing him. But she avenged his boyfriend's death, or, so I thought because she said something about last man standing, and that's another reason why she went to Colombia she wants to finish what the Colombians started. Oh, well, best of luck to her, and I know that she will conquer the battle.

I get home tired from going in circles in town looking for authentic fabric for my mother, I don't even know what that is, phela I'm not familiar with different kinds of cloths. My mom is actually packing guys, and she is humming a song dancing I wonder where is she going.

“Mama.” She stops packing and turns to look at me, a huge smile plastered on her face.

“Nono.”

Me: “Why are you packing?” She looks at me confused.

Her: “What do you mean why am I packing? Didn't you tell Lee to tell me to pack because you are moving me out of this place, and sending me to a place of safety due to this upcoming war?” Here's another thing, ever since the shoot out took place, and the message was sent my mother never goes out, ever. It even came to a point where she wanted me to resign at work because the world is suddenly dangerous, and she doesn't want to lose me. Yoh, I had to assure her that nothing will happen to

me, and boy it took a lot in me to convince her, but she understood, urh...m. Nope, she never understood, but ke...

Me: "I did? When?" I don't remember talking to Lee, the last time I spoke to him was weeks ago when he brought us here.

Her: "Are you really asking me that Nono? You are actually telling me that you don't know about this?" I scratch my head.

Me: "It must've slipped my mind," I will have to talk to Lee about this. How dare he?

Her: "Oh, my poor daughter. You have a lot on your mind, and I understand if you've forgotten it happens to a lot of us," I nod. Well, in this case it's different because I don't remember giving out such an order.

Me: "I guess. But why are you packing your whole closet?"
Sitting on top of the bed.

Her: "Because we don't know when this war will be over Nono. What if it takes years?"

Me: "Well, you could always sew, or buy new clothes mus."

Her: "I honestly don't like clothes that I sew myself, I prefer something that I bought, and I bought all of this, but I will surely see dresses for you," I laugh. Right. "Where exactly are you taking to me?" I don't know.

Me: "Urh...m. It's a surprise Mama, you will see where you are going, and I have no doubt that you will love it there," she nods giving me a smile, and continues packing. Dammit Lee. What game are you exactly playing?

Her: "Anyway, did you find the cloths that I've sent you for?"

Me: "Nope. Police were closing shops in town, and they asked us to leave they want to do some searches in some of these shops, so I also came back."

Her: "What? These police are failing to attend important matters, but they are too quick to attend shops? I'm sure they are searching foreign internationals."

Me: "Nope. They are searching all shops, including Woolworths too." I had to lie because I know that she will send me back if I tell her the truth.

Her: "That's bad. Aren't you going to pack? Or are you already done?"

Me: "I haven't started Mama, but I will soon. And besides I'm not going with you, I still have things to take care off."

Her: "Like what?"

Me: "Like pleading with Sol to give me another leave, but unpaid one for that matter. Then I will join you shortly."

Her: "Oh, I see. I will pray for your boss to grant you one. So, what will I be doing there apart from going there for safety?"

Me: "You will see, I'm sure there would be something to do, and they will buy you a new sewing machine. Who knows, maybe you will make yourself money if you sell our South African clothes there."

Her: "I like that, it will really keep me busy."

Me: "Let me leave you get done with packing."

Her: "Okay, and I've wasted time already talking to you. I'm supposed to be leaving 3 hours from now," I choke on my saliva.

Me: "What? Tha... Well, I didn't realize that time is moving so fast, I'll be right back I need to make a quick call," I get up from her bed, and walk out of her room. I get to mine, and I dial Lee's numbers he answers on the 4th ring.

"Missing me?"

“You wish. What game are you exactly playing Lee?”

Him: “Game? What are you talking about?”

Me: “Where the hell are you taking my mother? And how dare you tell her to pack without even consulting me?”

Him: “I was just following orders,” I chuckle.

Me: “Orders? Who gave you those orders?”

Him: “The main man, indoda yendawo.”

Me: “Who on earth is that?”

Him: “Malum'z.” What? Who is this Malum'z, and why would he want to take a mother to a place of safety? I mean, who gave him the go ahead? This is fucked up.

Me: "Who on earth is that Lee? Are you gambling with my mother's life?" He laughs, he finds it all funny.

Him: "Relax, no one is gambling with your mother's life. The boss just want to her safe, you don't have to worry about her, and trust me when I say that nothing will harm her." As if that's easy trusting someone, trust is earned.

Me: "I don't believe you Lee, and my mother is not going anywhere."

Him: "You don't get to call the shots, only the boss can. Not unless you have a safe place where you can take her too." Sighs, there's none.

Me: "Fine. But I still don't trust you, and why would your boss want to save my mother?"

Him: "Because you are his."

Me: “What? You must be out of your mind. I'm no one's property, no one owns me,” he laughs.

Him: “He does, you just don't know it yet. So long, tell your mother to get done packing I'm on my way,” he hangs up before I can even respond. Who exactly is Lee working for because I'm 100% positive that it's not Sol, unless he is working for Tk! Nah, that wrinkled paper is too arrogant. I wonder who is he working for, but funny enough I trust him, I trust that he will keep my mother safe plus they are the best of friends lately, I wonder what do they converse about. I lie on my back, and close my eyes, I know that one way or the other he will pop up in my mind. Sometimes I feel like he is present, he is with me, watching me. It gets kind of creepy at times. Ai, sengahlanya nou.



TSAKANI

Everyone is done loading their luggage into the sprinter, I have hired a sprinter to accommodate all eighteen of them (my brothers, their wives, their in-laws, and their children) they all came to my mother's house, I'm sure my mother told my brothers that I'm moving her

and Sabelo to a place of safety hence they also came here. Yazi, I don't understand why they came here. They could've just bought plane tickets, and fly to wherever with their families, but no. They all want to be rescued by their little brother old as they are, if they run to me then whom am I supposed to run to? I swear their wives are dating gays, I mean they don't even know how to throw punches, well Hlulani does but when pushed to his limits.

I wonder how did bubbles take the news of knowing that her mother is leaving, and no one had the audacity to inform her

about it. I can actually see her flaring her nose right now, and raising her brow in anger, her eyes twinkle when she's angry. Yah neh, you see I even notice the slightest things about her. Anyway, we are going to meet up with Lee at the garage so that bubbles mother can join the rest, hehe I also wonder what will my mother say when she sees bubbles mother, at least she won't get time to throw questions my way, besides Paul will be the one who will be driving them to the airport because I have things to take care off.

An hour later we are parked at the garage, and Lee haven't arrived yet, I wonder what's taking him so long. I take out my phone, and call him he answers on the 2nd ring.

“Yoh, give us 3 minutes TK there's a human piano making noise here causing me a headache!” I laugh, and I know exactly who it is.

“Ayt,” he hangs up. My mom comes back with some girl, she's beautiful I don't want to lie to you. She has meat in all the right, I guess she's the church girl judging by her outfit, Long skirt, cardigan, and a doek covering her head. But the connection ain't there, none whats so ever. She ain't the one.

“Boy, this Amogelang the girl I've been telling you about, and Amogelang this is my son Tsakani. You know boy I found Amogelang inside the shop, and I told her to come with me so that she can meet with you.”

Me: “After meeting me, then what?” My mother's smile vanishes, and so is Amogelang's.

Her: “Be nice son. You don't have to show her that you are rude, try accommodating her.”

Me: “No. I don't want to accommodate her, I'm sure there's some young man fearing God in your church having his eyes on her, Mama please. Each to their own, she cannot date her opposite, omunye no munye ku lane yakhe.” My mom looks at me astonished. “Vaya baby girl asikho I story sakho,” she quickly turns on her heels, and walk away.

Mom: “Mara wena zindlebe zaka yihlo, did you really have to embarrass me like that? Hhayi, u rude shame that poor girl was ready to cry, u rude boy yuhhh. No wonder you are single, no

girl can stand your rudeness. Wuhhh, who do you take after mara wena?"

Me: "I take after a distance relative maybe," shrugging.

Her: "Sewuyanya manjer. Do you know your distance relatives?"

"Language Mama. Leave him Ma, he will die single." Hlulani says appearing behind us. Mxm... My dick throbs, she's here and now with no absolute doubt I'm sure that he's mine. But I will not introduce her to the family just yet. And she is making noise busy exchanging words with Lee, we all turn to look at their direction, and she is indeed exchanging words with Lee, Lee is frustrated. I see Lee whispering something in her ear, and she looks our direction, and whispers back to Lee, he laughs. I wonder what are they whispering about.

Mom: "And who are those people? Never mind Lee, and the old woman. Who is this noisy girl?"

Hlulani: "I wonder too." They finally get to us, and they greet. We respond, the others are peeping through the windows.

"TK. Can I talk to you in private?" She flares her nose.

"First, let's bid goodbye to these people here then we will talk," winking at her, and she rolls her eyes.

Mom: "Whoa whoa, who is she and why would she want to talk to you in private? Don't tell me that she's your girlfriend!" Lux tilts her head, nose flares, and she's about to say something when Lee pulls her away from us. I know that she was going to tell my mother where to get off without even flinching, or showing any remorse. I chuckle, and shake my head.

Hlulani: "I like her, I really do. She will fit in just fine, and a lot of people will learn to stay in their lanes," he laughs. "Can I help you with your bags Ma?"

Mom: “No. She has hands she can carry the bags herself, and I wonder where is she going.” Lux Mom is just standing there looking at her barking.

“You need to learn to watch your tone, and teach yourself how to talk to people. You are a grown woman to be talking in such manner, you don't even have to worry yourself about me because I did not ask to be brought here, I can always go back to my house no one chased me. And again, what exactly is it that you are teaching these kids? Your son is offering to help an old woman with her bags, and you tell him straight up not to because I have my own hands? Your parenting skills are really questionable. Lee, please take me back to my house because no one chased me there.” She is already on her heels walking away. I look at my mother, and she is speechless.

“Wait Ma, you don't have to leave. You can always come with.” Sabelo interferences, I still don't understand why did my mother give us different names, we are all Tsonga's mus.

“No. My mother is not going anywhere with you, clearly she is not wanted.” Lux says helping her mother with her luggage.

Me: “Luxolo!” She stops on her tracks, and slowly turn to look at me. “Sabelo, go and take those bags and load them in the sprinter time is not standing in one place.” Lee is busy laughing from a distance. Lux sends a deadly stare my way, and a grin plasters on my face. “As I said, we will talk.”

Her: “I hope you are covered insurance wise, and your mother better not hlukumeza my mother, or else I will hunt her down.”

Me: “And I believe you. Why are you wearing leggings?”

Her: “How is that any of your business?”

Me: “At least tell me that you are not wearing any underwear.”

Her: “Fuck maarn wena!” I laugh.

Me: “Let's go, and bid those people goodbye's.”

Her: “Your mother neh?”

Me: "Don't worry about her, she will do just fine. Can I hold your hand?"

Her: "For what? It's not as if like we are a couple or something."

Me: "But we had sex mus, raw for that matter. What does that tell you?"

Her: "It tells me nothing, it tells me that it was just sex," I put my hands on her ass.

Me: "I can always finger fuck you right here, right now. You know right?" She rolls her eyes. We get to the sprinter, and bid goodbye to everyone.

Hlulani: "She's the one TK, she's the one for you."

"But I don't like her," Okuhle, Hlulani wife says.

Lux: “And you think I like you? You think I give a shit whether you like me or not? Baby girl there are a lot of women hating on me sitting on the benches waiting for me to give a fuck. You can gladly join the queue, and keep it moving sis.”

Mmathabo: “And as for me, I like her, a lot. You see this one, she's a gintsakazi, a tsotsikazi, a perfect match for TK. When I come back, we must hook up, finally some sister wife who wouldn't tolerate bull shit, in fact give me your numbers,” she hands Lux her phone, and bubbles punches in her numbers, I look at my mother, and she is looking straight ahead, you can see that she's on a verge of crying.

Me: “Well, have a safe trip everyone, we will keep in contact.”
I'm about to close the door.

“Everyone down!” Lux tells us before we can all register what's going on, bullets are flying in the air. I don't know how, but she manages to get hold of my gun that was attached on my gun holster, she rolls down on the ground, and the gun goes off twice, then bursting of tyres is heard from a distance, and some screeching. She gets up from the ground, and starts running Lee is behind her heels with a gun in his hand.

Me: "Is everyone okay?"

Them: "Yeah, we are."

Me: "The kids?"

Them: "Yes."

Me: "Okay. Paul drive."

Mmathabo: "Be safe, and tsotsikazi is for keeps keep her safe!"
Paul roars the engine to life, and drive off. I run after Lux & Lee, as I'm approaching the scene there's a crime scene tape, and the car is beyond repair, it has burnt into flames. The police were too quick to attend the scene, of course they are because there's a police station near by.

"What happened?" I ask one of the police.

“Faulty car wires, people don't like servicing their cars.” I nod, and walk away. I wonder where is Lee & Lux, but I'm positive that they are safe wherever they are. Lux's instincts kicks faster than any other instincts I've ever seen, she's fast too, and when did she know how to use a gun, and aim? I'm impressed. The excitement I'm feeling right now, it's fucking awesome. My phone rings, and it's Lee.

Me: “Where the hell are you?”

Him: “Buying food here at steers. Man, why didn't you tell me that this girl is a bad bitch? A whole mother fucking gangster?”

Me: “I didn't know man, I only saw her in action today, man she's good, very good.”

Him: “I'm impressed man. And the garage footage have been taken care of, don't worry. Get your flat ass here man.”

Me: “Do you have any idea who were they?”

Him: “None man, but babhodile feder feder. He hangs up. Damn! I wonder who were they, and who sent them.

TSAKANI

No one is saying all three of us are lost in our thoughts as we drive to my house, Lee is the one driving, and I'm next to him. Bubbles is sitting at the back, head laid back on the head of the seat looking outside the window. I just don't understand how the car ended up exploding, but they will tell me. And again, I wonder what would've happened if bubbles was not around, I mean no one saw it coming after all we were not expecting to be attacked. I don't even want to imagine what would've happened, or how many people would've gotten shot it all feels surreal. But who were those people really after? Shit is starting to get real, it's time to fasten our seatbelts, and get back in the game. I wonder what were our parents reaction, especially Lux's mother when she saw her daughter in action? Because I'm quite sure that my mother is now scared of her, and Mmathabo likes her. See, my mother never really accepted Mmathabo as her makoti she's just tolerating her because she's married to Tinyiso, if it was not for that she would've long got rid of her, and Mmabatho doesn't give a fuck. The only Makoti she loves its Okuhle, very respectful that one or maybe it's because she's a pushover, she does everything being told without asking questions, and Hlulani hates that, then my mother would get

angry at Hlulani when he reprimands him, and she will stop talking to him. Well, Hlulani doesn't even care because he knows that she will be the first one to reach out to him.

An hour later we are parked in my yard, and we all walk inside the house I never lock the door anyway, Lee opens the door, and we step inside I place the dodgy bags on top of the table. Lee heads straight toward the fridge, and take out two cans of Heineken.

“Want some Miss piano maker?” Lux sends him a stare. “My bad. Want some diamond?”

“I don't do ciders, I'm into gin & cocktails. So, no, thank you.”

Him: “So, you are going to watch the beers slide down our throats?”

Her: “I will not even be bothered, but I'm hungry.”

Me: “You can eat me,” she shakes her head.

Her: "I'm serious TK. And I need some meat not burgers."

Me: "There's a fridge right next to you."

Lee: "You guys are officially together now?"

Her: "Askies? Me & who?"

Him: "Why are you asking the obvious? You, and Takalani here." I shoot him a stare, and he chuckles.

Me: "No. We are not together, and I will never date a girl like her she's not my favorite cup of tea."

Her: "And you think you are my favorite? Boy, you hardly cross my mind. I know real men mina, not young boys like you." I hope she's joking, she better be joking.

Me: "Excuse me?"

Her: "You are excused," she rolls her eyes at me. Lee laughs. "And wena? What's tickling you? Did maybe one of us made a joke unaware?" The bottle gets stuck on his lips, and he shoots his eyes open.

Him: "Y... I... Okay, wawu." He sounds hurt.

Her: "I guess you are one person who doesn't know how to take jokes, and that's a turn off in a man. You are not exciting, you need to loosen up a little, it will do you good, or else hehe. Let me not say anything, and no I won't apologize." Now it's my turn to laugh, she looks at me.

Me: "Don't start with me." She laughs.

Her: "You not worth it shame, don't flutter yourself." Ouch.

Lee: "Your words are wounding diamond, honestly."

Her: “Then you are not ready for me. Anikho ready for me at all, and it's quite clear that you will not handle me.” She glances at me once.

Me: “Y...,” the door pushes open, and Talon comes inside followed by Leon. They greet us, and their gaze stops on Lux.

Her: “I'm not an action movie drop the staring, it's annoying,” Leon drops his head, but Talon doesn't. He looks at her straight in the eyes brushing his chin, and Lux holds the gaze not even blinking, you see Talon can stare bafethu until you feel uncomfortable, and end up dropping the gaze.

Him: “Bese ungubani wena sisi?” (And you are)

Me: “Uhlanganaphi nokuthi ngingubani? Kuhlohlonya kuphi?”
(Where do you fit in about who I am? What's poking you)

Him: “Hhayi kabi, mara uyakena ukuthi u ringa nobani?” (Not in a bad way, but do you know who you are talking)

Me: “Ang'cavi futhi angifuni nokwazi skhokho. Knowing you won't increase my bank balance, and the prize of bread will still remain the same. Uyabona ukuthi awuna impact? Uyacava mara?” Talon looks at her, he is speechless. That's a first. “Now stop staring, you ain't a hit.” Leon chuckles.

“Finally, finally bafethu. Anyway, TK I came to check if you are fine.”

Me: “I'm fine skhokho, uveni ngami?”

Talon: “Sicela I meeting namadoda k'phela hhayi abanye abantu,” (can we please have a man's meeting, not with other people) she looks at bubbles.

Lee: “Lalela ke mfana, u diamond akayi ndawo you can say whatever you want to say in her presence.”

Him: “Lee, hhayi skhokho zidinga ama hawks lezi.” I chuckle, and shake my head.

Me: “Masha Leon.” Talon clicks his tongue, second meet up between the two of them, and they started off on a bad foot. It's going to be a great one.

Leon: “Your boy ntwana yami told Adele that you will be moving your family to a place of safety, and Adele ordered a shootout for you & your family. I tried calling you wanting to warn you, but your phone rang unanswered. Seeing that you weren't answering your phone I texted Talon, and asked him to go to the garage to check on whether you are safe or not, when he got there he said he found no one, he then asked the workers, and they said that you guys already left.” I bang the kitchen counter, damn you Spikiri.

Talon: “Feder skhokho sami bathi bekuphapha eyabelungu nisashaya abo goodbye daar, ehkh kanty konumunye u thekeli o bathe tla, bathi uthekeli wathi zonke ngesisu ceda wagcumela yabelengu, and u blind kabi bathi bekuyi film mfana, feder u lovey wathi yabelengu wathi kayi 2 kwaqhuma umnyamane skhokho, hhayi ke ikari yathi 1 2 mshado smovane style, yakhawatheka yaqhuma umlilo. Uyabona skhokho kube bekungasi I lo lavi angicavi ngabe kuhambeni ngani. Awusho ke

skhokho uyamazi lo lovey?” (Okay bro, they told me that a shooting took place while you were busy bidding goodbyes, but the girl already saw the shooters. The girl shouted for everyone to lie down, and she jumped for a gun, they said the girl is the best, they said it was a movie boy. So, the girl shot twice and the tyres busted, then the car lost control, and it exploded, if it wasn't for the girl I don't know what could've happened to you guys. So, do you know this girl) I look at bubbles, and she's focusing on the plate in front of her.

Me: “I know her. Feder, where's Spikiri?”

Leon: “Eish, about that. He was in that car that exploded.”

Me: “Good. Serves him right. Umbonile Lee?” Lee shrugs, and then he looks at Lux.

Lee: “Yah, I did, but it was already too late the car was already on fire then, we left before the police can get there. And hade about your gun, we had to destroy it.” I nod.

Leon: “He killed himself basically. Yerrr, whatever Adele fed him is really working overtime, for him to double-cross you even though you gave him a second chance, hhayi a kana dankie saaarn, but feder ufele ku duty I wonder who will Adele recruit to spy for her next. She really wants you out.”

Talon: “Mara akaphumeleli kule gamors yakhe akevele ayeke ngoba anyeke aze aphumelele. Manjer, awutshele mina TK sithini I story saka lo?” (But she ain't succeeding in bringing you down

she should just leave it, because she won't succeed. Now, tell me. What's her story)

Lee: “Hhayi baba, ungabuzi. Yiskhokho lesi finish.” (Don't ask. She's the best)

Him: “Skhokho kuphi? Ngokudlala ku pole? Lapho ngiyavuma skhokho,” (Best where? By playing on the pole? There I agree with you) Lee laughs.

Me: “Yilo oqhumise ezimyama, yile one egcumele esami sabelungu. Umsindisi wezi mpilo zethu ke lo.” (She's the one

who busted the car tyres, she's the one who jumped for my gun. She's our lives saver) He laughs.

Him: "Ayihlekisi skhokho. Usho lo?" (It's not funny man. You mean her) he laughs, and Leon just stares at us not believing it. "You joke too much, she can never do such. Akavele abambelele ku pole yakhe ningazojutha nina." (She must stick to her pole dancing, don't sell us lies)

Me: "K. Lee, I think it's time I visited Adele she's crossing the line."

Lee: "Leave her for now, her spy is dead she's going to be stressed until she loses weight, she has no inside man." He's right though, but she still needs to be reminded about whomst am I!

"I need to leave, I need to go, and prepare myself for work," bubbles says getting up from the chair.

Lee: "Will you be able to cope?"

Her: "Yeah, it's not as if like I killed them. They should've hired someone who knew how to control the steering wheel not some amauture, they killed themselves. And besides I think there was something faulty about the car, I'm not a car expert neh, but that car was tampered with, it exploded too quick. I shot the tyres because I knew that they will puncture, and slow down the car. I guess this Adele of yours had other plans of hers." She shrugs, and walk to the sink. Now, that she's mentioning it, she might be right.

Leon: "So, you are the girl?"

Her: "What girl?"

Him: "The hero that saved the day?" She shrugs. "I'm impressed, you never strike me as someone who is a gangster."

Her: "I'm not a gangster babe, but I do shoot to kill I need to protect myself this world is no longer safe," he nods.

Talon: “Ngiswabile. Hade lovey for judging you so fast, hade saarn ng'zokutlamela I Ice-cream. Uyavuma?”

Me: “Nah. Lee, please drive me home.”

Him: “Sure.”

Talon: “Awww my loving, into ka lait, intombi yomjita awungigaye 2 maarn. Nginge sifo sokuwa baby love, ask them; bazokugcwalisela.” Lux laughs, and shakes her head.

Her: “Lee?”

Me: “Chilla memba I'll drive her.”

Her: “Bye gents, and wena Talon buy me a car, and I will forgive you.”

Him: “Hhayi girl voetsek noxolo lakho,” she laughs stepping out of the house, and I hear Talon clicking his tongue.

Me: “Are we going to have sex?” We step inside the car.

Her: “Sex? That's all that your mind is filled with? marshmallows? Samanyobinyobi?” I laugh.

Me: "I can't help it. I'm joking maarn," she clicks her tongue, and focus on the road. "You are my girl right? Like uyacava angisho bubbles?"

Her: "Dream ndoda dream," I laugh as I queue some music.

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LUXOLO

Yoh, yazi I'm more worried about my mother. I mean, she actually saw me firing a gun, too bad I did not get to see her reaction I'm sure her mouth was wide open together with her big eyes staring in shock. I don't even know how I would've answered her if she was around, but I know that she will call me, and ask me over the phone at least in that way I'll be able to spin her a story. As for TK's mother, I don't even want to mention her ikhombene between the 2 of us klaar, things will never be the same again, she's noisy. But I'm glad that my mom put her in line, you see my mother might be everything, mara once she disciplines you she disciplines you politely, and you will never hear her shouting. Hhe, but the words always leave a bitter taste in one's ears.

So, this house belongs to TK no wonder he did not ask for directions he knew exactly where we were going, and truly speaking I don't have the energy for him. Anyway, my instincts always kicks in faster, and I have to act on it without thinking twice. When I saw the car approaching in slow motion, and the silver gun glistening in the front window I knew ukuthy kushubile, and when the other one popped his head out of the window, that's when I ordered everyone to go down, and

Lindiwe's shooting lessons came in very hand, I remembered her words.

“If your shooters are using a car wait for it to pass then shoot the tyres at the back that will slow down the car, and possibly the car will lose control if the drivers hands aren't steady, and they ain't quick enough to hit the brake. Don't wait for them to stop the car shoot at them immediately as they slow down.”

Me, I'm a fast learner mus. She also taught me how to snatch ones gun fast before they can even react, she actually taught me a lot, she also taught me some karate and took me through all kinds of explosives, their names, and when to use them. You see, if I was that focus in school I'm sure I would've been somewhere far in life by now. But hhey, school was never my favorite, ever.

“Home sweet home,” he gets himself settled on the couch, and the remote is already in his hands busy changing channels.

Me: “And nou? Why aren't you driving back to yours?”

Him: "Why should I? I want to be here with you, I mean you are going to be bored because your mother & your cousin aren't around. So, who's supposed to keep you company if not me?"

Me: "Well, my boyfriend is coming," he laughs.

Him: "And he will find me here with my legs on top of this table," he puts them up. This guy. "I will shoot him, then shoot you too."

Me: "Are you being for real right now?"

Him: "This ain't Mr Bean bubbles, it's reality. So, what's for dinner?"

Me: "There's food in the kitchen."

Him: "And you are telling me this because?"

Me: "Because you want dinner, duh."

Him: "Dinner that will be made by you, and you will be the dessert. Sol won't have a problem with you not coming to work tonight, I will compensate him for this night that old man loves money. Don't worry. So, about that dinner bubbles, what are we having?" I throw myself next to him, I'm defeated, yazini he drains me.

Me: "You are annoying you know that?"

Him: "I know bubbles, and I love annoying you."

Me: "Geez!"

Him: "I know," hhey this one is the pain in the ass. He puts on soccer channel O. "We need some snacks while watching TV. Don't you have any?"

Me: "Kitchen."

Him: "Get your flat ass up, and go get us some snacks."

Me: "This is abuse!"

Him: "You ain't seen nothing yet. Tonight is just the two of us bubbles, just the 2 of us, and no we are not going to have sex this is your mother's house, not yours. But we can always go the graveyard nearby."

Me: "Hhayi maarn!" He laughs.

Him: "Let me text the gents, and tell them to leave I'm not coming back."

Me: "I'll go, and get us those snacks." I'm already on my feet.

Him: "Don't forget some beer."

Me: "I only have gin & Vodkas."

Him: "Nizofa nibancane yazi, vodka will do just fine, and gin will be perfect for you."

Me: "You don't get to tell me to what to do."

Him: "I know, and I just did tell you, funny enough you are following my orders bubbles," he laughs.

Me: "Uyikaka wena yeva ungu swine."

Him: "Its what we both in common, we are both swine's, and more," I laugh, and he joins me. He is such a fool, gosh.

LUXOLO

I flip my eyes open, and jump out of bed screaming when I feel something moving down my legs only to find that it was TK, he was circling his belt on top of my legs, that time I thought that it was a snake or something. He laughs as I try to catch my breath.

“Tsek TK voetsek! You almost killed me!” He is still laughing.

“Tsek maarn!”

“Wuuuuh, kanty? You should've seen your face bubbles, yerrr. Who would've thought that you are afraid of your kind? I mean, you, women & snakes are one and the same thing.”

Me: “Hhayi ndoda, noh. Vaya uyekakho, you want to kill me in my own home? You have a liver ha.ah. Wait, what am I even saying? This is your house do whatever you want ke!” He continues to laugh.

Him: "Nah. I don't want to leave, and tsek I can stay here for as long as I want."

Me: "So, uyakipita? You are doing vat & set?" He snorts.

Him: "Very much so, and it's such a good feeling waking up in someone's house, no wonder ladies didn't want to leave my house once they come to visit me. Kumnandi emadladleni wabanye abantu skhokho," (It's nice in other peoples houses)

Me: "Mxm. Why are you talking about other women in my room? Uyang'delela uyazibona?" He chuckles.

Him: "Does it wound your heart when I talk about another woman in your presence?" He smirks.

Me: "Pfftttt, what? Oh, please. It doesn't wound me or anything, and why would I give a fuck about you, and other women? What you do is none of my business." Yeap, this is me consoling myself. But the truth is I'm jealous bafethu, I don't know even know why because there's nothing going on

between us. We are just people who once slept together, raw, and now. Fuck, he melts me. I need to pull myself together before I turn into complete water, you guys know that I'm stubborn, but when it comes to him? Hhayi shame, the stubbornness in me shoots down my pussy, and fills my underwear, he pushes those buttons that makes me find myself submitting to him. Nah, this is a test. A test to see whether I'm a whore or what, no. I need to keep it together, but how when he is staring at me the way he is staring me right now? Like, hello? How can I not be a whore whereas he is an entire three meal course? Snap out of it Lux, you can do this.

Him: "So, how wet did I get you?" He grins.

Me: "Pardon? Not even a tiny drop."

Him: "You are lying and you know it."

Me: "Your opinion phela I will not dispute that. Anyway, thanks for keeping me company last night, but right now may you leave? I need my space back," he shrugs.

Him: "I said I'm not leaving. We are going to spend the day together, and annoy you even further."

Me: "Don't you have a girlfriend to attend to?"

Him: "Girlfriend? I have girlfriends bubbles, and no I don't have to attend any of them." I wonder how many girls saw his bedroom wall, and in which direction is his bed placed, I still can't believe that I'm one of those girls, a whole Lux? Me? Miss radio station? Yazi, in all 3 of my relationships I always used the 90 days rule, but with him. 2 encounters, and I was already screaming his name, and fisting his sheets to top it all, I had raw sex with him. I didn't even know his status, clearly I was risking with my life, by the way I'm clean, I did test for HIV I even asked the Dr to draw my blood, and take it to the lab just to be on the same side. Now, I don't even want to imagine how I would've reacted if I was HIV positive, ishUUU but then I would've only had myself to blame, no one else. I swear the devil was the one controlling me.

Me: "Disgusting. Seeing that you woke up first, were you at least a gentleman enough, and made us breakfast?"

Him: "Breakfast? This ain't my house bubbles," he is busy with his phone.

Me: "Oh, okay." I walk out of the bedroom, and go to the bathroom. I rinse my face & brush my teeth then I head straight to the kitchen. This man will know me very well, he will shame. Yazi, I don't even know why I'm entertaining him, I honestly don't.

I get done preparing myself breakfast, I even made sure that the smell will lure him to this kitchen in that bedroom he's in. TV is boring me lately, but cartoons will do.

"Why didn't you call me, and tell me that breakfast is ready?"

Me: "Ready where? This ain't your house boy, go and eat breakfast in your own house," he snorts.

Him: "Is this how it is now?"

Me: "It is what? Go to your house, and eat breakfast then you come back here." He shakes his head, and settles on my lap.

Him: "As I said before I'm not going anywhere, and now we are going to share your breakfast whether you like it or not bubbles. Can we sit down on the carpet at least?"

Me: "No." Picking up a strip of bacon, and throw it in my mouth. He chuckles, and he picks me up from the couch. "Uyenzani?" Hhayi nina, he puts me in the bathroom then he walks out quickly, I hear the key turning. Nigga just locked the fucking door, WTF? "TK open this damn door you piece of shit!"

Him: "I will after I'm done eating breakfast bubbles, enjoy your little breather in there so long," he laughs then he whistles. Fuck! There's no spare key here, shit. Now what? It was going to be better if I had my pin with, and there's nothing to use here to open this door. God, must be testing me with this maniac. He will pay for this.

★»★«

NOMALANGA (Lux's mother)

We finally arrived in our destination American Samoa, everyone is lost in their own worlds probably still traumatized from that shoot out that took place back there at the garage in South Africa. It's 02:45am, and we are all tired all I need is some rest, but first I will have to freshen up. I put my bags in my assigned room, we will be staying here at Tradewinds hotel until further notice, this hotel is very beautiful I tell you even the rooms are big, of which makes me wonder how did Luxolo afford all this. Or maybe that dreadlocks guy pulled some few strings for her? No, man this ain't making sense at all, not unless I'm really slow at catching up on things. Revisiting my conversation earlier on with my daughter it was very clear that she had no idea about all of this so-called "safety trip" of ours.

I'm still taken aback by what happened back there in South Africa. I never knew my daughter as someone who knows how to use a gun I was really shocked, and my heart stopped beating for a few seconds when I saw her in action, she wasn't my Luxolo. She was not the daughter I gave birth to, she better not be a gangster or something along those lines because these things are dangerous I used to see the movies on TV they even end up killing each other, and I don't want to lose her I've lost a

daughter before because of all this gangster nonsense. Her name was Luxolo too, just like my current Luxolo she was hyperactive, but not talkative.

I've been watching her from a distance ever since she was 10 years old, the choices I've made in my past left me with no choice, but to give her up for adoption. I'm not really a saint I have my own skeletons too lurking around, and I might've lied a little about how my marriage with Eddie was, let's just say I'm also to be blamed for my failed marriage with Eddie, all that glitters is not gold after all. But, I was doing all of this to protect her I didn't want her to grow up without knowing me just like Luxololwethu. When I learned that she was a gangster, and had her own gang a decade ago I knew right there & then that I've failed her, she doesn't even know about my existence and it's best that way all the love I failed to give her I gave it to Luxolo, and now I need to protect her before she gets in too deep in this gangsterism. But how will I, when there's a war coming and I'm far away from her? Doesn't that make me a failer as her mother? I don't know what I'm going to do, I honestly don't, but I trust that Lee will protect her. Well, even though she did show that she can protect herself she still needs some protection herself.

I'm yet to process all that have just happened. The way I trembled after those gunshots went off I almost peed on myself, I was scared. I'm just glad that no one was harmed all thanks to my daughter who saved us, but either way I will still confront her she will tell me exactly who the hell is she, and what's her story. I have no doubts that Lindiwe is involved in all of this that girl is very dodgy, I used to hear her sneaking in at night, sometimes she used to come home limping, and badly bruised, but will try to walk normal when her mother is around. See, this is what I fear for my daughter she will get mixed up in a rough mix, and end up getting hurt I'm not at ease honestly about all of this, I really am not.

Then there's this woman that I came with, she made it very clear from the word go that she doesn't like me, and she never will and to me that's okay because I'm not money not everyone is going to love me. I wonder how our stay is going to be like here because crossing paths with her is not really on my to-do list, I guess it was going to be better if we were placed in different hotels to keep peace between us, it's going to be a long stay here, I will just have to persevere until all is over. I also pray that the war doesn't come this side because I don't know what we will do seeing that we have no protection this side. Sighs, life life life why on earth don't you have a manual?



TSAKANI

It's been over an hour locking bubbles in the bathroom this was me teaching her a lesson not to deny eating with me ever again. You see, I've never felt like this before with all the women I've been with

I've been in the dating industry for long, but no woman comes close to how bubbles makes me feel. She makes me feel alive, and brings that soft side of me effortlessly. She penetrated my dark & cold heart the first time I laid my eyes on her as she was working that pole, I wasn't really focusing on her let alone all the girls working the pole, showing us their asserts, but the one residing within me who is unknown, the one who made my heart twitched forced me to look at her, he literally dragged my gaze to focus on her, her and her alone. I melted as my dick throbbed at her sight confirming that she's my mine, she's ours I had to act fast, and claim her, mark her and I did just that. She will never be with any other man, if she tries sleeping with any man they will die the following day. This marking/claiming of women was started by our unknown great-grandfather's, I

don't even know why they had to go to Ghana to get that unknown thing that marks woman. We don't even know what it is, but it definitely chooses women for us. All my brother's marked their wives on their first encounters, but as for me hhayi shame I had to sleep with more than 30 women before I met the one chosen by the one residing in me, clearly it was not taking me serious. And we can't take it out by ourselves, we will have to pass it on to our male children because if it is passed on to females they will die together with their partners, this is one fucked up shit, and unfortunately for us there's nothing we can do about it, but to just accept it. At least it chose me a gintsakazi, someone who understands my line of work, someone who will be besides me through it all, even if she wants to leave me she can't, because our bodies touched, and our body sweats combined.

Anyway, I wonder if my family arrived safe there at Samoa. I wanted to take them to Spain or Argentina, but Lee told me not too I'd rather take them to Samoa that place is very much safe for them, and they will not be amongst a lot of people. I did my own research, and I liked it. Oh, all the gents took their families there too we want all of them to be in one place. My phone rings, I pick it up from the table and it's my neighbor Martin, this man never calls me unless there's something important he

wants to tell me or there's something suspicious going on in my house...

“Marty.”

“TK my man. Are you home?”

Me: “No, why?”

Him: “Oh, I thought you were around because I'm busy seeing people coming, and leaving your house.”

Me: “I'm sure it's my friends Marty.”

Him: “It's not them, your friends left a long time ago the people I'm talking about were with some woman, but the woman left them here.” I drop my legs on the floor.

Me: “How many are they?” I'm already on my feet.

Him: "About 3-4 if I'm not mistaken, and they are armed."

Me: "I'm on my way, keep an eye on them," I hang up, and go and open the door for bubbles I find her leaning against the wall eating her nails. She just looks at me, clearly pissed off but I have no time to waste. "I have to go something came up, something is going on in my house," I'm already walking away.

Her: "What? I'm coming with let me go, and get something fast then we leave," she hurries to her bedroom. She's wasting time that I don't have, I walk outside and toward my car, I step inside it. I bring the engine to life, and I'm about to drive away when she comes out of the house wearing a black jumpsuit unzipped, and black biker boots with spikes unzipped too, she has a small bag with her, I like what I'm seeing. I just stare at her mouth agape. She gets inside the car. "Drive."

Me: "Wawu. Look at you. You look good, I fucken like you like this woman."

Her: "I like myself too, and I'm ready for action," I chuckle, and drive off. She looks at herself in the rear mirror applying black lipstick on her mouth. "So, you don't have any idea who those people are?"

Me: "I don't have any, but I know that this has Adelaide written all over it, she's the only one whose after my blood as far as I know," she nods.

Her: "Who is this Adele exactly, and what is she to you?"

Me: "She used to be someone I was fucking."

Her: "So, she's doing all of this because she wants your dick back?"

Me: "Clearly she wants it back, I guess the others are not satisfying her like mine does," I see her nose flaring, and she squints her eyes at me.

Her: "Mxm." I laugh. "Did you alert the guys?"

Me: “No, I haven't. I first want to see whoever those men are invading my house without my presence, and without my permission.”

Her: “You should've gone back to your house the time I told you too, look now; people are doing as they please in your house.”

Me: “But I was keeping you company.”

Her: “I did not ask you too.”

Me: “I know. You were going to be bored mus all alone.”

Her: “I wouldn't have because I was used to staying alone,” shrugging. As we are approaching my house I can see 2 SUVs parked outside my yard, and I've never seen them before they don't even have number plates, I slow down my car. “Time to put my skills that I've seen in movies in action, and see if I've got the skills I've been practicing phela.” She opens her small bag, and takes out a balaclava with black gloves. She puts them

on. "You can drop me off here," she buckles the small bag in her waist.

Me: "What exactly are you planning to do?" She giggles.

Her: "I'm about to cripple some people hope your neighbors won't have a problem with what I'm about to do. I got your back skhokho saarn noma unya sometimes," she kisses my cheek, and step out of the car, I watch her walk toward Mavis grass, and on top of the wall she's taking slow strides clearly trying not to fall, nc nc nc. This girl is really taking risks.

I park my car just behind the cars, I step out of it, and walk toward the gate, my gate is wide open, I chuckle, and walk inside the yard. All the way from here I can hear laughter coming from the kitchen... I lean against the door frame, and watch all these 3 men making a party with my food. I whistle, and they all turn, and look clearly surprised seeing me.

"What the hell is going on here?"

“We are eating, can't you see?” Responds one of the man, he looks really scary with his crooked lips.

Me: “I can see that, but what are you doing here?”

Him: “Well, we are here to get something for our boss, and now that you are here It's a bonus because we will kill you too,” I laugh once, and keep my straight face on again.

Man 2: “I wonder what's taking Alias so long he should be here by now.”

Him: “I'm sure he's still busy trying to break the code.”

Man 2: “But Spikhili gave Adele the password.”

Man 3: “You are such a fool. Obviously this bastard changed the password,” he looks at me, and I'm focusing on him when all of a sudden I feel a cold metal behind my head, okay someone is pointing me with a gun.

“Give me the code to your safe, and we will spare you your life,” speaks the man who is holding me at gun point I don't even know where he came from.

Me: “No. I will not give you any code, and I dare you to pull the trigger right now motherfucker,” I'm not even flinching I'm used too being pointed with a gun its nothing new, at all.

Him: “Don't make blow your br...” Bang bang bang! That's a sound of a gun coming upstairs, all the man gets up from their chairs, and my mind traces back to Lux, shit! While the others are running upstairs to see what's going on, I take out my gun from my waist holster, and in one turn the gun comes in contact with the man's stomach, I shoot him thrice, and push him away from me. I hurry upstairs when I hear more gunshots, 2 man on the ground, and one is aiming straight at my study whoever is in there is going to die. I'm about to shoot him when I see him going down blood coming out of his mouth. Shit!

I get to my study, and I find Luxolo still holding the gun pointing it toward the door hands shaking, and eyes opened wide in shock. I pull her into my embrace.

“It's going to be okay bubbles, it's going to be fine,” I assure her, and it will be fine. She will get used to it, but I Stan her bravery, and I wonder how did she get in here. She saved me, Adele have overstepped the line I need to call the gents, we must meet urgently.

“I- I killed them?” She asks more like whispering.

Me: “Yeah, you killed them all.”

Her: “I didn't mean to I just wanted to cripple them, but when that man pointed me with a rifle I had to act, he would've killed me.”

Me: “I know, but you saved me, and I'm proud of you.”

TSAKANI

Bubbles is still in shock about what she did, but I hope the green tea that I gave her will calm her down. I understand how she's feeling though because this is her first time killing people, not 1 but 3 people within minutes, she needs to learn not to channel her feelings when she kills someone. The boys who clean for me are almost done cleaning up the blood, and the bodies have already been dealt with I really hate the fact that people died in my house, I will have to cleanse it. The door flies open, and the gents get in I'm surprised to see all of them here, well considering the fact that Lee said that he have some errands to run.

“We came as soon as we could, what happened?” Lee asks looking around my kitchen.

“Adele's men happened.”

Him: “What did she do now?”

Me: “She sent his men here to fish for information because the other one was in the study,” shrugging.

Leon: “So, you came back and you found them here in your house? How many were they?”

Me: “4. Marty called me, and alerted me if it wasn't for him I wouldn't have known that there were people here, I was going to come back late, and found my house cleaned out. And Spikiri have already given them the code to the safe imagine what could've happened if I did not change it?” Talon whistles.

Lee: “Hhayi, it's time we pay Adele a visit she has crossed the line. How dare she send her men to your house? She has some nerves.”

Talon: “Yilokulala ama out skhokho, uke wacava muphi umjita olala ama out la phakathi kwethu njer?” (That's because you sleep in other girls houses, which one amongst us have you ever seen sleeping at their girlfriend's house) I shake my head.

Me: "That's funny because I left you guys here. Anyway, we are not there. I called you guys here because I want one of you to stay behind here, and make sure that bubbles is okay." They all look at each other confused.

Him: "Umagwebu? Yisilwane sphi leso? Senathaka TK?" (Foam? What kind of an animal is that? Are you now a ritualist) I chuckle.

Me: "Lux. I want one of you to stay here with her."

Leon: "You came back with her here?" I nod.

Talon: "Vele seniyashova?" (Are you guys now dating)

Me: "We are yet to confirm that."

Him: "So nanyovana k'phela?" (You are only tucking)

Me: “You can say that if you like.”

Batista: “Let's pause the debate for a second I need to understand something here. You said, there were 4 men here, how did you kill them? Or maybe were they in separate rooms, and you killed them one by one?”

Me: “They would've killed me if that was the case, I mean I was over powered, so obviously it was going to be easy for them to kill me. I'm joking. Anyways, bubbles killed three of them.” They look at each then laugh, I shake my head.

Talon: “Hhayi baba, ned ngoba lo lovey waqhumisa ezimnyama kayi 1 sekangu Rambo manjer? Ungadlali ngathi skhokho sibatdala mfana.” (No man. Just because of that tyre stunt she did she's already Rambo now? Don't play like that)

Lee: “I know that what she did then was an act of bravery yesterday, but killing three men in cold blood? Now that's far fetched you are giving the girl too much credit, phola skhokho chill.” I laugh.

Me: “Ngiyabona ukuthy nibo Thomas nina lomjita osencwadini yabelungu, manjer yazini ningafi ngizonidlalela I film.

Unamasimba u bubbles unishaya nonke la, phela don't forget that akekho noyi 1 la kini owabhodisa more than 3 people in few minutes, ningalokothi nikukhohlwe loko.” (I can see that you guys are like Thomas, the man from the bible, but don't worry I will play a film for you. Bubbles is the best, she dribbles all of you here, none of you here killed more than 3 people in few minutes)

Talon: “Injalo ntwana ayijiki, ayishayi reverse.”

Batista: “Uyazi ukuthi thina sifa nges'bhilivane.” (You know that we deal with prove) I nod.

Me: “Ngiyacava, epantshi.” (Chambers) we all walk to my study passing bubbles drinking her green tea legs still shaking, I'm sure the tea is cold now she doesn't even notice us as we are passing by.

Talon: “Zishaphi ngaye? Ubanjwe madimoni? Bamfikele abafana bomoya?” (What's wrong with her? Does she have demons) the others laugh.

Me: “Nex mfana usathukiwe.” (She's still in shock) we step inside my study, and I switch on the TV that's on the wall it's a good thing that I've installed hidden cameras in every corner of this house & yard, I never really liked them because I knew that no one would've dared enter my house, but Spikiri advised me to just for safety sake because you don't know when the enemy might attack. Of which makes me wonder why didn't he... Argh, almost forgot that he has passed on. I take my laptop from my drawer, and play them the video, I sit on my chair learning back, and put my feet on top of my thigh, and fold my arms before me. I like the fact that they are focused on the screen watching everything.

Well, Leon was the one who locked the gate when they left 15 minutes later 5 cars park outside my yard, and occupiers of four cars stepped out of their cars, and walk toward my gate. They fiddled with it, until it opened it's like these people weren't sure if I'm around or what. One enters the yard, and walk straight to my kitchen door checking the coast, he drops the handle, and the handle grants him access. He steps inside my house, and

searches all my rooms then walk out to alert the others that is all clear. The door of the 5th car opens, and Adele steps out of it. She's having a brief conversation with the man then she gives her a piece of paper, that was the code to my safe. She pats him on the shoulder, and the man nods then she walks back to her car, and drives off as the 2 other cars follow behind her. The remaining of these 4 men gets inside my yard laughing, then inside my house as one of them ascends the stairs coming straight to my study. His AKA 47 is hung neatly on his left shoulder he seemed really relaxed, but who wouldn't if the house is a house to let? The others are busy messing up my kitchen eating my polony that I bought with my man as it is, he didn't even try slicing it. The one is still struggling with the safe, and he goes back to join the others in messing up my kitchen without any care in the world, they are throwing Savannah dry jokes. Few minutes later one stands up, and comes to my study since Adele have been calling them none stop they seemed really irritated, but I job I job ayijiki.

One gets inside my study, and starts by messing it up, turning it upside down as if that's not enough he drink my expensive whiskey straight from its bottle then he smashes it on the wall laughing, he seems proud of himself, then he walks toward my safe, and start punching in codes. The sliding door from the

garden to my dining area opens, and into view bubbles appears.

“Whoa, is that...?” Lee ask pointing his finger outside the study. I nod. “What? You must be kidding me, and don't tell me that she jumped the wall bruh!”

Me: “Jumping walls is one of her favorite hobbies, she's a cat woman that one.”

Leon: “Shhh.” Mxm.

Bubbles tip toes toward the kitchen but doesn't really come into full view, she takes a peak, and by the look of things she saw me, but I did not see her. She shakes her head, and ascend the stairs slowly without making an ounce of noise, she enters my study silently that man didn't see her. She taps him on his shoulder, the man turns, and bubbles punches him with her fingers grills he staggers losing balance, but he comes back and blows a swing at bubbles he hits her, and bubbles staggers back balancing her hands on the wall. The man struggles to take out his gun from his waist, but bubbles beat him to it. She fired two

gunshots aiming straight at this guys heart, she stands there watching the man going down his hands placed on where he was shot. He couldn't believe it, he couldn't believe that a woman shot him. He lifts his arm, but he drops to the ground, and that's when we all rushed upstairs, I guess she snapped out from her haze her instinct kicks in very fast making her to react instantly, and she fired shots at the man who was ready to kill her. The man goes down, and that's when the third one appears this one was very much ready to shoot, another gun shots sounded, and he too fell down and his gun fired a shot in the ceiling. I hurried inside my study only to find bubbles standing there frozen hands shaking with the gun still pointed toward the door. She can't believe that she killed all these three men, fucking three men in cold blood.

None of the guys are saying anything after seeing the video, they are in shock especially Talon he is shocked more than the others here.

Talon: “Yazini ungivale umlomo, yabona sukela nou ukuya ek'deni eyami uyitholile skhokho. Hhayi yena uyay'deseva, esami isgcoko ngiyasithula, ngisithulela yena yinja u lovey ibhekela phansi iphilele.” (Yah, you really shut me up. You see from now going forward she has gained my respect bruh. No

man, she deserves it, I take off my hat for her, she is the best no more looking down on her)

Batista: “Salute. Uyimashisile inamba u lovey akadingi ukuhlangana ne hogo, mgcine njayami yewakho ke lo. Hhayi respect to her mfana, yoh. Enlek ngisathukiwe na nou.” (She did a really good job, she doesn't need initiation, keep her. She's yours. I'm still shock even now)

Leon: “The way she was holding that gun, and aiming her targets you can't even tell that she's not a professional, one will think that she's a professional hit woman. I'm sold, I'm impressed.”

Me: “That was me hours ago. I'm still shocked.”

Batista: “Who wouldn't be though? This is a shocker. What she needs to master is too kill without showing any emotions, but in this case is very understandable I'm sure next time she will do better,” as if the will be a next time, not when she's with me.

Me: "I know. Masigcwaleni indlela." (Let's go). "Wait, who is remaining behind?" I look at all of them.

"No one. We are all going." We all look at the door, and it's bubbles she looks better now.

Lee: "Are you sure?" She nods.

Her: "And besides I want to see this Adele of yours."

Me: "Very well then. Asimasheni."

Talon: "Mina vele cela ung'cishele yena."

Her: "Uzong'kgafa?" (Will you pay me)

Him: "Kanty why ungenza u debit order?"

Her: “Tell me someone who works for free in this day & age?
Everything is money papa, pay up or you kill her yourself.”

Him: “Mara ntombi ka mfwethu ungangenzi so toe,” she laughs
and walks away. “TK awukhulume nento yakho skhokho,
yabona manjer u Adele will finally meet her match, usazosha,”
we all laugh walking out of my study.



LUXOLO

TK's friends are now looking at me in a different manner, more like respect. I don't know how to feel about this, I really don't. Phela they are looking at me as some sort of a hero, and here I am seeing myself as a murderer, I'm still shocked at the fact that I killed people, three bloody men in cold blood. I never saw myself being a killer, yes the excitement of being a mafia woman is there I just didn't think that I would be killing people so soon, it never really crossed my mind. But it happened, unexpectedly, I killed them. The way my heart was beating so fast when I shot the first man I swear it wanted to come out, I wanted to vomit it, and by the time I shot the second one hhayi kwaba worse, then came the 3rd one oh, Jehova, all my insides wanted to come out of my mouth. Then I froze as if I'm watching a movie, and I'm the killer, well I am a killer in reality I can't believe that I have blood in my hands, I don't think I will be able to sleep the next coming days. I wonder how murderers do it, like yazini. Sighs, and TK seemed really impressed by all that I did, well I was saving his ass.

We park outside club vixen, I remember how Sol used to tell me about this club, apparently it is the only club that we are competing with, it was always the top one, and people loved it. Well, that was until I started working in his club, and people

started to flood in bringing in money, I don't even know what's so special about me. I've seen girls who have beautiful bodies out there, and knows how work the pole better than I do. But as my colleagues will say; "People will love you for three months, and you will be history" months later people still loves me, and the club is generating money all because of me. Wuhhu, whoever is busy stirring my life please don't stop until I live in Argentina, thanks.

"Bullet proofs bafethu." TK tells them.

Lee: "All set," I guess they are underneath their T-shirts.

Him: "Bubbles, bullet proof?"

Me: "I don't need one I will stay here in the car, and check the coast for you."

Talon: "Mara sakudinga phakathi mus, yazi ngifuna ukuthi ubheke u Adele emehlweni nawum'cisha. Yabo nawungangi cishela yena ngizokulandela I smovane," (but we need you

inside, you know. I want you to look at Adele in the eyes when you kill her, if you can kill her for me, I will buy you that car) I laugh.

Me: "As if. Let's go ke."

TK: "You want that bulletproof?" I scoff, and he chuckles.
"Check under the seat."

Batista: "I hope you are not giving her Spikiri's bullet proof."

Him: "I long got rid of those ones things."

Me: "Found it," I unzip my jumpsuit.

TK: "Just wear it on top of that jumpsuit." It's not as if like his friends don't know my boobs. Thousands of men knows them, and they've caressed them. So, I don't know what his problem is, anyway, I do as I'm instructed. "Good." The others chuckle as I pull my balaclava down.

Lee: "Territorial already?"

Talon: "Ndoda I catchile ingwenya, hhe! Kubi. Ku bad, Ku blind."
They laugh, and we all step out of the car, and walk toward the entrance of club vixen the guards tenses as they see us approaching, they look very abnormal with their overly buff arms, yes. They remind me of Johnny Bravo, they are him with their stock sweet legs.

Batista: "These men look funny guys, they look like some cartoon I used to watch growing up."

Leon: "I never watched cartoons so, I wouldn't know who he looks like."

Talon: "Me too."

Him: "What exactly were you watching growing up gents? Or you guys didn't have TVs back then?" I chortle.

Talon: “Eh baba, eh baba thina besicava abo Rambo nano Van Damme, not cartoons.”

Him: “Yet, you can't fight to save your life skhokho,” he chuckles.

Talon: “Awucavi nex skhokho ngizokushubisela nou uve ngathi uyasha.” (You don't know anything I can rough you up right now, and you will feel like you are burning up)

Him: “Unganya boy, unganya ntwana yami,” I laugh. TK & Lee are already inside the premises heading straight toward the very big double glass door, but the place looks empty I mean, there aren't even cars on sight, I wonder yazi. Lee yanks the double door open, and some of the people quickly get up from their chairs, oh, there are people here, but where did they park their cars or maybe there's an underground parking here. Oh, well, guess we will never know. We ascend the stairs soon as we come to view there are men (3) with guns pointing toward our direction bringing us to a halt.

“We came in peace.” TK tells them lifting his arms.

“Search them for any weapons,” one gives out an instruction. The two men come our way, and Talon already have his gun in his hand Phela Lee, Leon, and TK are the one who are standing in front, and we are behind them. One of the man starts by searching Leon, and that's when Talon shoots at the light. I hear people groaning next to me, and I'm standing in one place trying to study my surroundings, but it's too dark. And since I don't know what's going on, I'm forced to stand in this position until someone abducts me, I chuckle thinking about it.

“I wonder what humours you in this darkness bubbles,” TK says.

“Uhleka nama dimoni wakhe skhokho ngik'shayele ukuthy u lovey unama demon.”

Me: “I'm surprised that you guys are still breathing.”

Lee: “You want us dead? Ain't you a cute little witch diamond?”
I laugh, and someone pulls me by my hand that can only be TK.

Me: “How are you guys seeing things in the dark?”

Leon: “Special skills. You will know it one day.” I nod, and we walk for a few minutes until we see light. Oh, it's an office, but it's empty.

“Shit! She left!” TK says banging the table. I look around the office, and I spot a picture on the wall of a woman I guess that's her, she's very beautiful no lies about that, and she doesn't look dangerous, but hey. You can't judge a person just by looking at them, sighs. Guess we have nothing to do here but to leave, and for me to go, and prepare to go to work. We walk out of the club...

Lee: “She can run but she can never hide, sizomthola.”

Talon: “Injalo. Futhi ke singamuthi bhi somnika u lovey a deal(e) naye fast masinyane.” (It's like that. And once we catch her, we will hand her over to Lux to deal with her fast) we all laugh.

Me: “Uyangithemba maarn.” (You trust me)

Leon: "We all do." I nod.

Me: "Well, I feel like a president now nina ishu. Anyway, where to from here?"

TK: "We are going to rest."

Me: "And I'm going to work."

Lee: "You need to resign at that job of yours, TK will take care of you diamond."

Me: "That's the plan, and I will resign."

TK: "You only have a month. A month bubbles."

Me: "Yeah, right."



SOL

Things are looking bad. My enemies are coming at me with full force, and with this war coming it will be easy for my enemies to attack me, and I also learned that I don't have a long life

span, well, that I knew, but I did not think that it would affect me as much as it does now. I really need to get my things in order before my time ends, and I know exactly who can lead my empire, I trust her. She's earned it.

“Are we still scheduled to go ahead with the plan as per instructed?”

“Yes, we are. The Cosa Nostra cartel have been notified. I think it's time.”

Him: “We are still going ahead with the abduction?”

Me: “Yes, and we are left with 4 days to pull this off.”

Him: “Perfect. Bye.” He hangs up. I lean back, and listen to the pains I have a limited time left. Cancer is evil I tell you, but I've lived to see enough things. Now it's time for me to rest, well, in hell obviously, sighs.

LUXOLO

I get to work, and the first thing I do is head straight to Sol's office he allows me in after 6 knocks, I open the door and settle down. He doesn't look well I wonder what's going on with him, he is even shaking. Or maybe he's catching colds, ey.

“Evening sir.” I sit down.

“Evening diamond. I wasn't expecting your presence tonight.”

Me: “Well, I couldn't afford another night off the girls already hate me, and I don't want them hating me any further.”

Him: “Let them hate, and besides TK doubles the money if you aren't around. Are you guys a couple now?”

Me: “No. We ain't a couple, not yet anyway.”

Him: "I must say that you look cute together, perfect match," I chuckle. "You guys should date once."

Me: "What happened to dating clients is not prohibited?"

Him: "Some things don't need you to fight them diamond, you must allow nature to take its course." Okay. This is not the Sol that I've ordered, what happened to the old Sol? The Sol that would've been on my throat immediately as I stepped inside his office? He's changed, and I don't like it one bit.

Me: "Are you okay? I mean, this is not you, I'm basically seeing another version of you." He heaves out a sigh.

Him: "This is me, but with a twist. I can't always be angry, and throwing tantrums diamond, remember that everything has its own time. You can go and get ready, clients are waiting."

Me: "Oh, okay. Are you sure that you are okay?"

Him: "Yes. I'm okay. You better get going I need to finish up sorting these papers," I get up from my chair nodding.

Me: "Take things slow Sol, don't strain yourself."

Him: "I will do. Thank you diamond, give it your best out there. Who knows? Maybe it might be your last pole dance this very night." I look at him one last time before walking out of his office. Last pole dance this very night? What did he mean by that? Argh, I hope my life is not in danger, and he has something to do with it. Sighs, but then he is really not looking well, I guess he thought that I didn't notice that he was hiding that his in pains, letting out slight whimpers unaware. Damn, I wonder what's eating him. Nah, this fucker better pull through for this club's sake, honestly I don't know what will happen to this club if it were about to go through profit loss, wuhhh people will lose their jobs. Ai, I shake my head. Why am I worrying myself with things that don't concern me? Huh.

I step inside the change room, and I find the ladies chatting & laughing, as soon as they see me they stop on their chatting, and laughing then look at me with their usual boring looks.

Sighs. I bluntly ignore them, and settle down my station, and take out my make-up kit.

“It must be nice dating one of the X- gang members neh? Especially their boss, the man who calls all the shots. I mean, you are the current queen in their circle, and Sol is giving you off days as much as he wants without fighting you, and not giving you any warnings. But if it was us, hhe, let me not get started. Your inyanga is working overtime neh? You are abusing the poor soul just because you want to be relevant, and have these men eating at the palm of your hands right? Tell you what; all that will end very soon my dear don't get too comfortable.” Zama says to me.

“K.” I respond, and focus on my face I'm really not in the mood for her, I have much bigger things to attend than entertaining their bitterness & jealousy.

Octavia: “Don't K us you bitch! Your days are numbered here shame, you will be history soon wena msunu, we've been far patient with you out here acting like you are some sort of a queen, or you own this place. We've had it with you, we've had it with your nonsense!” They are angry at me bafwethu,

extremely angry for no apparent reason they need deliverance from whatever is tormenting them, their demons are burning.

Me: “Do whatever you want ladies I don't give a fuck, but be rest assured that I'll be the last woman standing in all of this fucking plot you are planning for me. You ladies think that you know me, but I have news for you ladies; you don't know me, and you don't want to know me because once you know the real me, I doubt that you'll even sleep at night because I'm a walking nightmare. Now, if you may please excuse me. I need to finish up here, I have clients to entertain. Anything else?”

They just stare at me. “Perfect. Let's all do what we came here for, and move on with our lives rather than stepping on each other's toes because it won't end well.”

Mapule: “This is not over diamond, not over.” Look whose talking, hahaha. Wuuhh, this life will show you flames shame, even Mapule is in this too after all that I've done for her, and supported her? But it's all good, no worries.

Me: “Right.” She clicks her tongue, and they all go back to their stations talking amongst themselves. Okay, now this is my 3rd time someone telling me that I'll be history soon, but Sol said it

in a different way, now more than ever I'm convinced that something big is going on, and I'm the target. This is fucking insane, and the worst part is that I don't know their plans or when will they strike, fuck maarn. And this is making me very uncomfortable, but ngizoyimela naseyi shubile.

The door flies open, and TK steps in looking around the room until his gaze stops on my station, he flashes me a smile, and walk toward me bese the amantombazana the girls bafuthekile kuthi banye mus. He wraps his arms around my neck from behind, and rest his big head on top of mine.

“Bubbles.”

Me: “And what brings you here?”

Him: “Must I have a reason for coming to see you unannounced?” He wiggles his brow.

Me: “Of course. Phela we aren't dating, so you can't come here anyway you want I'm on duty here.”

Him: "And you think that I don't know that? Besides, I was bored I had nothing to do," He shrugs then spins my chair making me to face him, and he gets in between my legs.

Me: "I thought you said you have things to take care off."

Him: "My boys are taking care of things. So, should I wait for you until you knock off or must I leave?" I'm about to say no then I remembered that these women will make me disappear. I look at the girls, and they are all focusing on me & Tsakani. Rha, banna babaloi.

Me: "You can come back later and fetch me, I don't think I'm safe here. People want me dead," his joyful expression changes, and it's now replaced by anger.

Him: "What? Who are those people? Do you know them?" I look at the girls from the corners of my eyes, and they all look scared some are even giving us their backs. "Bubbles!" I jump snapping out of my thoughts. "Who are those mother-fucking-nonsense trying to test my patience!"

Me: “Calm down TK. Breathe sweetheart breathe, and it's only rumors making rounds,” he chuckles, and turns around slowly looking at the ladies.

Him: “Aniringeni ke misunu. Who amongst you is trying to test my patience? Who amongst you is fucking tired of living?” No one says anything.

Me: “I don't think they know anything,” he laughs.

Him: “Is that so? Oh, I forgot to tell you something bubbles. Remember the time you left your phone in my house?” I nod. “Well, one of these girls here called you using a private number, and she was warning you that you must be careful, and always sleep with one eye open. She said a whole lot of bullshit, bekanya ngom'lomo bubbles lo mdeed kuzolezinja lezi!” I look at the girls, and they are all not meeting my gaze, but I already know who called me, and that person stole my numbers from Sol's office because none of these ladies have my numbers, none.

Me: "I'll deal with them my way, and I think I know who called. Don't worry yourself about this."

Him: "I trust you. I was ready to turn this club upside down one time, even Sol wouldn't have done anything about it, but I respect him only because you work here. Nina bo swine, I'm watching all of you. Should something happen to bubbles, hhe," he whistles. "Kuzonuka bo lovey, amasimba." He gives me a kiss, not just a kiss but a deep kiss that couples usually kiss, gish, gosh. Hha, he pulls out as I try to catch my breath.

Me: "Sies," I wipe my lips.

Him: "But you enjoyed it, and it got you wet no lies about that."

Me: "Now move, I need to change the panty liner," he laughs as I push him away.

Him: "Well, I guess I'll be hitting it tonight plus u Mamba have been fasting, Ishuuu. Habashwe, I can't wait." I give him a stare as I get off the chair, he winks, and I softly laugh. "Let me escort

you.” The other ladies have already, but Zama? I will deal with her, ebile I will push her off the stage making her to fall flat face

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and all her teeth come out. Silly. I know, but she deserves it. TK links our arms as we walk out of the change room.

★ » ★ «

NOMALANGA

It's 13:00pm in the afternoon, and the sun is out to play, the birds are chirping, and the flowers are very beautiful. The kids are happy, and so are the young adults having fun in the water. I'm sitting in my room watching everything from this gigantic window. Breakfast in the morning was very awkward I must say, I don't know if Tsakani's family eat breakfast silently or maybe it was because of my presence I really don't know. But what I do know is that I'm never having breakfast with them, ever. They are just a bunch of weird family, wuhh let me not get started about these other wives the way they annoy me I was not even interested in knowing their names. Mmathabo is the only one who's tolerateable as for the rest of them, hhayi shame bayabhala they bhal' and they have a very stinking attitude, sighs. This is going to be one "safety vacation" from hell I don't even think I will survive 3 more days here, ku too much, and I'm tired and the kids are forever making noise, well, at least the husbands are friendly, and very accommodating. The doorbell rings, I wonder who is it. I get up from my chair putting my book down, and attend the door. I yank it open and it's one of the makotis.

"We are about to have lunch. Shall we wait for you or must we eat?" Her voice carries so much attitude, and you can tell that

she's annoyed its like she was forced to come here, and let me know.

“Urh...m, what's your name again?”

Her: “How is you knowing my name relevant here because I'm here to tell you about lunch, not to make friends with you.” I nod.

Me: “Very well then. And no, I will not join you, enjoy.”

Her: “Thought as much,” she looks at me as if I'm disgusting. She clicks her tongue, and walks away. I close the door after her, and walk back to my chair. Yazi, I don't remember Luxolo disrespecting me, or talking to me as if I'm her age mate, but what I just witness few minutes ago its shocking, sometimes I wonder what some parents are teaching their kids, sighs. Speaking of kids I need to call Luxolo I know that is almost midnight in South Africa, but I still need to call her, and let her know that we've arrived safe, even though she already knows that, but I still need to assure her. And again, I wonder how lindiwe is doing there in Colombia phela naye she never tried

keeping in touch with us, and unfortunately for me, I can't call her because we are both using international numbers, and she doesn't have WhatsApp I would've called her, and checked up on her. I look at the time, and Luxolo's shift have already started, right. The doorbell comes through at the door again, now what? Can't these people just let me be, and not disturb my peace? I get up from my chair, and attend the door. Oh, it's another makoti.

“Lunch is ready.” She's tells me already walking away. I shake my head, I might as well go, and eat rather than starving myself I can't take my medication on an empty stomach after all. I put on my slippers, and walk out of my room going to join them, I find them already seated in the big table laughing as soon as they saw me approaching the women stopped laughing. This is just crazy I tell you. I greet sitting down only the boys, and Mmathabo respond, and the rest keep quiet.

“I think I've just lost my appetite, excuse me.” Tsakani's mother says getting up from her chair.

“Me too.” Says the other makoti, and she too gets up from her chair too.

Hlulani: "Sit down Okuhle. What nonsense is this? Why are you behaving like a high school girl who just entered the adolescent stage, huh?" She looks at her husband.

Her: "Bu..." he bangs the table

"Damn it maarn! Don't but me, sit down at this instant Okuhle!" He roars at her, and Okuhle quickly sits down. "Eat. And Sabelo you better talk with your mother because we are going to be here for a very long time, tell her to start acting her age because if I do she will hate me for weeks, as for you Okuhle stop being a pushover! How many times did I tell you to stop being a pushover? I swear my ancestors gave me a weak wife, a wife with no backbone! Excuse me, I need some air." He huffs getting up from his chair leaving Okuhle wiping her tears. From the corner of my eye I see Mmathabo smiling dishing up for herself, and the table is dead silent.

"We can start eating guys, and as for me, I already love this safety vacation. Eat up guys, we still have some side viewing to do, I can't wait to see how beautiful this place is seeing that the sky looks beautiful at night. Asidleni," she throws a Russian in

her mouth, and the guys laugh. The other Makoti's are not even trying to smile, well, tough luck for them because we are all here to stay. Sabelo's phone beeps indicating a message, he views it, and smiles.

“Well, please excuse me I need to fetch more guests,” he's already on his feet.

Mmathabo: “More guests? What guests now baby?”

Him: “Tsakani's friends families are here,” she laughs.

Her: “Wuhhh, I think I like this vacation more drama coming, as I wait for Mmangwane to arrive hahaha. Akusemnandi, go, and fetch them baby I want someone's high blood to go up, up in the heavens.” The others shake their heads. Okay, its official. Mmathabo loves drama, and I wonder who this Mmangwane is because she sounds like trouble, mina I'm not in the mood for many people, and drama, I also pray that we won't be sharing rooms. I dish up for myself, and start eating. The afternoon is still long hey, but I will endure the vacation until I don't know when. God, please give me strength to pull through, and not step on anyone's toes.

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TSAKANI

I'm outside the club waiting for bubbles to come out of the club, and its 02:45am I'm sleepy as hell. I see her coming out of the club with some customers who are busy groping her, and some pulling her by her hands trying their luck. Erh, is this what she experiences every time she knocks off? This is bullshit, I don't like it, at all. I open the door wanting to step out of the car to meet bubbles halfway, but someone pushes it, closing it. What the actual fuck? I try again, and he/she does the same thing. I bring my face near my window trying to see who it is,

but the person is wearing all black. She/he's back is the one closing the door, I chuckle, and take out my silence gun underneath my seat I check if have some bullets, and there's one I will not miss. People really love annoying, I've never encountered any drunk person daring me & disrespecting me like this. I open the passenger's door, and take one foot out and my upper body aiming at this person, I shoot him/her straight on the neck, and he/she staggers moving away from my car surprising the people he's standing with.

I take my gun from my waist, and walk around the car I want to see who the fucker is. I remove the hood, and I don't know him. Sighs, I'm sure it's one of those random drunkies, but still uyaphapha. Mxm, I shake my head, and step inside my car... Seconds later bubbles joins me looking tired.

“Hey Tk.”

“Is this what you go through every time you knock off?”

Her: “If you mean the customers touching me anyway they want, then the answer is yes.”

Me: "I don't like this job of yours bubbles, and I know that I said you hav..." she brings her hand up stopping me from talking.

Her: "Please don't. I'm tired, and I need some massage, and some gin to relax my body."

Me: "I will deal with you bubbles, I will. Today it's you & me, but I will allow you to rest as much as you want."

Her: "Please!" I queue in some music as I drive, I look at her, and she's sleeping, lightly snoring. Shame, she's tired maarn, but I must have a talk with Sol, he needs to do something about his customers. Bayadelela, yuhhh.

25

VUYO

I'm here at the Dr's practice to get the DNA results. I took the things that Adele gave me, and brought them here. She steps inside the office with a smile plastered on her face, what am I saying? This woman is forever smiling I've never witnessed her grumpy, or moody.

“Good afternoon Vuyo.”

“Afternoon doc,” she settles down.

Her: “What do you think the results say?” She gives me a smile. Yes, I told her about my ordeal.

Me: “That she's mine.”

Her: “I see. Let me not waste any more of your time then,” she hands me the envelope with an assuring smile.

Me: "Thank you Dr," I'm already on my feet.

Her: "Only a pleasure, and remember to go for the therapy sessions together with her if she's truly your daughter. It's going to be a tough ride trying to build daughter & father relationship, but whatever you do remember to put God first," I nod, and step out of her office pressing the envelope on my chest taking deep breaths. I get inside my car, and look at the envelope, my hands are sweating, and so is my forehead. Yes, I want to know the truth, but on the other side I'm scared of what I will find. I mean, I found her on top of the bed, legs sprawled showing her tiny pussy, and seeing the mark really sobered my mind. Imagine if I was in drunk, I would've probably slept with her without thinking twice. And again, how will she look at me? She will always see me as the man who buys prostitutes, and I have no doubt that she saw the ring on my finger. Damn, this is messed up.

I pull up at the house address that she gave me, and from the outside you can tell njer ukuthi hhayi akulungi. The gate is ajar, the fence have fallen, and the windows are covered with boxes. I step out of the car, and there's a little boy playing right next

door he looks so dirty, and his face is filled with dry mucous. I call him over, and he gets up, and hurry toward me, he is walking barefooted.

“Hey boy, unjani?” I play with his coarse hair.

“Ngiyaphila bhuti, wena unjani?” (I'm well thanks, and how are you)

Me: “Ngiyaphila. Ikuphi ekhaya?” (Where is home) he points at the house. “Umama ukhona?” (Is your mother around)

Him: “Akekho, futhi mina ngilambile solo aphume ekuseni no Nomcebo naye angimazi ukuphi,” (She's not around, and I'm hungry. She left early in the morning, and I don't know where Nomcebo is)

Me: “Ukukhiyele la ngaphandle?” (Did she lock you outside here) he nods. A part of me wants to take him, and leave with him, but I can't just take him without talking to his mother. I know that she will not care that he's gone, but I need to talk to

her. And why would she leave the child this dirty?

“Singakutholaphi ukudla la eduzane mfana?” (Where can we get food around here boy)

Him: “Masiyehla kancane ngale strada akusekudeni,” (when we go down the streets it's not that far) I nod.

Me: “Asambe. Ubani u Nomcebo?” (Let's go. Who is Nomcebo)

Him: “Sis'wami,” (she's my sister) I nod. We walk for a few minutes having a conversation, he is one clever child. Anyway, we get to the café and we buy dagwoods plus coke, then we go and sit down in one of the benches waiting for our order. A woman who is very drunk, walking zig zag having a bottle of castle lager in her hand, and singing a song that I never heard of approaches us. “Nangu U Mama uyeza,” (here's my mother coming) she gets to us, and looks at us.

“Yah wena mbuzi ubani lo?” (Hey you goat, who is this) she burps after asking that question.

Him: “Igama lakhe uVuyo.” (His name is Vuyo)

Her: “Wenzani naye la? Njengoba uhlezi la ubani ogade u muzi wami wazi kahle ukuthi nalenja engu Nomcebo ayikho? Kaze siyephi lesa sfebe. Futhi ucabanga ukuthi uyodlani namuhla mbuzi ngoba mina angiyolala endlini?” (What are you doing with him here? With you sitting here who is guarding my house knowing very well that, that dog Nomcebo is not around? I wonder where did that slut go. Again, what is she thinking you are going to eat today goat because I will not be sleeping at home tonight)

Him: “Angish...,” one slap lands on his cheek cutting his sentence short, he yelps, and sounds of sniffing follow shortly. He is silently crying.

Her: “Yey! Angisho yamasimba ngithi ubani ogade u muzi sami wena njandini?” She attempts to slap him again, but I get hold of her hand twisting it. She looks at me, then at her hand. “Wenzani? Wenzani wena nja!”

Me: “Yini lento oyenzayo? Why ushaya lomntwana ngathi ushaya umuntu om'dala? Yintanga yakho lomntwana? I think I need to let the social workers know about this, and trust me they will be very excited to know about how you are treating this child, and you will spend the rest of your life in jail. Mshaye futhi mshaye.” She looks at me eyes wide in shock not believing that I just said that, she should know better than to treat the child the way she's doing, and with their living conditions the social workers won't even hesitate to take the child away from her, and she won't do anything about it.

Her: “Awazi ukhuluma ngani, and ungubani wena uzong'tshela ukuthi ngimuphathe njani lomntwana? Ungu yihlo wake wena?” (You don't know what you are talking about, and who are you to tell me how to treat this child? Are you his father)

Me: “I'm not his father, and I know exactly what I'm talking about, and if I were to call the social workers right now, and take them to your house, let them asses the living conditions. What do you think is going to happen to you?” She looks at me.

Her: “I- I. Bhuti please don't do that, ungayenzi lento awazi ukuthi kwenzekalani ezimpilweni zethu, awazi ukuthi lenja le

ngiyithole njani. Ngiyam'zonda lomntwana, ng'mzonda kakhulu kube ngavele ngam'bulala ngisase nes'khathi. Ngiyam'zonda lomntwana mina. Enhlek uyazini, cela ung'size ke uyithathe lento uhambe nayo ubone ukuthi wenzani ngaye, ngim'suthi mina lo!" (Don't do this, you don't know what's going on in our lives, you don't know how I conceived this dog. I hate this child, I hate him so much, I should've killed him while I had time. I hate this child. You know what, please help me, and take him, and see what you do with him I've had enough of him)

Me: "I will gladly do so, and I will come back with the social workers. Ungumama onjani wena othengisa ngomntanakhe emadodeni?" (What kind of a mother are you that sells her daughter to men)

Her: "A mother that has had enough. Umama okhathele, ngidiniwe mina!" (I'm tired) she walks away, and I look at Blessing whose hands are holding my legs.

Him: "Hamba nami bhuti ungangishiyi," (leave with me brother, don't leave me) his voice carries so much pain.

Me: “Khululeka mfana sizohamba manjer uyezwa?” (Relax boy, we will leave now do you hear me) he nods. Now, how am I going to explain all of this to Cindy? But then again, I can't leave this child here at the hands of this woman. Sighs, oh, well I will see ahead. We go, and fetch our orders then leave the café, as we are busy walking we see his mother entering her yard with some man hand in hand giggling, I shake my head. I will have to come back here so that she will tell me more about Nomcebo, I wonder if there's a day where she becomes sober. We step inside my car, and we drive off. I look at Blessing next to me as he is eating, he is eating as if like he last had a meal a long time ago.



NOMALANGA

A peaceful nap is all that I wanted, but how can I with the noise of the people who've just arrived? Sighs, I look up the ceiling, my hands on my tummy trying to think of something that will distract me from all of this, yazi it was going to be better if I had a sewing machine, my mind would've forgotten about things happening here, but focused on the machine, and the fabric at hand. Bulelwa (Tsakani's mother) have been locking herself in her bedroom ever since that breakfast saga. The makotis and their husbands went sight seeing together with the little ones, but hhayi shame I think these adults busy making noise takes after them. My phone rings, and its a South African number, and it can only be daughter. I sit upright as a smile forms in my lips, and answer her she looks tired, and very sleepy if I must say.

“Mama.” She looks happy to see me.

“Nono.”

Her: “How are you? How are you finding the vacation so far, and I'm sorry for calling you after this long,” she yawns.

Me: “I'm good Nono, and the vacation is not what I expected it to be. It's a disaster, a whole mess.” She laughs.

Her: “It can only be TKs mother making it a mess, that woman seems like she has a lot of issues, and have a very childish mind,” I laugh.

Me: “That could be your future mother-in-law mind your language, and no it's not only her, but the wives too, except for Mmathabo she is trying her level best to accommodate me. How can I forget the boys? But overall, all is good,” she nods.

Her: “Mama, if that woman attempts to make your life a living hell please tell me, and put her in her place tell her where to get off together with those makotis of hers, or else I will come there, and play them a movie they've never watched before. Bangakusukeli njalo,” she yawns again, and I chuckle.

Me: “How dare you yawn while on a call with me?”

Her: “I'm tired Mama.”

Me: “So, what is it that you did days ago at the garage?” She sighs, and flares her nose.

Her: “Mama, can't we have this conversation some other time? I really need to sleep now, and I was calling checking up on you.” I nod.

Me: “Okay Nono. Please be safe that side.”

Her: “I will Ma, I love you.”

Me: "I love you too, and don't turn that house into a circuit," she laughs.

Her: "As if I will dare you, take care, and enjoy your safety vacation."

Me: "I will try, and who knows maybe I might find you a step father here."

Her: "No, you wouldn't Mama. I don't want one, but you can find yourself a boyfriend. Anyway, Lindiwe asked me to pass her greetings, and I've given her your numbers she will call you anytime, I love you."

Me: "I love you too." She blows me a kiss, and hangs up leaving me with a smile on my face until...

"I guess this is my room I hope I'm not sharing it with anyone, you know how I like my peace," speaks someone outside the room, and I watch as the doorknob goes down I chuckle

because I've locked the door. "Hhayi, the door is locked!"
Whoever it is plays with the doorknob, and the person she is
with laughs.

"Try knocking, I'm sure someone will open the door," says the
one who was laughing.

Her: "But, I strictly told Lee that I don't want to share I want a
room of my own!" She protests.

Woman 2: "Guess your son didn't hear you very well, be glad
Mmangwane that you are not sharing with Bulelwa."

Her: "Yhey. Don't mention that woman's name in my presence,
hake mobatle ke matlakala fela that woman, I don't like her,
ebile watella," I chuckle covering my mouth.

Woman 2: "And you are stuck with her until this war is over."

Her: "How I wish those thugs can grab her, and put her in the
front line of this war, but I will be patient." A knock comes

through at the door, finally, some manners. “I hope the person I'm sharing with is not noisy,” but you are, and loud too. I get off bed, and attend to it, I turn the key, and the door pushes open. “Yah, I'm here, and you are?” She looks at me from head to toe then brushes past me as she invites herself in, the woman she's with greets, and I respond closing the door.

Woman 2: “I know everyone who's here, and it's my first time seeing you. What's your name?”

Me: “Nomalanga, and you are?”

Her: “Thembeke, and that's Mmangwane,” I nod. Mmangwane is busy looking around the bedroom, I stride to my chair, and settle down looking at the view.

Mmngwane: “We need to set up a sleeping arrangement, Nomalanga you will take the couch, and I will take the bed.”

Me: “Not so fast Mmnangwane. You found me here of which means that you are taking the couch, because I'm the one who

slept on that bed first,” she looks at me, and claps her hands laughing once.

Her: “Are you telling me that I'm supposed to sleep on the couch?”

Me: “Yes, if you don't want to share the bed with me, then you can make yourself a comfortable bed on that couch.”

Thembeke: “HmMMM, excuse me. Lovely meeting you Nomalanga.”

Me: “Likewise,” she walks out leaving me with Mmangwane who is sitting on the bed hands on her cheeks looking at me, studying me, oh well. I shrug, and look outside the window.

“Yoh!” She exclaims clapping her hands. “Hha, hhayi unbealivable, hhe madoda.” I want to laugh, but I don't want her to think otherwise of me. I will not be a pushover for these women, phela bona they know each other, and I'm the odd one out. “Let me take a nap, maybe I'm dreaming, I must be

dreaming haibo!” Uh, uh, uh... I shake my head holding in laughter. Shuuhhh, so dramatic.

★»★«

LUXOLO

Hearing my mother's voice assures me that everything will be fine, everything will be well. She looked rather excited to be out of South Africa, but I don't blame her. I, too, would've been excited shame because wawu this kounrty kore ho bhizi maarn Ai. Tk's mother better not mess with my mother if she knows what's good for her together with those Makotis of hers, mxm. Lindiwe called me few hours ago saying that she's checking up on me whereas she just wanted to see if Lee was around, her obsession with Lee will really send her straight to the devil's toenail, Lee is those guys who loves pussy more than the owner of the pussy

and Lindiwe likes sex too, and the fast life. Mara mos they both like marshmallows, maybe if him & Lindiwe hook up they will tame each other, and fall in love with each other, other than sex.

TK steps inside the room with a tray of food in his hands dragging me out of my match making scheme, and we are at his house. I woke up in his house, or our house as he calls it. Yazi I don't know what's going on with me, or maybe I do, but I'm in denial about all this. I vowed to not fall in love again after my breakup with Sanele, well, no one told another that it's over, but as they always say “action speaks louder than words” and

in this case, actions spoke louder than words. Dude doesn't even cross my mind I've completely forgotten about him. But TK? TK does things to me, and he is easy to love, he is fun to be with, and most definitely a whole vibe, and more. I'm falling in love with him daily, but I'm scared. I'm scared of falling in love alone, scared to be diving with my heart in instead of my head. A lot of people already think that we are a couple, and he too is behaving like we are one, but if only they knew that what's actually going on between us doesn't have a name, we just enjoy each other's company. Wrinkled facka also gave me a pet name I would be lying if I said I don't like it, I love it. Sanele never called me with pet names, and coming to think of it Sanele never wanted to be seen with me in public, of which makes me think that he was afraid of something or someone, or maybe he was just embarrassed about me, I was not a slay queen after all, and most definitely not beautiful like all the girls he always hanged out with. And so were my previous boyfriends, I guess I was the problem. But this time, this time around it all feels so different, but as for me I'm a girl on mission. I need to build an empire without distractions, but TK is my beautiful distraction, a distraction I would like to keep forever.

I'm jogged out my thoughts again by TK's lips smashing into mine, I snap out of it giving him a guilty smile.

“Yoh, hhayi you can think shame I give it to you. What were you thinking about?” I tilt my head.

“Nothing interesting,” I shrug.

Him: “Not even me?”

Me: “Nada.”

Him: “Stop lying. You were day dreaming about me, admit it.” I roll my eyes at him.

Me: “There's nothing to admit uyaphapha nje wena. Aphi amajita?”

Him: “They left I told them that I want to spend time with you.”

Me: "If only you could spend more time with your girlfriends than me."

Him: "Nah, I'd rather spend it with you than all these whores. You are my woman bubbles, everyone knows that, and you know that too. Ungowami, you belong to me, and me alone ngibulala Inja lakuwe bubbles saarn. Ng'yakuncwanya uyeza? Ng'yazifela lovey saarn wuwe k'phela okwazi ukuba ku level yami hhai lezi ezinye izinja. Yeka uku stress(a) ngezinto eziningi bubbles, bheka mina." I look at him. "Good. We are official now sesajola finish, mangingaphikiswa futhi."

Me: "H for hektik!"

Him: "You'll do just fine lovey saarn, ungafi bubbles, but you still need to quit that job of yours, or else I will come, and fetch you everyday," I laugh.

Me: "You have time."

Him: "I do have a lot of time when it comes to protecting what's mine bubbles my bubble gum, asidle ke."

Me: "You are unbelievable wena."

Him: "And that's why you love. Bubbles."

Me: "Hmmm?"

Him: "I love you." I flash him a smile.

Me: "I love you too," hope I won't regret this. I love this moment right now, but there's something at the back of my head, something that doesn't sit well with me, something that doesn't put me at ease, I smell danger. Hope my guts are wrong though... TK puts his hand underneath his T-shirt, and gets hold of my breast cupping it, now this is what I want. Mind blowing sex that will ease my mind from the thoughts of this danger I'm sensing, he makes me lie on my back, and he gets on top of me, and start kissing me as both his hands are fondling my breasts, I

wrap my legs around his thighs, my hands cupping both his cheeks...

SAMANYOBINYOBI

I'm not an oral fan, I hate sucking dicks honestly even Sanele knew that, and he too never went down on me, apparently I was not clean enough I didn't even know what he meant by that because I was always shaved. But at this very moment with TK I'm willing to give him one, I mean he does muff me, so why don't I return the same gesture? Haha, hope I will not bite his dick, but I will follow all the tips I've been reading on bad girls bible "how to give a mind blowing blow job," and I've practising with my vibrator, and cucumber, after all practice makes perfect. We are fully naked now, he continues kissing me caressing my boobs his dick is right at the entrance of my pussy, but I don't want him inside me, not yet anyway. He guides his hand down my pussy lifting himself up a bit so that his hand can find it's way on my pussy, he finally does. His hand covers all my pussy, and he starts moving it up & down in slow motion he ain't in a hurry, and I like that, he wants this to be love making

more than just fucking. We are both deep within our feels, we are connecting with each others souls the way he looks at me in between the kissing, erh makes me happy. He has this proud look that I'm finally his, officially his, and right now he wants to make the best out of it, this is assurance that he loves, and wants me more than anything else. Should it happen that we don't work in the long run, or it ends in tears I will still cherish these moments, I will cherish his love because he loves me beyond my flaws and all that. I know that he hates my work profession, but the very same work profession is what attracted him to me. That very same job is the reason I'm sprawled out in his bed with him on top of me.

He runs his finger down my slit, and draws circles around it, his thumb is right above my clitoris circling his thumb there too, I moan as his finger pushes inside my pussy hole, and start finger fucking me, he slips in a second finger, and continues fucking me. Sending all kinds of sensation in my body, he quickens his pace, and not giving my clitoris mercy he is basically punishing it. A loud moan escapes my lips as his fingers continue working my pussy, putting some pressure on my clitoris. My legs stiffens as my body tenses, I dig my nails in his neck bringing his face to hit the pillow just above my shoulder. 1 2 3... My toes curl, my body relaxes, but my legs are shaking, I feel like peeing, but that

would be embarrassing imagine peeing while having sex? Wuhhh, anyway. He retracts his fingers of my pussy, but his thumb is still circling my clitoris in soft notion, hhayi fuck it, in just one pressure a loud moan escapes my lips, he lifts his thumb, and I pee right there, and then wetting the bed he will have to forgive me, I will wash the sheets if it needs to be. I'm embarrassed!

“Aren't we a little naughty? You squirted, and I take it it's your first time seeing how flushed your face is.” I cover my face with my hands, and he laughs. “You don't have to embarrassed its very normal, let's just say you are lucky not many girls know the feeling of squirting, unless they pleasure themselves, and find their weak spots, then yeah...” he removes my hands of my face, he is still laughing mxm.

“I...,” he shuts me up with a kiss again, doing what he did in the beginning. He teases my right nipple with his tongue while pinching the other one, not with pressure, but gently. I pull out from the kiss as he attempts to push himself in. “Wait, before you fuck me out of my brains allow me.” He looks at me confused. I push him off me, and I get on top of him, but facing the other way around. My ass is up on his face together with my pussy on full display, he better work his tongue there. I hear

him suck in some air before releasing it into a low growl making me smile. I look at his still erect dick pointing straight toward my mouth wanting my attention, my lips covering it, and my throat reacting , gagging to its length.

I spit on the tip of his head before giving his dick a hand job. “Lift your legs, but let your feet stay on top of the bed, and spread your legs apart.”

“Huh? Uthini sisi? Why?” He asks clearly confused.

“Just do it before I'm turned off,” he does as I say, his knees are pointing up. I start by licking the tip of his head not releasing my hand from massaging his dick, I swirl my tongue around his tip releasing my hand from his cock going to his balls, he exhales in a longer shudder. I focus on licking his frenulum up-down-side to side, in circles, he twitches, and groans as I do my job assuring me that I'm on the right track. He starts licking pre-cum I lick that shit, yuck, the taste! Anyway, now this is invitation to use my mouth, my hand is squeezing his balls, but not with pressure since it is said that balls are weak, and doesn't requires you to hurt them, mxm. I take his dick inside my mouth, but not all of it, I don't want to gag before I can

even start doing my job with my mouth. Hmm, he groans as I go up & down, he moans and I go deeper. As I pumped up and down on his cock with greater speed, his hand stretches and dig his fingers into my ass cheek. I relax my throat and go all the way down on him, taking him all in this time, his dick reaches my throat causing my eyes to bulge, shit. He moans and press his fingers between cheeks against my ass turning me on more, he parts me and I feel a shock that travel up through my middle making me moan over him. My throat Tightens and I cough with his dick still inside my mouth, I want to vomit, but I won't be squeezes my waist tightly groaning as he flickers my pussy with his tongue, my body tenses, and I feel him grow inside my mouth.

“Fuck bubbles! Shit! Hmm, aahhh, bubb... bubbles.” He's about to cum, and I don't want him cumming inside my mouth, I let go of his dick from my mouth, and give him a hand job, first pre-cum then seconds later my hand is filled with his semen, he breathes out. I swipe some of the semen with my finger, and turn to look at him, he looks out of it, his eyes closed. I part his lips with the very same finger that I used to swipe his cum, nigga must taste himself. He flips his eyes open as he tastes his own cum, I laugh. “Voetsek!”

“I hope you liked it.” I bat my eyes. He smiles.

“I loved that shit, damn girl! That was wild!” Impressive Luxolo, impressive baby girl.

I'm beneath him, he has both my wrist tied down with his hand, I open my legs, and starts by teasing my entrance with his cock sucking on my neck clearly he is giving me hickeys, well I will hide them with make-up. I don't want to walk around with evidence that I had sex previously. A moan escapes my lips as I start breathing abnormally, my nipples hardening against his chest. I want him, but he is busy circling his cock in my entrance I will not rush him to be inside me, I like it when he tortures me like this. My body jerks up as his free hand cup my breast, playing with it. I move my hand down his back until my middle stops at the passage that separate the ass, I want to tease my finger there but I decide otherwise, he will that I'm a porn star, and I've doing this sex shit for long. I gasp as he enters me, his balls slammed my ass, that was unexpected. Argh,. I wrap my legs round his thighs just underneath his butt cheeks drawing his huge cock into me further. He moans as he pushes himself inside me, till my soaking wet pussy envelope the whole length of his dick, he thrust into me fast with his tight ass going up and down, he pushes ass off the bed and my pussy into his

hardness. I'm sure by now you all know that I love digging his skin, and he loves it when I dig his skin with my nails.

He goes in & out of my pussy, groaning in my ear, sinking his teeth on my neck again making my blood rush. I moan, and growl especially when his balls hits my butt cheeks... He turns me over, pulling me by my dreads bringing my neck up to meet his face as he kisses me, the slap of his balls on my clitoris is what turns me on more, I caress my boobs with my hands since they are both free, and pull my nipples. My moans get lost in his mouth as he continues fucking me, my toes curl, he pushes me to the bed his weight on top of me as he fucks him, he breaths fast & hard pushing my body further down the bed. I climax with a shattering intensity and within minutes of me reaching my orgasm, he follows erupting inside me, drenching my pussy with his release and he slurp on top of me, his dick still inside me as we both try to catch our breaths, it was intense! drenching her warm pussy with his erotic release.

"I love you bubbles," he whispers in my ear nibbling it.

"I love you too," I close my eyes because I know that he's not done with me.

26

CINDY

What a hectic day I had, and today I submitted my resignation letter at the office I'll only work this month that's it. I really can't risk finding myself in the middle of a war that doesn't even involve me. I pull up next to Vuyo's car he's home early today that's a first, considering the fact that he always arrives 20 minutes after me. Oh, well, guess we are going out tonight. I step inside the house taking off my heels in the process my toes are stiff.

“Honey I'm hom...,” I stop mid-sentence when I find Vuyo busy playing with a boy who is probably 6 years old if not younger that I've never seen before, he looks so dirty, I wonder who is he, and what the fuck does he want in my house. “And nou? What's going on here?” I'm annoyed to say the least.

“Hello to you to my love,” he gets up from the carpet and walk toward me giving me a kiss.

Me: “Who is he, and what is he doing in my house?”

Him: "Let's go upstairs babe, and I will tell you everything. Blessing?" He turns to look at him. "Ng'yabuya manje ne?" (I'm coming back now, okay) he nods smiling, I pull him roughly by his hand leading him to our bedroom.

Me: "And that?" Throwing my bag on top of the bed.

Him: "His name is Blessing, well, I- I..."

Me: "Stop stuttering, and tell me what the hell is going on Vuyo!"

Him: "Why are you shouting me now?"

Me: "Look, I'm sorry baby it's just that I had a long day, and coming home to find you home with a street kid really put me off." I shake my head.

Him: "First things first he's not a street kid his name is Blessing. Secondly don't bring your work issues in this house, deal with it before you step inside the house, and start throwing tantrums. Anyway, I found Blessing outside his home playing, his mother have locked him outside. I had a brief conversation with him, and he enlightened me about his home situation, to cut the story short his mother said that I should take him with me, and I did. I couldn't leave him there after how I saw what his mother did, I had to take him he needs to be in a good environment," I laugh clapping hands.

Her: "And this is a good environment for him? And since when are you Mr save the less fortunate? Do you want him to infest our house with his poor status? And what were you doing in that house?" He sighs.

Him: "I will not allow you to call him names, and make fun of his situation. I will ignore all those nasty things you've just said about him," he chuckles. "Yazi, it seems as if like you've forgotten where you come from, where I picked you up, and don't forget that I made you who you are today. You have no fucking right to talk about his situation in a bad manner," I roll my eyes at him. Did he really had to remind me of where he found me? Well, there's a different between me, and this

Blessing of his anyway, a huge one for that matter. And why is he being defensive. "Anyway, he will be staying with us for a while."

Me: "What? You must be out of your damn mind, that thing in my lounge must leave my house, you can't bring strangers to my house. He must leave, he is not welcome here. End of story." How is Vuyo taking me though? He brings a complete stranger in my house, and he has the audacity to tell me that he will be staying here for a while, is he expecting me to babysit him? Well, he has another thing coming. I don't care even if the boy is homeless or being abused, but he must leave my house.

Him: "Let me ex...,"

Me: Chirping in. "No. Don't explain anything just take that nonsense out of my house I don't want him here. I will not take care of another child whereas their mother is free, he must leave this very moment Vuyo!" He heaves out a sigh then shake his head.

Him: "He will leave once everything have been sorted babe, his home condition is not safe for him, and his mother doesn't care about him, he abuses him. The only person who cared about him is gone. So, please Cindy, have a heart until I figure out what to do with him." I laugh, sarcastically.

Me: "And how is that your problem? You don't have any kids of your own, why care about children who are abused, and live in a not so safe environment? This is the part where you include social workers instead of being a hero, the next thing you will bring in more kids claiming that their homes are unsafe, must I accept them too? We should make our own kids Vuyo not raise some strangers kids, he must go!"

Him: "Don't be heartless Cindy, he's still a child for quite sake! Do you know how abuse damage these little souls? And who wants to grow up in a toxic home, a home where you see very well that you will not prosper if you continue staying there. The child needs love, and to be taken care of."

Me: "I don't care, whether you justify this or not I want him out of my house at this very instant, I'm not about to raise a child

that I didn't birth I'll be damned Vuyo!" He gets up from the bed.

Him: "We will talk again once you are calm Cindy, and maybe just maybe you will be rational to hold this conversation with me without throwing any tantrums, excuse me. I need to go, and check up on Blessing I'm sure he's bored." I push him back down.

Me: "I hope you, checking up on him, means that you are taking him to his home. I will not allow him to stay here in this house Vuyo. See to it that he leaves, and I don't want to talk to you about this any further. We should be busy making babies, but no. Instead, you want to play daddy, daddy to a stranger that you picked up playing outside his home without a care."

Him: "You are really not ready to have this conversation with me like the adults that we are because there's more to this than what meets the eye. We will put this conversation on hold, until then, please excuse me." Vuyo is not taking me seriously right now, and by the look of things he is not going to get rid of him, he is willing to keep him around for as long as he wants, but not on my watch. That boy must leave, he must.

Me: "But he will leave whether you like it or not Vuyo! I will not raise another woman's son never."

Him: "Okay. And just so you know I have a daughter." I chuckle, he's joking, he wants me to react, and I will not.

Me: "Oh, please. What daughter because we both know that you can't make babies."

Him: "As I've said before; you are not ready for this conversation, trust me on this one Cindy," He exits the bedroom banging the door after him, making me jump a little. Imagine Vuyo having a daughter? Pfttt, that's the day Jesus is going to come back. I sit on top of the bed, and browse through my phone. What a day...



TSAKANI

I watch her as she's busy peeling vegetables, she offered to cook. She looks distracted by something, but I don't know what is it. And when I ask her about it, she says nothing, but something is definitely troubling her. Well, at least it doesn't affect our mind-blowing sex. I honestly love her, she's one of the most important things in my life, I never thought that I would ever love a woman like I do with her, she makes this love thing look so easy. She came into my life unexpectedly, and

changed it for a better, I'm happy, very much content with her, to think that I said that she's not the type of woman you can introduce to your parents, I swear the devil was using me that day. He was deep within my feels convincing with me nonsense. This girl deserves to be introduced to Mr president himself, in fact God must know her too. I live for this girl, and I will most definitely take a bullet for her because I know she will for me too without flinching, but my mother is going to be trouble. That woman loves drama, and wants everyone to do what she says, she's controlling.

Speaking of them, I wonder how are they considering the fact that Mmnangwane & Linah are there, it's a madhouse for sure with Mmangwane getting it with my mother, and Linah working on the last nerves of abomakoti, especially Mmathabo because she's hard-headed that one. She doesn't allow the family to push her, and give her orders that they too can't take.

“Bubbles, need some help?”

“I thought you would never ask wena sthandwa sami,” I laugh getting up from my chair.

Me: "What must I do?"

Her: "How about you eat my pussy while I'm busy cooking?"
She wiggles her brow.

Me: "Are you for real bubbles?" She laughs.

Her: "Of course not. You can help me by chopping the
cabbage."

Me: "Cabbage out of all the vegetables bubbles? Why not I take
over with peeling the potatoes, or grate the tomatoes?"

Her: "You asked me what you want to do, and I'm giving you
something to do, you are still complaining. What do you want
to do ke?" She stops peeling the potatoes.

Me: "You. I want you, I want to fuck your brains out on top of
this kitchen counter with all these vegetables staring at us,
imagine how awesome that is going to be?" She laughs.

Her: "Your sex appetite is so out of this world my love, but I'm not complaining I like it, even though it always leaves me sore, but I love it."

Me: "Say what? I'm a self-proclaimed sex God bubbles, my dick is addictive, and my sex game is the best, and your pussy is my sanctuary," she laughs.

Her: "Look at you Mr poet, wena sex God, Mr sanctuary," she laughs.

Me: "Or am I lying?"

Her: "Of course you are." I click my tongue.

Me: "Mxm. Yazi wena. Did you drink the morning after?"

Her: "That was the first thing I did when I woke up." A part of me wishes that she should've forgotten to take them, but

knowing her she will not. It won't be a bad thing though if she carries my babies, yoh, I will teach those little rascals how to use guns at the age of 5 years old, hahaha I'm kidding.

Me: “So
you don't want to carry my babies?”

Her: “Say what? I would love to carry your mini yous wena, but right now I'm on a serious mission babies will only distract me, and hinder my plans,” she shrugs.

Me: “I wonder what mission is that, it seems to be important.”

Her: “Very important, and once it manifestes you will be proud of me. We will build the biggest empire, the world is not ready for us my love, we have a lot to show. And the picture I have of how this is going to turn out makes me impressed.”

Me: “Whatever that vision is, I'll gladly support it.”

Her: "I know baby, I know," she kisses me.

An hour later we are done cooking she has cooked a lot of food, enough for the gents too because I know that they are going to come, and start opening my pots, and fridge looking for food. But that will change once bubbles stays with me permanently, and this thing of them coming here as if they own this house will stop too. They will learn to stay in their house, and will know how much a bag of rice cost. We are busy eating, feeding each other when the door opens, see? This is what I was talking about. Someone is busy opening the pots, bubbles laugh. Leon, Batista, and Lee joins us, that means Talon is the one busy with the pots in the kitchen. They greet sitting down Lee already have the remote in her hands. Bubbles excuse herself, she's going to prepare for work. I really hate her job, I really do. If it was up to me, I would've burned down the club, but Sol needs the money too.

"Another message received from the Bratvas gang," sighs. The Bravtvas gang originates in Chicago.

"What message now?"

Batista: "They too are bringing war to us."

Me: "Nothing new there," shrugging.

Him: "I know, but they are bringing it sooner than we have anticipated."

Leon: "Meaning that they can rain war upon us any time, even tomorrow, and remember that not everyone knows that they are coming."

Me: "Then how do you guys know?"

Him: "Someone leaked the information unaware, I think their plan was to attack without warning anyone, and that would've given them the upper hand in this war." I nod. "So, they think that they are clever neh?" He laughs.

Lee: "Exactly. I mean, they even took down the information, but our computer geek here beat them at their own game, and he sent them a message anonymously telling them that we will

be waiting for them, and if not then we will bring the war to them.”

“Vele vele ufuna sithlekele emathuneni wethu?” (So, you want us to send ourselves straight to our graves) Talon says settling down.

Him: “We are not that crazy, why would I want to get myself killed deliberately?”

Talon: “Then what is you say kahle kahle?” We all laugh, Talon is full of jokes yuuhhh.

Me: “I wish I knew what he's saying. Gents it's time to put our heads together, and find a way forward. We need to take the war to them, and not wait for them to bring the war to us.” The last time a war broke out was when the grillers were rescuing some girl, now that was a war and a half, that was the war that went even abroad it was heavy. Phela the grillers are too many, and they were led by a woman but I heard that she has retired, and her husband is the one who took over, they've been quiet though. I guess that's a good sign, hopefully they will resurrect

when this war starts we really need to be united as South African gangs, and put our differences aside, and be one because these other gangs from other parts of these worlds are many, there are thousands & thousands of members, and they all have one mission. To kill & destroy.

“Goodbye gents. Have a very good night, and please wash the dishes once you are done eating. I will see you when I come back.”

Batista: “Lajola?” We look at each, and we nod.

Lee: “Yoh, finally bafethu it's been long overdue. Congrats guys. So, when are making babies?”

Her: “The day Jesus finally get the courage to come here because wawu, ni H for hektik nina.” She is already marching away laughing.

Talon: “Hhe lovey!”

Her: "Yini wena?"

Him: "U spane grand."

Her: "Zoyenza njalo thanks, and don't forget to wash the dishes."

Me: "I'll be back gents."

Leon: "That's what you said the last time, and what did you?" I laugh.

Me: "Rest boy rest."

Luxolo: "I'm going home first," I nod, and we get inside the car.

Me: "I should teach you how to drive bubbles."

Her: "Please do. That's another important lesson that I need."

Me: "We will start tomorrow then."

Her: "Yess!"

Me: "I love you bubbles."

Her: "I love you too sthandwasami," she gives me a warm smile. Yasis, I'm one lucky bastard!

★»★«

LUXOLO

Tsakani left as soon as he dropped me off. I take out the shoebox underneath the bed, I need to hide it. The unsettling feeling is still there, it doesn't want to leave the back of my head. I still don't know what kind of danger is it that's coming, or maybe the men Bella stole from now know that Bella was last seen with me, and she gave me a bag to keep safe for her, I honestly don't know. But what I do know is that I have to hide the box before something happens to it. I step out of the house, and walk at the back, and start digging a hole on the soil, it's only for time being until I find a place that is safe to hide it. This is my jackpot nina, yoh. This will do, and no one will find it here. I get back inside the house, I rinse my hands, and take my bag, step out of the house locking the door after me.

10 minutes later I'm at work, and everyone looks so happy I must say I wonder what's going on. I get to the change room, and I find the ladies celebrating with champagne this can only mean that Sol is not around. I sit on my station minding my own business when Zama stands beside me, taking a drag of her cigarette.

“Have you heard baby girl? Your blesser, Sol. Or should I say your fuck buddy, left?” I ignore her. “You are not understanding me, I'm telling you that Sol left town he went back to Russia, there's a new boss in town, and you baby girl will not be getting the VIP treatment that Sol was giving you.” She laughs, and the others join her.

“And?”

Her: “What do you mean end? This means that your VVIP life is over. This new boss won't play with you, he will treat you like the rest of us, but ke as for me. I will wake up next to him tomorrow, I'm a girl on mission.”

Me: "I hope he won't drown in that ocean of yours," she gasps, and the others laugh. "Now, fuck out of here, give me space your fragrance smell is making me nausea," I look at her from head to toe, and look at myself in the mirror. I wonder why did Sol leave so sudden, whatever is going on with him must really be serious that he had to go home, may he heal from whatever his going through. I wonder who the new boss is. The door opens, 2 guards step in followed by a man whom I assume is our new boss. He is ugly, and he looks strict too. He is a no-go area this one, he doesn't take shit you can tell njer just by looking at him.

"My name is Antony, and I'm your new boss until further notice. Whom amongst you is diamond?" The girls look at me. "It's you? Then why didn't you raise up your hand, or said something?"

"I am diamond. What do you want from me?"

Him: "Follow me to my office, and make sure that you get there before me, and as for the rest you meet me in my office before your shift starts." He walks out followed by his guards. I look at Zama, and smile.

Me: “Well, guess Sol put in a good word for me, and as for you? Good luck waking up next to him in bed,” I laugh, and walk out of the change room.

Him: “I need to teach you the ropes of how this business operate,” I'm in Sol's office, or should I sag Antony's? Argh, whatever the case may be.

Me: “I don't follow.”

Him: “I know,” he sits down. “Sol, believes in you, you better not mess this up. I, too, won't be long here, but you will be. Now, let's get to work, and don't ask me any questions I also have no answers, I'm only following the rules given to me by Sol.” Could this mean? Uh uh uh, shuuuuu. Nope, let me not get ahead of myself, I mean Sol would never? I mean, pshhh. I startle when the table makes noise, Antony banged the table. “Focus. I'm sure I'm not teaching a 12-year-old here, this is business not primary.” He clicks his tongue, wawu, he's rude, very rude. Well, I can be rude too if I want!

NOMALANGA

Let me just say for all that is worth it, I'm enjoying my vacation Mmangwane, and her family are accommodating me very well unlike Bulelwa and her makotis, but Mmangwane is the person I'm closed too we share a lot in common. Her & Bulelwa are always at each other's throats once they cross paths kuyanyiwa it becomes better when we eat because they stay far apart even so, they still give each other nasty looks and throw indirect slurs at each other, I'm yet to find out why are they always at each other's throats, but I won't ask them, I'm sure Mmathabo will tell me she's noisy after all. Today we've decided to go to beach, we've been cooped up in this hotel for the past 5 days, and I do need some fresh air I've even finished the books that I came with, I need more but I need a sewing machine more I will have to call Luxolo, and ask her if she can't ship my machine I really need to keep busy or else I'll end up knowing everyone's news like Mmangwane. She has a file of people, and never gets tired talking sometimes she sleeps while talking. Oh, and Mmangwane is Lee's mother well, not his biological mother, she took her in when he was still in university. Apparently Lee was staying with Tsakani's in his house, and Bulelwa didn't like that she was always at Tsakani's

house, and that made Lee uncomfortable. Oh, I forgot to tell you; her & Bulelwa are cousins, and they were best of friends until Bulelwa started talking bad about Lee, insulting him, saying that he's busy enjoying his son's money why doesn't he go and work for his money, and all those shit. Lee told Tsakani, and Tsakani banned her mother from coming to her house, he changed locks and all, but that still didn't stop Bulelwa from insulting Lee, it got to a point where she even went to the university, and insulted Lee claiming that he is a blood sucker he wants to finish his son's money, and that he was homeless and stuff. One day Mmangwane received a call from Tsakani telling her to come, and reprimand her before he does something he might regret to his mother.

When Mmangwane got there, she found Bulelwa insulting Lee standing outside the yard making noise for everyone to hear. That's how Mmangwane ended up taking Lee since she had no kids of her own, she still doesn't have any. Okay, I think I know why they can't stand each other. Now that I remember what Mmangwane told me, it all makes sense. I guess Bulelwa is a control freak and a pushover. What a woman she is, and this brings me to the conclusion that she hates me only because his son paid for my trip, so pathetic & stupid. It seems like she wants to control everything, and everyone around her. She

needs to get a man honestly, or something that will keep her busy because I khant with her.

“Hhayi mfazi awucedi Kanti?” Mmangwane shouts from the bedroom I'm in the bathroom.

“Almost done.”

Her: “How far are you?”

Me: “I'm wearing the dress now.”

Her: “Oh, okay. You'll find me outside I don't to bump into that toenail of a devil on my way out because I will punch her to her grave,” I laugh. She's dramatic this one.

Me: “Okay.” I get done dressing, and I walk out of the bathroom only to find Okuhle snooping our closet I don't even know what she's looking for. She takes my bag, and about to walk out when I clear my throat, she stops on her tracks, legs shaking. “What are you doing with my bag? And how dare you

enter our room without knocking? In fact, what are you doing here?" I'm standing before her looking at her straight in the eyes she's shaking. She drops her eyes to the ground, and I lift her chin with my thumb making her to look at me. "I've asked you a question Okuhle. What the hell are you doing with my bag? Yini, you want to bewitch me?" She shakes her head tears already streaming down her cheeks, I don't care about her tears they don't move me, not even one bit. "Oh, you don't want to talk? Okay, fine, maybe you might talk in your husband presence." I get hold of her hand attempting to pull her toward the door, but she's not budging.

"Pl- please, not my husband. I'm sorry."

Me: "I don't want your sorry! I want to know what the hell were you going to do with my bag Okuhle! How dare you invade our personal space? How dare you!" I'm livid, how dare she. Haike, and she does what she studied for at the university of emotions, crying. I'm sure she got level A for it because this kid can cry effortlessly.

“Kant...,” she stops talking when she sees the hysterically crying Okuhle with my bag still in her hands. “Haibo, and then who died?” She stands beside me.

Me: “No one died, I found her busy in our closet, and as you can see in her hands she has my bag with.”

Her: “Hhey sisi awusho; what are you doing with Noma's bag? Wait, who sent you because I know that you did not come by yourself, not unless uyathakatha sisi, habe!”

Me: “She won't tell you, but I'm sure she will tell her husband.”

Her: “And I saw him coming in let me call him. Hlulani Hlulani, come and see, your wife have been caught red-handed. Shesha bo!” I look at Okuhle who is busy shaking her head. “Cha, uyathakathaka wena I strue,” she claps her hands.

“What is it Mmangwane?” I hear him ask from the passage. When, he gets to the door he looks at us then at his wife. “What goes here?”

Me: "Ask your wife. I caught her snopping around our closet, and as you can see she has my bag in her hands."

Him: "Care to explain Okuhle?" His voice is low. Okuhle shakes her head. "Talk dammit! What were you doing here? And what the fuck are you doing with that bag!" He roars making us jump a little. He steps inside the room, and grabs the bag from Okuhle's hands, and throw it on top of the bed then he pulls her by her arm. "I'll talk to her, and she will tell me exactly what she was doing with your bag, you can go, and join the others."

Me: "Just know that violence won't solve anything, just talk to care politely, raise your voice if you have to, but don't use your hands to get her to talk."

Him: "I won't Ma. Thank you." They both walk out of our room.

Mmangwane: "I wonder what was she going to do with your bag, sihlala nabaloi la." I chuckle.

Me: "I wonder too, and I have no doubt that Bulelwa is the one who sent her."

Her: "It doesn't need an affidavit that one," we laugh. "Make sure that you lock the door very tight we don't want the episode to happen again." I lock the door, and we walk away. This is getting too much now I wonder what was she going to do with my bag, nx these people...



VUYO

I'm leaning against the door frame watching Naledi playing with Blessing they seem to be enjoying themselves judging by the way Blessing giggles, after that incident with Cindy I left that very same night. She was busy insulting me, and calling Blessing all sorts of names, but Blessing didn't take her nasty words to mind because he is used to being called names, his mother used to call him names, and everyone else in his hood called him names too, but why wouldn't they when the very same woman who gave birth to him treats him like she never birthed him? I couldn't stand her noise, so I left her shouting without taking anything, but I did go shopping the next day and bought all the necessities. Now I need to work on finding Nomcebo before it's too late. I'd like to believe that Adele didn't sell her to slavery because she is against it, that's why she goes all the way out to take these girls in once she sees them roaming around with foreign internationals or when she sees them mixing themselves with the wrong crowd, guess she really took her girls to a place of safety. I need to find a private investigator

who will find me information on where did Adele exactly took the girls, I must save my daughter before everything takes a different turn.

“Hey, we didn't see you there. How long have you been standing there?” Naledi asks getting up from the floor leaving Blessing playing with the cars.

“Hi. Not long.”

Her: “You came back early, I wasn't expecting you so soon,” I sigh.

Me: “I know, but my meeting was shorter than how I anticipated it will be.”

Her: “You may sit, I was about to dish up.” I settle down. “Ble, go and wash your hands I'm dishing up, but first things first pick up your toys, and put them in one place.”

Him: "Okay Sis'Naledi. Sawubona Bhut'Vuyo," he comes, and hugs me.

Me: "How are you?"

Him: "I'm good thank you. Athi ngogeza izandla ke," he takes off.

Naledi: "He's such a happy child hey," I shrug.

Me: "He is indeed."

Her: "Will I be asking for much if he sleeps over just for tonight? I get bored, before you say anything. Yes, I'm used to staying alone, and getting bored, but ever since you brought Blessing, and introduced me to him. I don't want him leaving. He reminds me of my so..." she stops talking. "Food is ready." She gives me a bowl to wash my hands then she gives me a swab.

Me: "Thank you." I wonder what happened to her son, but I will not push her to tell me. She will tell me once she's ready.

Blessing joins us, he says Grace, and we start eating. The food tastes good I must say. We clean out our plates, and Blessing asks for more, and Naledi is very much happy to be at his service. I look at him, and he looks happy, but he needs a hair cut, and I must start looking for a school for him nearby, I haven't forgotten about talking to her mother. I still want to know why she hates Blessing, and how did Nomcebo ended up staying with her.

“Vuyo.” Naledi drags me out of my thoughts. “Are you okay?”

Me: “Yeah. I'm just thinking.”

Her: “There's some beer in the fridge.” I chuckle.

Me: “No. Thank you. I don't want your boyfriend to come back later, and shout at you.” She laughs.

Her: “What boyfriend? They are mine.”

Me: “I'm sure its those sweet ciders.”

Her: "No. I don't drink ciders, I drink real beer. I drink Hansa Castle lager/light, milk stout, and all those brands that some women find disgusting."

Me: "Wow. Are you sure?" She laughs.

Her: "Of course."

Me: "You are the first woman I've come across who drinks raw beer."

Her: "I know. You are so used by those city girls who drink ciders, champagne, and cocktails. So, beer?"

Me: "Hansa will do, thank you." She's a rare breed. I'm used to ladies drinking ciders, not raw crafted beers. Blessing gets done eating, and he goes back to playing with his toys. Naledi brings a can of Hands. I'm also not used to drinking no Hansa, and Castles hhayi they taste very bitter, at least Castle light & Savannah. She clears the table then we go to her lounge, and

we watch TV I don't even remember when was the last time I watched time.

Her: "So, about what we spoke about. Are you agreeing for him to sleepover?"

Me: "Why don't you ask him? I might say yes, and he might say otherwise."

Her: "He agreed. I spoke to him first, and he said I must ask you."

Me: "Oh, okay. If he agreed then who am I to say no? It's fine, he can sleep over."

Her: "Thank you. Uzwile mpintshi?"

Him: "Ngizwe kahle nje." (I heard very well) he looks at me, and smiles. "Thank you Bhut'Vuyo."

Me: “No stress boy, I just want to see you happy,” he nods. He continues playing with his toys, I'm sure he misses Nomcebo even though he doesn't ask about her, but he does.

I'm sure Cindy have been calling me none stop, I don't even know where my phone is, and it's best that she doesn't know where I am. She has some lot of growing up to do. Spending time with Naledi is making me see things from a different perspective, she doesn't have much, but she's content with all that she has.

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LUXOLO

My heart is beating faster than it usually do I don't even know why, you see the feeling I've been having this whole week, today is much worse even my palms are sweating I foresee a bad night ahead, but since I'm working in the office I don't think it will affect me that much since the office is little bit far from the club. I step inside the club, and everything is normal like any other night, I get to the office, and push the door open, I find Antony looking outside the window brushing his chin. He ain't wearing a suit tonight he is in his casual wear, but now there are 4 guards instead of 2, usually it's one guard inside the office, and one outside.

“You are 5 minutes late diamond,” he turns his face to look at me. He is not impressed.

“Traffic. But I'm here now, aren't I?”

Him: “Yes, you are. The ladies have been asking about you.”

Me: "Oh, is it? Why were they asking about me?"

Him: "Obvious. Because you no longer work the pole like they do, and you haven't been coming to the change room for the past four days. They believe that something happened to you. Why don't you go, and assure them that you are alive, and well." I wonder why do they think that something happened to me? I mean, they will be the first ones to rejoice when something bad happens to me.

Me: "Were they worried?"

Him: "No. In fact, they were happy, they said that they wish you can disappear for good. Now, go, and show them that you are still alive & kicking, so that we get back to work. This is my last night teaching you, from tomorrow you will be handling the club on your own." I heave out a sigh getting up from the chair.

I get to the change room, and I find them busy with their faces their mood is somber, wait, they look angry.

“Got the message. As you can see, I'm fine. Nothing happened to me, I'm still intact, and very much savage as you know me. Now, what got you all so sad? Or who died?” They just look at me, hatred fills their eyes.

“You thought we wouldn't find out that you will be our new boss?” Aranele asks.

Me: “Oh, that. It hasn't been finalized yet, but once it does all of you will be fired. I will hire new girls, girls who won't misbehave once their clitoris start misbehaving, and need some attention. You better put some respek on my name.” They just stare at me blankly, while the rest don't even care about what I said.

Tshego: “You will not find better girls than us, we are the best in this game diamond, and no one will ever take that away from us. We've been working here for years now, we kept this place going even though it was on a sinking ship!”

Me: “Then I came along, and change the whole thing again, and made your sinking ship a cruise. Now, tell me here; how many more girls are like me out there? Girls who take hearts just by glances, you see that there's too many of me out there? What

makes you all so special? I will fire all of you mina, aningiboni & aningazi nina. Get done, it's rude to keep customers waiting.” I look at them, then walk out banging the door. Damn, that felt good.

I get to the office, and Antony is not around, but his guards are I wonder where did he go. I sit down and wait for him to come back. TK was so happy when I told him that there might be a possibility that I might be taking over Sol's club, and be the owner. He told the guys, and they too were happy shame mostly because they will get free alcohol, and be treated like VIPs talk about being ambitious. My mother will be very happy once I tell her these news, I really can't wait to tell her the good news.

While waiting for Antony to come back the office starts smelling funny, I look around to see where the smell is coming from, but I see nothing, and it seems like I'm the only one smelling the smell because the guards don't look affected by it all. I try getting up from the chair to get some fresh air, but my vision becomes blurry, and I start getting dizzy. I sit back down, and close my eyes then shake my head, I try opening them again, but they ain't budging. The only thing I hear is Antony's voice from a distance...

“Take her to the car, and make sure that no one sees you.” He tells whoever he is talking to, I try lifting my hand I want to say something, but my heads drops on top of the table...

TSAKANI

It's been over 5 minutes now waiting for bubbles, but she ain't coming out, and I saw all the girls coming out, I wonder what's taking her so long. Let me add 2 more minutes if she ain't out by then, then I'll be forced to get inside, and fetch her myself. This Antony better not test my patience. I want my woman. The way I was so excited when she told me that there might be a possibility that she might take over Sol's club, I even promised to buy her a car, but now I'm not so sure. Not unless she hires Batista as her bodyguard, that will put me at ease knowing very well that she's safe. I'm disturbed by someone knocking on the window, I roll it down, and I find a nyaope boy.

“Ek'se, kuhambani?”

“Bam'ncandile u lovey wakho Bra TK, bam'phose emotweni,”
(They took your girl, they threw inside a car) he is speaking in slow motion.

Me: “Askies? Uthi iqhude likhala kuphi?” (What are you saying)

Him: “Ama daman am'thethethe bengicave konke skhokho.”
(Those men took her, I was watching everything) I scratch my dreads, and step out of the car.

Me: “Ima la ng'yeza,” (wait here I'm coming) I head straight toward the club, and the guards grant me access even though they are about to close. I get to the office, and it's empty, but bubbles bag is on the floor, her things are scattered all over the place, I pick them up, and walk out of the office, and out of the building. Before getting into my car, I give the nyaope boy R200, he thanks me, I get inside my car, I take my phone from the seat, and text the guys to meet me at my house immediately. Whoever took bubbles are testing me, they want me, and they will get me! They just started something they can't finish, if is war they want then it's war that I will give them! My hands tighten on the steering wheel, I clench my teeth then bring the engine to life, and I drive off leaving trail of dust behind me.

A new journey begins...

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TSAKANI

Pacing up & down in this lounge at 04:00am in the fucking morning ain't helping! My bubble must be crossing the borders by now, or tied up somewhete by some bloody bastards who are tired of living, it fucks me up that I couldn't save her, in fact

I should've refused her going to work the minute that she told me that her mind is not at ease, but what do I know? Fuck! I don't even want to think about what are her captures doing to her right now! The gents are here still in their pyjamas I found them already waiting for me, I told them what happened, and Talon flipped.

“We are going to turn this city upside down! We are going to rain terror on everyone, and by everyone I mean everyone!” I roar.

“You are including innocent people too?” Lee asks.

Me: “Which part did you not get when I said everyone? In fact, I will start with my neighbors right now!”

Him: “Now you are talking bull shit you can't involve innocent people in Lux's abduction, you can't. I understand that you are pissed, that those men ticked you off the wrong way, but you can't go around killing innocent people TK man, those people don't know anything!”

Talon: “Makubhode wonke umuntu maarn! Masicisheni yonke lemisunu one time maarn, makunyiwe macala onke!” He gets on top my coffee table.

Leon: “Vakga kancane Talon ngokubasela umlilo ubona uvutha njengo Volcano. TK ntwana yami umoya phansi, (wait a bit with fueling the fire, TK calm down) we need to be rational about this. We need to think things through before innocent people get hurt.”

Me: “Fuck it maarn fuck it! Bubbles was innocent too but they still took her, don't tell me to be rational about this. My woman is in danger I'm not functioning I need to kill someone, I need to spill blood!” I take my gun from my waist, and shoot the ceiling twice.

Lee: “Fuck maarn TK keep it together ndoda! What we need to do is to go to Sol's club, and ask for the footage, and we can also question the girls I'm sure they know something.” I chuckle.

Me: “You must be kidding me, and there is no way that whoever abducted my bubbles made sure that they switch off the cameras, we need to find this Antony man he has answers to give me, and I'm sure that Sol is involved in all of this. That's why he left because he knew what he was planning, he left knowing exactly what's going on!”

Batista: “I need to call my contacts from Russia, and alert them. But I will need to send them her picture so that they can be on the look out, and if they see anything they will let us know.”

Me: “So, I must sit around till the sun comes up, and it is only then I will know where my woman is? You must be insane! Leon, start by finding me everything about Sol, find me every fucking thing put your computer skills into work!”

Him: “I'll get right on it,” he nods getting up from his seat.

Talon: “Bese mina? Mele ngiyenzi? Phela ngifuna ukucitha igazi kube bovu phansi,” (And what about me? What must I do? I want to spill blood, and make the entire floor red)

Me: “Enlek yazini, asivaye sovakashela leziferbe u Arenele no Zama, bazokhuluma ukuthi ukuphi!” (You know what, let's go, and pay Arenele & Zama a visit, they will tell me where she is)

Lee: “I'll also touch my contacts, and we will see what we will do. Sizom'thola u bubbles before the sunset, she will be back in your arms.”

Batista: “Let's not make promises we can't keep Lee. First of all, we don't know who this Antony is, and secondly Sol is the mastermind behind all this, and I don't think he is that stupid, there is no way that he went to Russia because he knows very well that, that's the place you are going to look at. And I also can't say that he's still here in South Africa, he is somewhere hiding, but what I can assure you though is that we will not rest until bubbles is found, even though I know that she will kick some ass. She's one bad bitch, she will not go down without a fight she will fight till the end. Be strong ntwana, and keep together.” He clasp my shoulder, I hear what he is saying, but I don't understand shit. All I need is to find my bubbles that's it.

Talon: “Asivaye TK. U Dr. Phil uringile,” (let's go. Dr.Phil have spoken) I nod, and we walk out.

An hour later we are at Marian squatters, these bitches earn a lot of money for them to be staying in this filth. The sun is about to come out, and few people are already awake busy sweeping their yards. We weave through passages, and jump sewerages, Talon knows this place very well, and we finally arrive at this so called mkhukhu. No man, so Talon used to come here just for sex? Sies, that's so unlike him, but then who am I to judge? Talon kicks down the door, and we make our in as the the girls jump from their beds screaming.

“Voetsek. Msindo dwi sous nou!” (Keep quiet right now) Talon roars pointing them with a gun. Their room is so dirty, clothes are scattered on the floor, pile of dirty dishes in one of the basins, bottle of beers, and cigarettes butts lying carelessly on the dirty torn couch, and oh let me not get started about the horrible smell, I'm not here for that, but I'm here to find out where my bubbles is. They are covering themselves with the blankets shivering. “Kuyanuka la, yasis maarn ngathi akuhlali abo lovey fo sho namagundwane akhona la, yerrr. Manithola is'khathi ni kline hhayi maarn!” (It stinks here, yasis maarn it's as if like is not women staying here, I'm sure there are rats even, when you get time clean up this place)

“A va u bubbles?” They look at each other. “Yhey nina msoon, ngithi u va u bubbles?” I shot one shot next to their legs, and they scream I don't even care whether the neighbors heard the gun shot or not, should they come here, and complain I will shoot them.

Zama: “We don't know where she is.”

Me: “Njani? Weren't you the ones calling her threatening her?”

Her: “I- I did, but I swear to you at this very moment that I don't know where she is.” Talon shoots at the zinc missing her shoulder by an inch.

Arenele: “She's telling the truth we don't know where she is, we really don't. The last time we saw was when she came to tell us that she will fire us.”

Me: “More reasons to get her abducted! You couldn't stand losing your jobs right? So, instead you got her kidnapped just so she won't fire you right?” I wave my hand in the air with my

gun swinging back & forth. They shake their heads. “I will ask you one last time, and you better answer me truthfully or else I will blow your brains out, I'm not joking. Now, tell me; where is bubbles?”

Them: “We don't know!” I point my gun at them.

Talon: “Yima ntwana ngathi ba ringa I waar. Anisho ke wakuphi lo Antony nyana wakhona?” (Wait boy, I think they are telling the truth. Tell us here; where is that Antony)

Zama: “We don't know. All we know is that he's from Russia, and he is Sol's friend that's all we know about him.”

Talon: “Manje I wallpaper yakhe?”

Aranele: “We don't have his picture.” They are not helping, they don't know anything. Fuck!

Me: “As'vaye Talon ayikho lento esize ngayo la.” (Let's go, there's nothing that we came for here)

Him: "Savaya skhokho, nina bo lovey ngiyathemba niwabekile ama cent ngoba Sol's club is closed until bubbles is found, thanks. Aziye skhokho," we walk out of the room. "Sizom'thola ungapheli umoya. Ngiyathemba no Leon uzothola something asilali singakam'tholanga u bubbles, enlek masivaye siye kulabo dam'shishi fo sho sizovuka." (We will find her, don't lose hope. I'm sure Leon will find something

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we are not sleeping until bubbles is found, let's go to these other gang members I'm sure we will find something) I nod, and throw him the keys. I won't be able to drive in this state, I spit, and we start walking I must find bubbles, and once I do she ain't going back to that club, ever. Matter of fact, I will shut that club down. And Sol together with this Antony better pray that I don't find them, or I find them dead because if I do find them I will not have any peace, I will rain terror upon them. They will wish they never poked me from my hole, I did not disturb them, they disturbed me, and I'm going to strike, hard.



LUXOLO

My head is so heavy it's like I've been drinking the whole night. I slowly open my eyes as I am not familiar with this scent, it smells horrible. The first thing I see opening my eyes its an elderly woman she is looking straight at me, I open my eyes fully, and grab her by her collar she opens her eyes in terror.

“Where the fuck am I and who the hell are you?” Words are failing to come out of her mouth, she keeps on opening & closing her mouth. “I've asked you a question dammit answer me!”

“Easy the tiger, let go of her,” a woman maybe same age as my mother tells me as she approaches us, she is wearing all black, and very much muscular. “Erin, you may leave.” What the fuck woman! How can she leave when I'm still grabbing her collar you are one stupid bitch. Erin looks at her, then at me. “Oh, that.” In one forcefull yank my hands let go of Erin's collar, and she rushes out, I look at this woman standing before me.

Me: “Who the hell are you, and what am I doing here?” I sit upright. I really want to strangle her to death right now.

Her: “Who the hell I am mustn't matter to you. Now that you are awake you better get your ass down at this instant!” I look around me, and there are more than 50 beds here.

Me: “I will not do such thing until you tell me who the hell are you, and what am I doing here!” She slaps me, I taste blood on

my mouth. "Di...", another slap lands on my finger, yasis she slaps like a man. I look her, and return the slap back the least she expected it.

Her: "You bitch!" She attempts to get on top of the bed her aim is to strangle me, but I roll over, and fall on the floor twisting my leg in the process shit. She gets hold of my dreadlocks yanking me up, and I kick her vagina with the back of my heel, she whimpers as I continue kicking her, she's not let go of my locks, she's now pulling them roughly. I stop kicking her, and that gives her the opportunity to push me to the nearest wall, my hands are the first thing to land on the wall as my face crashes on them. I duck as she is about to pull my dreads again, her hands lands on nothing. She groans, and I run toward the door, and step out before she could even reach me. When I get outside I find lot of girls eating they really look worm out, some are falling asleep while eating. Those who are awake look at me as I limp away. Haike, the sgora steps out looking angry all the girls stand up when they see her even those who were sleeping, she must be important around here, and the girls look scared of her.

Her: "Come here you black bitch!" As I took a look at all the girls, I'm the only black girl here. I'm the fucken odd one out! In

fact, what the hell is this place? Or is it some kind of a boarding school? How did I end up here? Anyway, the woman run straight to me, and I take one of the plates that was on top of the table, and throw it her way she ducks. Fuck me! She finally finds me, and tackles me down giving me slaps, and speaking in a language I don't understand. I bite her arm, and she cries out in pain, and stops slapping me. Now its my turn to slap her, but I don't think she's feeling anything.

“Enough!” A voice I've never heard before reprimands us. I remain sitting, and don't bother standing up, I turn my head slowly only to find some man in his early 30s standing behind me with a few men. They are all wearing expensive suits, and have cains with them.

Me: “What the fuck? What the fuck is actually going on here?” I get off this woman, and leave her on the ground smiling, I guess this man is her boyfriend.

Him: “Go, and freshen up then come, and join me diamond then I will tell you everything.”

Me: “No! I want to know, where the hell is this place, and what the fuck am I doing here? Lastly, who the fucking hell are you? You are even brave calling me by my stage name.” My nose flares.

Him: “Go, and freshen up diamond you have only an hour, and I will send someone to come, and take a look at your leg.”

Me: “And you think I will take orders from a stranger? You must be out of your damn mind!”

Him: “Don't force to get physical with you diamond,” those words come out from his gritted teeth.

Me: “Do whatever you want mfana. Tsek maarn!” He grabs my arm, and pulls me to him, and he squeezes my cheeks looking at me straight in the eyes.

Him: “Do you know who I am?”

Me: “I don't want to know!”

Him: “Then you will know me!”

“She's one hot-headed girl I've ever dealt with that one.” Argh maarn, Antony! This fuckershit let go of my face, I rub my cheeks.

Me: “What the fuck? How could you Antony?”

Him: “We are doing all of this for you, you will need all the training you will get, and I was just following orders given to me.”

Me: “Training for what now? And who gave you those orders?”

Him: “You are left with 55 minutes,” I groan. “Jaguar, get her prepared, and send her to the dining area once done.” This Jaguar woman gets up from the floor.

Me: “My boyfriend will find me, and he will kill you, not unless I kill you first.” They all laugh, and this Jaguar woman pulls me by arm taking me to this so-called bathroom. I don't even want to know what they are going to do to me, or what torture awaits me. Those men out there are dangerous, very dangerous even my TK won't stand them. And I wonder who gave Antony an order to get me abducted, Lord please be with me. I don't know what awaits me in this new journey. I wonder what do those girls that I saw outside do, or maybe they were also abducted just like me? They were forced to be here? And what is it exactly that we are training for? I have lot of questions, but who will give me answers to them?

This Jaguar woman pushes me inside the shower roughly. "I'll be right outside, and by the way I'll enjoy torturing you. I will torture you until you die. Welcome to my hell baby girl," she winks at me, and closes the shower door. Her words makes me shiver, but I will die fighting if it needs too. TK better find me, and fast!

LUXOLO

I step inside the huge dining area being led by Jaguar of course, and my hands are tied up for everyone's "saftey" as they've said. I'm wearing a blue overall with saftey boots, and my dreads are hanging freely of which I find quite weird because I always tie them or plait them, I don't even remember when was the last time were they this loose. Men with expensive suits with cigars in their hands, glasses of whiskies before them, and all kinds of food placed neatly on top of the table are sitting around the feasting table their eyes fixed on me as I stop on my tracks, and not moving forward. Jaguar pushes me forward making me stumble, I spin my head around, and look at her, and seeing her grinning like a fool irks me. My nose flares, and my right eye start twitching. The day I will get my hands on this girl she will wish that she should've treated me differently because I will make sure that I kill her without flinching, enhlek mina naye ikhombene klaar.

"Move!" She commands me pushing me foward until I'm standing before the 20 men, oh wait. 15 men, and 5 females. I

didn't see the females because everyone here looks exactly the same, all buffed up & shit.

“Welcome diamond. How lovely of you to join us this evening. Please take a seat, we've been waiting for you.” Speaks the man who reprimanded us earlier on.

Me: “No. I'd rather stand.” He gets up from his chair giving one of the guard standing beside him his cigar, he fixes his jacket, and unbuttons his shirt folding it showing his awfully looking wrist tattoos, he walks around the table like a gentleman he thinks he is. Few more steps he is standing before me his hand steadying my face to look at him.

Him: “I heard about you. I know about you, and I know your pathetic little boy you call a boyfriend.” But what you don't know is that I am a killer, a cold-blooded killer, self-proclaimed of course. Well, it seems like he has done his research, but oops. There are loopholes in his so-called research. “I know your mother, and I know that she's staying with your sister currently due to her health issues.” See? I told you that his research have some loop holes in it, he is still withholding old information about me. Stupid Italian man, I guess not all Mafias

are clever after all, some are just good at giving orders while sitting behind the table sipping on some whiskey, smoking cigars, just like him.

Me: “And?”

Him: “And nothing. wait,” he walks around, and stand behind him, he breathes down my neck making me snare. “I heard that you are also hot-headed, and you are used to getting things your way, all that you need lands safely in your hands after you've put up a fight using your mouth.”

Me: “Can you please get straight to the point, and move away behind me you are making me uncomfortable honestly.” He snorts, and laughs once.

Him: “You are telling me what to do? Me, the son of Dominic Duvenge? Me Nikolai?” I roll my eyes. He trails his fingernails up my neck and

splays them beneath the veil of my dreadlocks at the base of my skull, ready

to grip, tug possibly hurt me in the process making me scream, begging him to let go. I cringe at the thought of him pulling my dreadlocks with force so much that I feel like they will leave my skull, and I'll bleed from there.

Me: "Yes. You are making me uncomfortable," hissing. He abruptly steps back letting go of my dreadlocks as they fall on my back, I suck in some air waiting for him to do whatever he wants to do with me. I hear him snare, and knuckles cracking, shit it's about to go down, but I'm not going down without a fight I will not be allowed to be bullied by them. I'm sure in their minds they think that all women fear them, and weak. I wouldn't be surprised if these women sitting here right now together with Jaguar wanted to be here. They are placed here against their will, and I'm sure they had to go through shit, and quite numerous number of abuse to secure those seats that they are occupying right now looking all serious their gaze focused on me as if I'm something disgusting, or maybe their fathers put in some words for them to be here, or maybe their fathers are present here, and they forced them to be here. Hmmm, "family legacy" type of shit, I guess. I don't think their opinions even matters around here, they are here for the sake of being here. But I'm not them, I will not allow to be bullied by these men, and I hope those girls out there are also not going

to be sitting in these chairs. We need more female protagonist, I mean, we are always portrayed as weak human beings, and I don't want that. Unfortunately, we all don't have the same vision.

Him: “You sure have a mouth diarrhea going on there little missy, but few days here will teach you to keep your mouth shut, and you will do as we tell you. You will follow our rules, this is not South Africa, this is Italy, and here everyone lives by my rules. By the Cosa Nostra rules!”

Me: “Fuck the Cosa Nostra rules, and fuck you too. In fact, fuck everyone present in this very same room right now!” They all gasp.

“Diamond you are crossing the line now.” Antony reprimands me, a bubble of laughter surge out of my mouth. He is the last person to talk about crossing the line, I wonder where is Sol in all of this.

Me: “You, Antony, you are the last person to tell me about crossing the line. You are the one who crossed the line, and put

me here in this place. Wena Antony, you brought me into this place without my will! So, don't you dare tell me about crossing the line, don't you fucking dare!" I spit on the floor. A slap lands on my cheek making me stumble.

"Enough!" Nikolai roars. "That's enough. You need to be taught some respect, and some manners diamond. I will not allow you disrespecting us any further, I will not tolerate such disrespect in the presence of these respected people sitting in that darn table!" He is angry, he roars at me pacing up & down running his hand in his curly hair. But, I still don't give a fuck about his anger, none!

Me: "Oh, please. Do teach me those manners, and some respect. I'm sure you didn't think that I will fight you, and stand up for myself right? Seeing that you succeeded drugging me, and bringing me here then you have another thing coming. I'm not like all these weak women you are used to, I'm a rare breed Nikolai. There's only 20 of us in this world who are rare. I will not bow down to you, not now, and not in this life time! Never, I will not bow down to you, that's a promise. But you will bow down to me Nikolai, you will!" Another slap lands on my cheek, and I chuckle as I taste blood in my mouth.

Him: "Take her away at this instant Jaguar before I lose it, and cut her throat right the fuck now! Move her away from my eyes before I go crazy, while taking her away bring me one of the girls I need to off load some sperms!" He rapes these girls too? Talk about being cruel, but as for me I will not be his statistic ahh neva shame. Jaguar grabs me by my arm roughly walking me out of the dining area, my laugh is the only thing that its heard here as it echos behind the very marble looking walls. The door shuts close behind us.

Jaguar: "You have some nerve pretty little thing to talk to Nikolai in that manner. You have some fucking nerves to disrespect the boss in that manner, in front of his associates, you are lucky that he didn't kill you. But, what I do know is that, he will deal with you very soon. Once he is done with all these girls here you will be next."

Me: "I would love to see that, and I can't wait for the day where I will blow your brains out to arrive." She laughs.

Her: "Say what? Hello kitty, you don't even look like someone who knows how to shoot, let alone hold a gun. Stop being a

clown it doesn't suit you." She pushes me inside the room where all the other girls are, they all look at me as I pass them, I can't even read their expressions. "You. With those big eyes come with me the boss needs to have some fun, and you are going show him some good time, you better make sure that he enjoys. Now, get up!" I look at where she is pointing, and a skinny girl stands up looking scared, and tears are already rolling down her cheeks. "Stop wasting time, move!" The girl jumps up, and hurry toward Jaguar.

Me: "Why not choose someone better? Someone more matured, after seeing Nikolai I doubt he will want someone so skinny & weak. I trust you to do better than that, I'm sure you don't want to disappoint the boss," I climb on top of the bed, resting my back on the wall, my legs crossed. She growls, and push the girl to the bed taking another one, well this one looks happy, and she's definitely matured. They walk out of the room, and the skinny girl breaks down into tears. Sighs, it's going to a be long of whatever that is going on here. TK better find me, soon, not unless I find ways to contact him, and send him my location.

"Don't even think about it, it won't happen

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" says one of the girl settling next to me. I turn my head to look at her, and she looks real hard on the face bakwethu, her face tells a lot, she clearly have been through a lot. "Milan. My name is Milan." She stretches her hand for me to shake, and I stretch mine as we clasp.

Me: "Luxolo, but known by my stage name diamond."

Her: "Lovely meeting you diamond. So, what would you like to know? And by the way, I stan your bravery." A smile creeps out of my face. Well, well. What do we have here, I guess my stay here will not be that bad, it will be bearable.

Me: "Everything that is to know, and don't leave anything out."

Her: "Make space for me, I will tell you all that you need to know, and all the torture that we go through here. Only the brave makes it out alive, I've been around for too long witnessing gruesome acts taking place here, and people dying right before my eyes." I'm already intrigued by this fold over. I make space for her, and she starts by sucking in some air...



TSAKANI

The sun have set last evening, and it's up again now, this very morning. It's a new day, and still no sign of bubbles whereabouts we've tried tracking her, but nothing comes up, even Sol's location is unknown, but we are sure that they are not here in South Africa. The hours, minutes and seconds are counting, I don't even know what's happening with her at this instant, what are those men doing to her, has she eaten, yet? I couldn't sleep last night, I've been standing in this very same position hoping that I will see her walking through that door, but nothing. Right now I feel like a failer, I've failed protecting her, and now her life is in the hands of sick bastards Lord knows what they are doing to her. The cup in my hand break as I squeeze it with pressure. Fuck it. Leon steps inside the kitchen looking drained just like me, he rubs his neck stretching it, he stands next to me. Talon, Lee & Batista I don't know where they are. I last saw them around 02:45am in the morning.

“Still no news?” I shake my head. “Let's hope that the guys will bring us good news, or maybe they will come back with some leads. We can only hope.” He tells me switching on the kettle. “Want some?” I shake my head. “I hate seeing you like this man, seeing you this broken is not cool. The last time I saw you this broken was when your father passed on, when his casket

was lowered, and that was 10 years ago. You need to be strong man, be strong for her because I know that wherever she is, she's fighting for her freedom. She's fighting real hard.”

“She is supposed to be here with me, not fighting for her freedom! How long is she going to fight for her freedom? We don't even know who's holding her captive as we are talking right now, we fucking don't know. With every minute passing my heart aches, I can't sit here, and not do anything.”

Him: “We are trying all we could to find her, but no one is coming through for us. But don't give up man, we will keep on trying until we find her.”

Me: “I'm tired of that ‘we will keep trying until we find her’ line, I'm tired of hearing it Leon, I'm fucking tired!” I bang the kitchen counter, and groan.

Him: “I know man, I know that it's tiring, but... You know what, let's wait for the others to get here while I make us that coffee.” My mind traces to bubble's mother I'm sure she's been trying to contact her to no avail, and now she's worried sick

about her another reason as to why I must find bubbles fast before these news reach her mother's ears, and her high blood shooting sky rocket, plus I also heard that she has stroke, so imagine the stress she will be subjected to, or they reach Lindiwe's ears, whom I don't really know what she will do. Sighs. My phone rings, and it's Sabelo fuck. I just watch it ring, I'm sure he's calling to tell me that bubble's mother can't get hold of her, and she's worried sick about her, blah blah.

The door flies open, and the guys step in they look exhausted, I don't blame them though, they've been working real hard trying to trace bubbles, I'm sure they've exhausted their resources in trying to find bubbles.

Me: "Thank you all for all that you are doing for me, but you all deserve some rest you've been working tirelessly in helping me find bubbles."

Batista: "Rest? Rest for what? We are not resting until we find diamond man, we need to find her, and get her back here safe, we will not rest until she's found TK. We are with you all the way."

Me: "I know man, but we've tried all that we could. Whoever took bubbles made sure that they take her to where we can't find her, they knew exactly what they were doing, and Adele doesn't have anything to do with this, that I'm sure of that, in fact none of my enemies do. But someone, who doesn't know me, who haven't heard of me took her, but who?"

Leon: "It's that Antony. He's the one who took bubbles."

Me: "If it's him then why did he take her? What does he want with her because I'm quite sure that bubbles did nothing to him. She only worked with him for like what? Four days then he kidnaps her? And not only that, but Sol was the first one to disappear. What if this Antony was always watching everything from a distance? What if he had people working for him posing as Sol's workers noting down everything that was happening in Sol's club, noting down all the workers daily activities, following them around finding information about them?"

Lee: "You might be right, and if that's the case, then that person knows that you are diamond's boyfriend, and it shows that he ain't scared of you, or maybe he doesn't know who you are. It makes sense, and to tell you the truth finding bubbles

will take time because we are only working with a name here, no last name, no nothing, just a random name of a person. I hate to tell you this, but someone must tell you. We will not find bubbles with only a name, it's mission impossible, and we are doomed we are actually wasting our time, and resources." I hate to admit it, but he's right. Dealing with a name only is useless, this is harder than it is, and it will make it even more hard for us to find bubbles, I've really failed her, but giving up is not an option I will have to track Sol's family, I must find them, if I find the information then it will be easy for us to find bubbles.

Me: "You are right. But, if we can track Sol's family maybe we might find something about him, and possibly find out what links him with Antony, then that way it will be easier for us to find bubbles." I see them looking at me with eyes full of hope, that finally something is looking up. The question is; will we find something tangible? I would like to believe that we would. Hold on a little longer bubbles I'm coming to save you. Lee's phone rings interrupting the moment, he takes it out of his pocket, and stares at the screen then at us.

Him: "It's Lindiwe."

Talon: “Ek'se? Hhayi ifahle yamazhi ngeke ayeke phansi, futhi ke mele sim'beke endabeni.” (Answer her, you know that she will not hang up, and besides we must tell her what's going on) he nods, and answers it.

Him: “Hey.”

Her: “Hey, do you have any idea where Luxolo is because I've been trying to call her, but my calls aren't going through?” He looks at us, honestly I don't know how I feel about him telling Lindiwe about bubbles disappearance considering the fact that it was said that she went on a very serious mission, and she needs no disturbance. But this? This will surely disturb her mission. “Lee. Where is Luxolo?” Her voice is hoarse now.

Him: “She has be...”

“Abducted. She has been abducted by a man named Antony.”
Batista injects.

Her: “What? And when did this happen? Where? Actually you know what, don't answer those questions I'm flying there first thing tomorrow morning, bye.” She hangs up. We all look at

each other, and not say anything hopefully her flying back here will help us find bubbles fast.

Leon: “While we wait for her to come back, can you please give me Sol's last name.” I take out my phone from my pocket, and go to my documents I've stored everyone's information, those whom I do business with. I hand him my phone.

Talon: “Ngathi angafiika namabhoza u lovey k'sasa kunyiwe nombolo 1.” (I wish that she can come with the bosses tomorrow, and make things happen one time.

Leon: “Nothing is coming up, and all his websites are down. There's nothing.” Fuck! Fuck maarn!

Batista: “Kwaze kwa burd. Lindiwe is our last hope, these people did some thoroughly planning because this is beyond professional! They planned this whole thing very fucking well, I give it to them.”

Lee: “They really did, and they've covered their tracks well too, we are dealing with real Mafias here, not these wannabe mafias” Right.

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LUXOLO

Being splashed with cold water is what wakes me up from my peaceful sleep, damn it maarn. I'm soaking wet, and so is my bed. I take a look around the room and all the girls are up, and ready to start the day looking all freshened up. Jaguar chuckles beside me, nxa.

“Do you have any fucking idea what time is it?” I ask Jaguar as I take off my pyjama top.

“03:10am in the morning. You are lucky that I'm the one who woke you up, because if it was Nikolai who did I doubt he would be this gentle. Take a look around you diamond, all the girls have long woken up, all ready to start with the training.”

Me: “What training?”

Her: “You will see. Everyone out, and as for you- you have 5 minutes to get ready then meet us outside.” They all walk out,

well, except for Milan who opted to stay behind, and guard me. Hahaha, funny. So, after what she told me about this place last I was star struck some of the things she said sounded surreal, but they are true. The torture these girls go through every day is not healthy. They are training them to be terrorists, killers, and all the things that take place during war, they are training them for the upcoming war in Afghanistan. Afghanistan bafwethu, a country where wars happen every now & then I'm sure you guys know what takes place in that country kuyanyiwa shame. I don't understand why Nikolai decided to recruit these women instead of men. Afghanistan needs men, military professionally trained men not some random abducted women. We are doing a man's job, RHA! And they sell the fragile ones for sex slavery to these old disgusting men, old enough to be their grandpa's.

Nikolai sleeps with these girls as part of the initiation, once done sleeping with them, he passes them to his associates, and they too sleep with these girls no protection used, so, you can imagine what kind of sickness they all have, and if Nikolai didn't enjoy you during sex he kills you, and throws you in some room. According to Milan that room is full of dead people both genders, and it smells horrible as fresh bodies keep on being added. Oh, and Nikolai locks you there for 2 days with no food or water given as part of punishment, thinking about it nje

makes me nausea. Milan told me a lot last night hence we slept very late. Yena shame she is one strong woman, and her stepfather is the one who brought her here. He brought her here to teach her a lesson, and that was 5 years ago, and not once did he come, and visit her together with her mother. I don't even know why her mother agreed to this shit, but what was she to do ke when Milan's stepfather used to rape Milan whilst her mother is watching, and she would do nothing about it, but mind her own business. Milan started developing hatred for her mother & stepfather as the abuse proceeded until she's had enough of it, she attempted stabbing her stepfather, but her mother bashed her head with a vase that had small used items, and when she woke from her consciousness she found herself here in this place.

So, Milan tried escaping with 5 other girls a year later with the help of one of the guards of course, but they caught them before they can even get past the first gate, there are 4 gates here I wonder why so many gates, and the walls are very high they have spikes on top. They caught them, and tortured them, they've chopped their thumbs off, and grazed their ears. Once they've tortured them enough they threw them in that room full of dead bodies for 2 days with no food & water. Milan said that the smell was unbearable, and the bodies were piling up.

The guard was taken into a different room, yuck. So, 2 days of staying with the dead bodies they were finally released, and she was thankful yhey, they've prepared food for them, and they told them to go, and bath then come back and eat. Wuuuh shame they were so excited that finally they'll be getting some food, the food was delicious, and the juice was nice too it tasted different from the one they are used too she said only to find that they are actually eating the guard's flesh, and drinking his blood Sies, Cannibal type of shit. Yoh, they were so disgusted, and tried vomiting but nothing helped, and one of the girls decided to commit suicide she couldn't fathom the fact that she ate human flesh and drank the blood. Milan said she never ate for 2 full weeks thinking about it, of which makes me wonder how many more people have they eaten unknowingly because I know that, that the guard was not the first person to be eaten, and as for me, I ain't going to eat shame, ah never wuuh. I'd rather die of hunger than to eat a human being like me.

“Hurry up diamond we are 2 minutes late.” She complains.

“All done. Let's go.” We walk out of the dom, and go, and join the others. They are already running in this huge stadium of some sort, but this one looks weird, and too vast. Some of the

girls are already tired. "How many laps do we do here?" We are already on the field running.

Her: "50 laps," shrugging.

Me: "Askies? Do you see how vast this field is? I ain't going to do 50 laps!"

Her: "Then be prepared to get punished by Nikolai."

Me: "After here we are doing what?"

Her: "Mud training."

Me: "Mud training?"

Her: "Yes, one of the brutal trainings. Let me not tell you, you will see for yourself."

Me: "But the other girls look tired already, and I'm quite sure that this is the first lap," she laughs.

Her: "Of course they are, but they will run once Nikolai gets here."

Me: "It seems like this Nikolai is some kind of God around here."

Her: "He is. Everyone fears him."

Me: "Is there something going on between him & Jaguar?"

Her: "They are fucking each other every now & then."

Me: "How did Jaguar end up here?"

Her: "I have no idea, but I think it was after her father's passing. Her father was brutally killed while having a mini celebration with his associate, some assassin invited herself, and killed him,

in fact it is said that the killer killed him with razor blades, and she walked out as if nothing happened.”

Me: “Wawu. Was her father a gangster?”

Her: “He was a mobster my stepfather was working for him. Adriago was a very heartless man.”

Me: “I see, but what happened to your real father because I keep on hearing you mentioning your stepfather.” She sighs.

Her: “He was killed back in your country.”

Me: “Yoh. By whom & why?”

Her: “I don't know who killed him, and his killing had something to do with stolen diamonds.” I swallow at absolutely nothing. Could the diamonds that Bella gave me belonged to his father? If yes, then how did Bella get hold of them? Wait.

Me: "When did your father die?"

Her: "20 years ago." Phewww, at least. This means that the ones I have doesn't belong to her father.

Me: "Damn, I'm sorry for your loss."

Her: "No he deserved it, he was a monster too." I nod.

"Stop talking, and start running!" Jaguar yells at us, mxm yaphapha lo. We do as told. From a distance I see Nikolai smoking his cigar looking at us, and the girls start running fast. Yazi, I need to stop fighting this, and do as told, find out exactly what is it that they actually want from me. Maybe if I can acquire that information I might find a way out of here, and who knows maybe the training will come in handy one of these days plus with the upcoming war I might put my skills into good use. Not bad, not bad at all. And I can also use these very same skills to kill them.

Me: "Do they teach how to use guns too?"

Milan: "Everything. They teach you everything. How to throw a knife, how to protect yourself from explosives, how to shoot with different guns, self-defense, and more. We have different tutors for all those things. Jaguar just helps us with training, and she is working with 5 more people." Okay.

10th lap, and I'm already tired. Some of the girls are crawling, some are passing out. Jaguar kicks them, some get up, and continue running, but some don't even bother getting up. I understand why they are fainting though, they haven't had breakfast

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and their last meal was around 20:00pm yesterday, they had 3 slices of rye bread with tea, yet they expect them to do 50 laps what kind of nonsense is that? This is abuse nina. I wonder how long have they been here, I look at Milan, and she too is breathing heavily sweat forming on her forehead.

Her: "I'm tired, hopefully Jaguar will blow the whistle seeing that everyone is almost passing out." A whistle blows immediately as she finishes saying that. "Thanks God!" She throws herself on the grass facing up.

Jaguar: "Go, and eat then we will continue where we left off!"
Milan laughs.

Her: "I take it you will not be joining us."

Me: "Duhhh, of course. I don't want to eat human flesh." She continues laughing

Her: "We don't eat that, they cook proper food you only eat flesh meat as part of the punishment, nothing more."

Me: "I'll pass thank you." I help her up from the grass, and we follow behind the others. Nikolai is still looking at us, his stare is unsettling, but let me not think about it. I wonder how far is the hunt going there is South Africa, gosh. Where are they even going to start? God, please intervene. I'm sure my mother have been calling me without success, and she is worried sick about me, shit. I wonder if TK found my phone, enhlek my belongings. Sighs, I miss him. I miss the gents.



NOMALANGA

I'm so stressed Luxolo's phone ain't going through it's been days now, I hope everything is fine, and she is okay, we also can't get hold of Tsakani & Lee or maybe the war have started?

But even it has started I'm sure we would've seen it in the news by now. God. I'm losing my mind here, not knowing what's going on, I'm so in the dark. Mmangwane is also worried about Lee, in fact everyone here is worried about them, Bulelwa too even though she pretends as if she doesn't care, but deep down she does, and she's worried. Sabelo have been calling his South African friends pleading with them to go, and check on Tsakani, but they will all come back with the same answer that Tsakani ain't at his house, and the neighbors don't know where he is, I'm losing my mind here. Food doesn't even go down well.

“Still nothing?” Mmangwane asks Sabelo who just stepped inside the lounge looking defeated. He shakes his head, and breathes out. “Oh, Jehova. Why are these kids not taking our calls? Where the hell are they?” She put her hands on top of her head.

“I'm sure they've run out batteries.” Okuhle says.

Sabelo: “For 3 days? It's been 3 fucking days Okuhle without reaching these people! 3!” He shows the number 3 with his fingers.

Hlulani: "This is not good. I'm going back to South Africa. I must find out what's going on."

Bulelwa: "You are not going there Hlulani! Tsakani made the choice to stay behind, he is a grown man he knows how to take care of himself. I don't understand as to why are you fucking stressing yourself about a grown man like him!" This woman is pure nonsense of a person, she fits it perfectly.

Him: "You don't get to tell me what to do Bulelwa, you fucking don't. This is my brother we are talking about, your son! I don't understand why are you not worried about him, I really don't understand what kind of a mother you are!"

Mmangwane: "She's a witch! That's why she doesn't care, she's devil's favorite daughter, been telling you that she's an evil woman look at her. Hear what rubbish comes out of her mouth!"

Her: "Don't you dare call me a witch Mmangwane don't. I'm not your age mate, and most definitely not your friend!"

Mmangwane: “Who would want to be friends with you? No one wants to be friends with a witch like you, a control freak! A woman who controls her sons. Why don't you get yourself a boyfriend that you will control just like you are doing with your sons? Oh, I almost forgot. You can't keep a man, no wonder your sons have different fathers! You are evil no wonder all those men decided to leave you with fatherless kids!” A backhand slap lands on Mmngwane's cheek. Everyone gasps.

Her: “Don't you dare Mmangwane! Don't you fucking dare spew such nonsense you know fucking nothing about my life! You don't know anything, and don't you utter things you have no proof of, don't you fucking dare!” She is pointing her.

Mmangwane: “Truth hurts! Just tell your sons the truth they deserve to...” another slap lands on her cheek, haibo.
Mmangwane laughs.

Her: “Stop talking rubbish you barren! You are talking about this because you have no kids of your own! You are barren, you are useless, and not woman enough no wonder Siphon divorced you, he saw how useless you are, you've failed to give him a child!”

Mmangwane: “And that's why he found himself in bed with you, and gave you a fatherless son. A son with no fucking origin!” She attempts to slap her again, but Mmangwane gets hold of her hand twisting it, then she slaps her. She yelps, then looks at Mmangwane then at everyone present looking at her hell-shocked not believing all that was said. They really need to process this, emotions died down, and yeah. Ishhhu, she walks away tears filling her eyes... Emotions are running high here, secrets have been revealed, and the sons want answers. This is messed up. Now this explains the hate they have towards each other, it's not because of Bulelwa hating Lee, it's because of them sharing a man, argh what am I saying? Yes, they hate each other because of a man. I'm too stressed to entertain all of this, I need to know if my daughter is fine or what wherever she is. Its problems after problems here, they are piling up, and I'm afraid of what's coming I don't know what it will be, but it will sure come.

Mmathabo: “Wawu. What a shocker.” She heaves out a sigh, and the boys get up from their seats, and walk out. I guess they need to process all of this, I don't blame them though this is one shocking explosive that's just been dropped. Mmangwane also leaves us, uhhhh.

“I've just spoken to Batista, and they are all well just having network issues apparently there's some heavy storm,” Thembeke tells us stepping inside the lounge, and relief washes over me, but it seems as if like the others did not get that, or they did, but they are still shocked about what was said earlier on. “And nou? Why is everyone looking so somber?” She asks moving her eyes around.

Me: “Shocking exchanging of words took place, ku tense. Please excuse me, I also need to process this too.” I walk away leaving her standing there like a statue. I get outside, and I can spot the guys from a distance they are looking out of it, everyone minding his own, but they are standing closely next to each other facing the beach. This is shocking honestly, the betrayal is too much. Ishuuu, I wonder how are they going to fix this up, but its not that deep. They can fix it, like the adults they are.



TSAKANI

Batista settles next to us after attending his phone. Lindiwe canceled coming because her boss or whoever he is that she's working for refused her coming here, but she promised to do some research of her own too, she too is complaining about working with a name only. She said it's impossible, giving up is the only option now we've reached a dead end. It's all just

useless, and futile. But for bubbles I can't give up for her even with no leads, but I will find her. I don't know how, but I will.

“That was Thembeke she was asking if everything is okay because they've been trying to call you guys, but your phones weren't going through.”

“What did you tell them?” Leon asks.

Him: “I told them that network coverage is bad this side there's a very heavy storm.”

Leon: “Good answer.”

Lee: “So, we are giving up?” He takes a sip of his beer.

Me: “It see... Wait a minute.” They all turn their attention to me.

Batista: “What? Have some idea?”

Me: “Does any of you here know the best sketcher around here?”

Talon: “Ngazi ababili abathathu zishani?” (I know 2 or 3, what's up)

Me: “Find me one. The one that you trust Talon, we will have to go back, and ask those girls to describe Antony for us, I'm sure his picture will come out clear.”

Lee: “That's it. You can be clever at times man. Talon get the guy for us, we have work to do gents. I'm tired of seeing TK sulking.”

Batista: “Even with the tattoo of her face covering his back he's still sulking, but don't worry skhokho once we get the picture of Antony in a paper everything will be fine.”

Talon: “Yohhh, muntu sekazojola kam'nandi bafwethu.” (I will now date in peace gents) we all laugh.

Leon: "So, bowufa nge marshmallows?" (You were craving sex)
he chuckles.

Him: "Blind Ek'se. Batista asivaye sobheka lomjita fast masinyane." (Too much. Batista let's go, and check out that man fast)

Me: "Nibuye nimphethe bafwethu." (Come back with him)

Batista: "We will drag him by the balls if it needs too." I chuckle shaking my head. They get up taking their guns on top of the table, and walk out. I hope those bastards didn't get their filthy hands on bubbles, this Antony guy will tell me exactly who told him to poke me, and take what doesn't belong to him. He will tell me exactly who told him because I'm sure as hell I'm going to make them pay.

Lee: "Kuyalunga ntwana amadlozi avumile." (It is getting well man, the ancestors have agreed)

Leon: "Ayijiki skhokho." (It's like that) I nod.

TSAKANI

Talon steps inside the house panting followed by Batista their clothes are torn & bloody they've been gone for over 5 hours, and now they come back drenched in sweat. Me, Lee & Leon get on our feet, and look at them.

“Kuhambeni majita?” (What happened) Lee asks with so much urgency in his voice.

“Kuyanyiwa e Witbank bafwethu. Yi war enzima kabi daar, akusi magazi kuyafiwa.” (It's bad at Witbank. There's a serious war going on that side, people are dying like flies) Talon responds.

Lee: “Witbank? Benofunani daar fer so?” (What were you doing so far)

Batista: “The guy that we were looking for said that he's at Witbank, and he doesn't have transport, so we told him that we

will come, and fetch him only to find some serious gang war going on.”

Talon: “E baba kuyafiwa wonke umuntu zwap ziyafa ziyabhoda macala onke.” (People are dying everywhere) we laugh, trust Talon to make fun out of a serious situation.

Leon: “Then why are you drenched in sweat & T-shirts torn? Not forgetting the bloody T-shirts?”

Batista: “They were chasing us with 3 cars, the way we were flying on the N12 neh? Yoh, we almost caused accidents mus. Then we decided to take the bushes for shorts cuts, ehhe the car that was behind us started firing shots at us, since I was driving I had to duck, and Talon's head was down all this time. I increased the speed until we reached a dead end...”

Talon: He injects. “Haike, kwavela I beast sbhudubhudu abafwethu yabayenzani? Amakari wajika waba I fufa emoyeni, yhey bekuyi film. Yadabula oyi one phakathi igazi lasaphazeka yonke indawo, bheka ne ndwango yami edura njani inamabala abomvu, yoh bafwethu ngilimele faarn. Ngisani beka, yabhodla

daai dang, hhayi mina no Batista sabhekana kayi one sathi ntnla, hhayi saba u Bolt no Caster sathi shup, gone thina.” (Anyway, a beast appeared from out of nowhere gents, and what did it do to them? Cars became aeroplanes flying in the air, it was a film. It tore one man in two and blood spilled everywhere, look at my expensive T-shirt it has red spots, I'm hurt. As I was telling you, that beast burped, erh then Batista & I look at each, and we took off running). We laugh. “Ninga lakgi cische sabhoda.” (Don't laugh, we almost died)

Lee: “Why do I feel as if like you are lying?”

Him: “E baba, E baba asishovi u 2 la nombolo 1 kanye nje.” (Hey man, we are not lying we are telling the truth)

Lee: “Ohooo. Let me pretend as if I believe you guys. So, we have no sketcher?”

Leon: “Let's try asking google for recommendations I'm sure we will find a good one.”

Talon: “Athi ngo splasha fast ngisuse lenyakanyaka.” (Let me go, and take a quick one)

Batista: “Let me join you.”

Him: “Whoa, whoa ndoda. Awume ned lapho. Uya va?” (Stand right there, where are you going) Lee giggles.

Batista: “Ahh... Skh... Hhayi ndoda, ucabanga ukuthi?” He laughs. “Awurhalisi ndoda, awushelile phola. Imagine me craving you? Hhayi phola nja!” Leon erupts in laughter, and I just chuckle shaking my head. These guys are crazy I tell you.

Him: “Hhe? Athi ng'thule before kuphele umcimbi.” (Let me keep quiet before I end the ceremony) he clicks his tongue, and walks away. Batista laughs.

Batista: “I still wonder where did you get this boy from, he is crazy.”

Lee: “Tell me about it, finding anyone Leon?”

Him: "Just a few candidates, but I don't trust any of them."

Me: "Man, just get me that sketcher whether you trust them or not I need bubbles found we can't keep on wasting any more time. Days are moving, and I'm sure she's shit scared wherever she is. Just get me one man, and tell him to come immediately. Talon & I will go, and fetch those girls so long, when I come back I need to find that Sketcher here ready."

Batista: "Please do so Leon."

Him: "Okay. Let me try this one, and find out if he's available."

Me: "If he's not; tell him to drop everything, and come here."

Lee: "The fish still bathing?" We laugh.

Batista: "I bet his busy dirtying TK's towel with his Heineken sperms." Leon snorts.

“Usho mina njalo skhokho?” (You mean me) he asks stepping inside the lounge looking cleaned up.

Batista: “Correct njayami. Hope you've cleaned up your mess, let me go, and freshen up too.”

Me: “Talon asivaye solanda lezifebe zakho zale emkhukhwini.” (Let's go, and fetch those bitches of yours from those shacks)

Him: “Yini? Seniyitholile I sketcher?”

Me: “Leon usahlanganisa asivaye.”

Him: “Yoh, bayothi sajola manje sinawe!” (They will think that you & I are dating now) I laugh.

Me: “Inkinga I vha lapho? Ngiyashisa phela mina bazoba nomona labobantu.” (Where is the problem there? I'm hot, those people will be jealous of you)

Him: "Ek'se? 10111 on speed dial mfana." We laugh.

Me: "Arhhh, ungang'tsheli ngamagwala. Mas'vaye nes'khathi asimanga." (Don't tell me about cowards. Let's go, time hasn't stopped moving)

Lee: "Nisihlanganisele igawula daar bo mapapa so manibuya." (Organize us something to eat, like porridge when you come back)

Me: "Sure."

Leon: "Nes'thambisa umphimbo bafethwu." (And alcohol too) I nod.

Talon: "Mele sibathole abo lovey," (we must find them) we step inside the car.

Me: "Sizobathola ungafi, plus ne club siyivalile."

Talon: “Yazi bekoba lula if bekunama footage mara lezinja zihlakaniphile mfana, basuse yonke I evidence. Yonke.” (It was going to be better if we had a footage, but those men are very clever boy, they've removed all the evidence)

Me: “Ng'shayile skhokho mara sizobathola, ungafi.”

Him: “Nakanjani.” I bring the engine to life, and take off.



LUXOLO

This hot potato training as they call it is very dangerous maarn. Who on earth plays with grenades? Real grenades the ones that explodes when you pull the pin. So, here's how it goes; we pass the grenades at each other we are split in 40 groups each group consists of 8 members which means that there's 320 of us in total, 320 women being trained to be terrorists or military combats as they call it here... You need to tame seconds before the bomb explodes whilst in your hands then throw it in the hole nearby, and we must all jump, and lie flat on our tummies covering our ears till it explodes this game is very dangerous maarn. Sidlala ngama bhomu, yesis. At least no one got hurt, well, not yet anyway, but I'm not sure about the other groups since we are a little far apart.

“Move it! Move it!” Samina commands us. She is cruel just like Jaguar, and look too manly with her ugly ponytail, and tattoos. “I said move it!” A strike meets my back, and I yelp. I don't know what is it that she want because we are doing exactly what she asked of us, circling the hole, these clothes are flipping hot, and the sun ain't having mercy on us. Another strike lands on my back even with this big jacket I can feel the stinging sensation, it's a steel spiked cane after all, and she uses force when she hits you.

The last girl throws the grenade inside the hole a little too late because it explodes before we can lie down on the grass instead it sends us flying as we drop in different spots. Luckily for us the hole is a little deep. I wince as my leg start aching, and my face feels so hot I bet I have some mud on my face, ouch. I close my eyes, and within a second they fly open someone kicks my ribs.

“Get the fuck up, and move it!” She yells kicking me once more.

“My- my leg. It's hurting.” I tell her looking at her straight in the eyes. She chuckles, and her cane strike that very same leg that

hurts. Then she puts her boot on top of my leg jumping, and laughing. I cry out in pain, it hurts.

Her: "Get the fuck up right now! Don't make me drag you!" I attempt getting up, but I fail. She gets hold of my locks, and drags me across the grass taking me to the mud run ground. The other girls cheer, some inflict pain by kicking me on that very same leg causing me more pain. One finds the opportunity that I think she was waiting for, and spit on my face with her phlegm as the others laugh, gross. She spits on me again, and I saw exactly who she is, and when they cheered her name made my blood boil, I'm going to kill her.

Samina throws me in the mud, mud so thick one will think that they are walking on a beach damp sand, but nah this one smells. Horrible for that matter. "Start running, your trainer will be with you shortly." She kicks me one last time, and she walks away laughing her hair swinging side to side.

"Diamond!" That's Milan's voice sounding from far. "Get up, Viktor is coming!" She yells. The girls scurry past me, some step on my leg I don't know if whether they are doing it deliberately or what.

Me: "I can't! I can't get up I'm in pain!"

Her: "Force yourself diamond! Get up right now!" Her voice is now faint as it gets muffled by the sound of a tractor in full speed. I lift my head, and I see it coming towards me. I attempt getting up, but my body ain't having it, instead I roll out of the way just in time as it passes me its wheels visible on the ground. Fuck! And I'm finally up, but my leg ain't helping. I try steadying myself, but someone pushes me forward, and I fall with my face sticking on the smelly mud. The sound of the tractor comes again, and once more

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I roll out of the way, and settle on the grass again panting.

I'm yanked up by Viktor with my locks, he steadies me & surveys me. He chuckles, then he does the unthinkable he heads my nose making me bleed instantly.

"What the fuck man!" I shout at him. He is a big man with scars covering his face, and his teeth are crooked, and have brown stains on them. He heads me again, and I groan.

Him: "This is my territory. This is my ground, and you will abide by my rules, my rules!" He lifts me up, and throws me back in the mud. "Get up & fight me." What? He must be crazy I ain't fighting him, he will crush me until the mud buries me. I shake my head, and he roars.

"Fight fight fight!" The girls cheer, they are happy with what it's about to happen, they are happy that I'm going to die today. He sends me flying with just one forceful kick on my chest, and I fall on the mud almost hitting my head on the wheel of the tractor I just missed it by an inch.

"Get up!" He roars, and he runs towards me, kahle kahle his aim is to jump at me burying me beneath his big body, hahaha, what a sick joke! I knee him on his balls, and he groans my lower body is between his parted legs, I use my left leg to kick him from behind, and he loses balance going forward, and a loud thud fell on my ears as everyone around us gasps. Shit, I hope I did not kill him. He is about to fall on top of me, and I push myself down, and he falls to the ground knees bent, I couldn't even bring myself to look at him. Once more I killed a person, but it wasn't intentional.

A sound of danger siren ring indicating that there's danger, I close my eyes tightly. He died, good. He was going to kill me anyway, but unfortunately for him his plan didn't go accordingly.

“You are so dead diamond. So dead.” She whispers, and helps me up. “But he deserved it, girl I need your bravery, I really do. That was fucking impressive maarn!” She puts my arm around her shoulder, and we start walking the others have left, but some are still standing, shocked trying to process the fact that I killed a man whom they've known for months if not years. The man who trained them, barely a month here, and she already has blood in her hands I bet that's what they are saying to themselves.

“Shit!” I curse as Nikolai together with his people approach us, he is angry. Milan & I come into a halt, I can feel Milan shaking besides me. “Keep it together Milan. He's here for me not for you.” I tell her, and she nods unsure. Nikolai stands before us, and he spits on the ground right before my feet.

Him: "Strip her naked!" His guards wait for no further instructions, they manhandle me as one of the guard pushes Milan away from me. I'm naked before everyone here, and to tell you the truth I don't care. "Jaguar, flock her!" Jaguar smiles coming toward me, she has her whip in her hand.

"Flock her! Flock her!" The girls cheer, these girls are really delusional bayahlanya straight, instead of siding with me, they are siding with these abusers, but I don't blame them, I'm sure they give it them real good. I suck in air as the first strike comes into contact with my thighs, I bite my lower lip hard as she continues flocking me. Tears are streaming down my cheeks, I'm looking Nikolai straight in the eyes as Jaguar have her way with my body, the anger building inside me right now will turn me into something I'm not, and they're turning me into a different person slowly, but surely. I can feel myself getting wet it's clear that blood is seeping out of my thighs, and back. "Bang bang!" That's a sound of gunshots ringing close to my ears, Jaguar stops flocking me, and I see Nikolai widening his eyes in horror together with his cartel. I slowly turn my head around, and I find Milan pointing the gun at Jaguar whose lying on the floor very much alive, it seems like Milan shot her on her shoulder because that's where her hand is.

Nikolai: "Take them to the dead room. They will be there for 5 days with no food or water given to them, and no visitors will be allowed for them. And as for you." He looks at me straight in the eyes. "I will deal with you. You've killed my man, and you are showing no remorse for it, you look pleased by what you did. I'm going to slit your throat, in fact I'll start with your friend here, you will watch her die a slow painful death, and there will be nothing you can do." Milan giggles.

Her: "You will never kill me Nikolai. Never, ever!" She spats on his face, and Nikolai send a fist her way, and she stumbles backward shaking her head.

Him: "Dead room right now! But first, you must cut her dreadlocks. Samina, attend Jaguar." His guards grab us roughly, and walk away with us.

Me: "Why did you do that?"

Her: "I was tired of them. They've been abusing us for far too long, they were treating us like shit. And to be honest, I really wanted to shoot Jaguar I've been waiting for a very long time

for an opportunity to present itself, and it sure did, too bad she ain't dead.”

Me: “Well, you can make a good candidate for my female mafia cartel that I want to work on.”

Her: “Say what? I'm in, and I can also help with recruiting very dangerous females in the game, as much as I'm locked inside here I have ears & eyes outside.”

Me: “So, can't your eyes & ears sneak in a phone for us or tell them to contact someone for me who's in South Africa.” This is me taking my chance, I need to be out of here before things get out of control.

Her: “I will gladly do that, and we have a lot of things to discuss being in that dead room will be very useful for us, we can come up with an escape plan without anyone knowing.”

Me: “You are very much correct, and I will heal while there.”
She laughs.

Her: "Damn, they've really panel beaten you. They fucking did you bad."

Me: "Fuck you."

Her: "It takes two to fuck, you know right?"

Me: "Yuck. I don't do girls."

Her: "There's always a first time for everything." We both laugh, and the guards shove us inside the dead room. Nausea simmers from my mouth when I see all these dead bodies, and the smell is unbearable. Shit! Everything that I ate spews on the dead bodies before me. Milan laughs. "You will be fine, don't worry." She pats my shoulder. How cruel are these people? Damn, so many dead bodies here. Milan leads us to a certain corner, and we both sit down the floor is cold though. Sighs.



TSAKANI

The ladies are sitting here, their legs are shaking and Zama keeps on biting her fingers. Arenele is looking down, and they reek of alcohol. I don't really care much about them, all I need is for them to describe this Antony fucker for us. Leon went out moments ago to fetch the guys that will be helping us with sketching. Talon, Lee & Batista are eating Zama & Aranele refused eating I don't know if whether they are scared or what.

“Hhayi fok basidliza kabuhlungu labo lovey laba haikhona akigwinyeki nale thambo le nyoka lishaye I tsi la ku pipe.” (No man, these girls are making us uncomfortable, we can't even swallow peaceful even the bone of the wors is stuck on my throat) We laugh. Talon complains.

“Bengithi yimi k'phela mus ndoda.” (I thought I was the only one) Lee says.

Batista: “And I'm enjoying, no complaints no nothing. TK ndoda kuyaphela ukudla.” (The food is finishing)

Me: “Idlani gents.” He nods. I will eat once the sketcher gets here, and we have the face of Anthony on a paper. Just then

Leon gets in followed by 2 other guys, they greet and Leon introduces them as Ludo & Mndawe. Mndawe is the sketcher, and Ludo is the friend. His aura is too dark just like mine, and he is looking at me like he knows me from somewhere. Creepy if you ask me. “Thank you for coming gents. You may start.”

“It's good to see you boys safe & sound.” His directing his words to Talon & Batista. “But I've got to give it to you though, you guys can run maarn. Caster Semenya & Bolt have nothing on you.”

Talon: “Ek'se? Ungubani? Uyasazi?” (Who are you? Do you know us) Talon's hand is already on his waist.

Him: “Chill boy, relax, and enjoy your meal.” He winks at him. Batista just shakes his head.

Him: “No one. So, who are we sketching again?” I shake my head.

Me: “Zama, Aranele start talking.” I cross my legs, and play with my watch. I can feel Ludo's stare, fuck!

TSAKANI

The gents are dead with laughter as we look at the sketch. I don't what on earth this is, but hhayi maarn these are three faces in one paper. Disaster this one, I don't really know how to move on from here. This is a mess, even Mndawe couldn't help himself, but laugh. I shake my head this all feels like a complete waste of time with this pace I don't think we will find bubbles anytime soon. We still have a long way to go.

“Yoh, this is worse than Rasta's work. This is total bullshit! It's either you girls give us a clear description of Antony or I will kill you right here, in those very same couches you are sitting on,” I click my tongue. “Excuse me I need some air, and when I come back I want to see Anthony's face not that nonsense I see here.” I walk outside this is really not going anywhere we are running around in circles, and this is fucking me up. I walk around my garden trying to calm myself down, trying not to think so much about what bubbles might be going through wherever she is. Fuck! I need to keep it together.

“You have a beautiful garden, mine doesn't even look this beautiful. How many times do you take care of it?” Ludo ask this standing next to me.

“Thanks. Three times a week.”

Him: “Nice. If only I had time. So, care to tell me about this girlfriend yours?”

Me: “What do you want to know about her?”

Him: “Everything.” I don't know why, but I trust him, and somehow his presence gives me a sense of belonging. There's this unexplainable connection between us, it's like I've known him for years, yet I only met him few hours ago.

He nods after me telling him everything about bubbles, her work & all I did not leave anything out.

Him: “So, the person we need to find is Sol not Antony. It's clear that Sol sent this Antony guy to do this dirty job for him hence

he, Sol made sure that he leaves 5 days prior so that you will not suspect him. All I can tell you is that; he is a fool and his stupid. He didn't think this through, he really didn't because if he did he would've left maybe 2 or 3 months ago, so that all this bullshit wouldn't have linked with him, if he did that then Antony was going to be the first suspect in bubbles disappearance. And maybe we would've figured that he abducted her because he found out something that included bubbles, for example; let's say he found some papers that Sol left lying around carelessly or stashed them somewhere obtaining important information, maybe like bubbles would be the one taking over the club once he's time has come for him to depart this earth, and she kept her where Sol would've never found her. Then he would've persuade Sol to give him the club, and so forth. And obviously Sol would've given him after so much consideration, and stuff. Are you getting what I'm telling you mara?"

Me: "Yeah, I understand you completely man. I get what you are saying." He is right yazi. This means that we must stop sketching Antony and sketch Sol instead. Why did I not think about this? Guess it's true when they say; you can't think like everyone else, and this man here just thought a whole different thought, a thought that makes perfect sense. At least now

things are promising it won't be hard tracing Sol when we have a picture. But then, there's this thing that is still bugging me. Him. Who is he? And why do I feel so connected to him? It's like he is my long lost relative or something.

Him: "I'm Ludo, and the reason you feel the connection you are feeling with me right now is because we share the same beast that resides within us. The only difference is that I get to be physically him, and you- you get to be him spiritually, he will never show himself to you, but he always reacts when there's something he doesn't like." He reads minds now? Jesus! And who is this him that he keeps mentioning? "You sure have a lot of question running through your mind, worry not because you will find answers to your questions soon, but for now let's focus on finding your bubbles before things get out of control."

Me: "Are we somewhat related?" He laughs. I had to ask, if we are related or what, and if we are; how are we related?

Him: "No. We are not related. We just share the one residing within us. Now, let's go, and sketch this Sol. You need to be strong for your bubbles, and I command you for going all your way to find your bubbles, you must really love this girl, and I

have no doubts that the one residing you made the things to be done, once he has chosen & marked there's no turning back” he laughs walking away leaving me shaking my head like a fool. I follow after him.

“Ek'se Ludo. Where did you see us running?” He chuckles as Batista asks him this question immediately as we step inside the house.

Him: “Around.”

Batista: “Around where?”

Him: “The world.”

Talon: “Awusho uyicavile le beast le enyenze umrivithi le ehlathini?” (Tell us; did you see the best that caused chaos the by the bush) A smile flashes across Ludo's face.

Him: “Ngiy'cavile ntwana, and besides I was hunting daar.”

Batista: "And you just stood there and watched?"

Him: "Yeah."

Batista: "Well, at least now they will believe us that we did see a beast."

Talon: "So, awudlanga phansi wena nakutshuneka daai dang?"
(You didn't run away when that happened)

Him: "Nah, I didn't."

Talon: "Mxm, masimba lawa owakhuluma manje wena saarn. Beyizokubhubhisa leyanto wena ngabe awukho la nou." (You are talking rubbish, that would've killed you- you wouldn't have been here now) Ludo laughs.

Me: "Change of plans bafwethu. We are sketching Sol now. Time for games is up, we are on a mission to rescue bubbles,

make sure that your passports are ready. Aranele, Zama. You girls can leave we are done with you.” Zama gets up, but Aranele doesn't her gaze is fixed on Ludo. “Ek'se, bring your friend to life nihambe la njengamanje.”

Ludo: “Chill. I'll take care of it.” He walks toward her, and stands before her looking at her straight in the eyes. I growl unexpectedly making Aranele jump screaming, and she starts shaking uncontrollably. “Leave.” he hisses. “And next time don't look at me like that because my wife will kill without a care in the world, and for your information I am a happily married man, out.” She hurries out of the house with the help of Zama of course who was pulling her by her hand.

Leon: “What the hell just happened?”

Me: “I would love to know too.”

Mndawe: “Sol's picture please I don't have the whole day I have somewhere else to be urgently.”

Talon: "Respek your elders saarn." Mndawe just stares at him.

Him: "Masingajwayelani amasimba skhokho asazani." (Let's not get familiar with each other we don't know each other)

Talon: "Yhe? Uthini? Uyangazi ukuthi ngingubani mina? Uyangazi?" (What are you saying? Do you know who I am? Do you) he takes out his okapi from his pocket opening it using his sneaker.

Me: "Not in my house. There by the streets, hhayi la. Do what I'll paying you for, and Talon go and catch a breather outside."

Him: "Yoh, ngizom'cisha lo mina. Sies maarn." (I will kill him) he clicks his tongue and walk out.

Batista: "We should consider doing a movie because wow we have some serious impressive acting skills, and great actors up in here!" I laugh handing Mndawe my phone showing him Sol's picture.

Lee: "I agree with you there. Anyone feel like playing cards?"

Batista: "We are game. TK?"

Me: "I'll pass bafwethu."

Ludo: "Don't stress yourself much we will find your woman." I nod. I have hope that we will find her, but in which state are we going to find her in? Will I find her in a good state of mind? Unharmed? Moreover sexually violated? Damn, I really don't know, but I need to find her. Oh, yes. I must also send Lindiwe Sol's picture I'm sure her contacts will help too.



LUXOLO

Day 4 in this dead room. I'm hungry, I'm weak, and I'm perched. I swear to God I've lost some weight, and the smell of these dead bodies ain't helping because they bring more than 50 bodies daily I wonder where do they get them, in fact, why don't they burn them? Because this sight is sickening. And inhaling the smell will really do some serious damages in our lungs, and shit. Milan, have been sleeping for a couple of hours,

and I must say that sis here loves her sleep I don't even know how she does it because I can't even close my eyes for few seconds, all I see are dead bodies. Milan gave me her jacket to wear since this room is very cold, and she's left with her military jumpsuit. I get up from the floor stretching myself, we've been planning our escape, and how we are going to kill all these fuckers without them seeing us coming, and possibly recruit some few ladies to be part of us. We are going to cause some serious havoc around here.

My feet stumble upon something

and that something makes a clicking sound. I shift my feet slowly, and bend down to see what it is. Oh, it looks like some secret door of some sort. Curiosity gets the best out of me, and I pull up the tiny wooden knob as it makes some creaking sound, I yank it up fully, and when I look down all I see is darkness but I can see some few metal stairs, and I go down using them slowly, and I'm trying to be careful since my body is still in pains. My heart beating out of my chest, and sweat forming on my forehead with every step I take my heart beats out of my chest than it normally does. Finally, my feet touches the cold ground. I move my hand over the wall I'm looking for some switch to switch on the light, but I find none. Fuck. If only I had a torch with, dammit. But either way I move my hands on

everything I touch since I can't see, but I can tell what some are just by touching them. Ouch, I bump my toe into something, and the pain is unbearable as I let out an unexpected scream, shit.

The room brightens up as the light blinds my eyes making to shut them for a few seconds, I must've touched the switch somehow by mistake. Upon opening my eyes, and surveying the room seeing all that I'm seeing leaves me speechless, and not believing it. This room is full of gold; gold statues, tables, chairs, the wall is covered in gold too like yazini I'm surrounded by gold. I walk around the room taking in all this gold, I've never seen so much gold in my whole entire life, well, I did in movies though. I wonder how rich is Nikolai, and where did he get so much gold from. This is too much gold. I walk around the gold table, and there are stacks of papers sprawled on top of the table, I pick some, and browse them. Bingo.

I close the door tightly as I step out of the basement taking a deep breath, I did switch off the lights even though it was a struggle at first, but I did manage. I place the map tightly on my chest, at least now we will find a way out of here, and know all the secret passages. The phone is in my pocket, well there's no network coverage here, two pockets knives are settled very

well on my other pocket, and some few cash. How can I forget a handful of diamonds, I had to take all that I will need, and besides it's not as if like Nikolai will notice anything. Milan is still sleeping she's even snoring, but she stirs as the door opens, and more bodies are thrown in. Sighs. I close my eyes, and look up. I want to be out of here.

“Wakey wakey slaves.” One of the guards wake us up by kicking us. Milan sits upright looking pissed off, and the guard just smiles showing us his ugly teeth; people working here have ugly teeth maarn, yasis. Or maybe it's their basic requirements when they hire them, ai I would never know. I'm sure their mouths even stinks.

“Fuck off!” Milan tells him. He laughs.

Him: “You don't get to tell me to fuck off you slut! I own you, and now I'm going to have fun with you, and remember that no matter how much you scream no one will hear you, and no one will come to your aid. Once I'm done with you Milan, I'll have your friend.” He laughs.

Her: "Danny boy, just leave me alone. I'm no longer that old Milan that you knew back then, that old Milan who used to sleep with all of the guards in exchange for protection."

Him: "You are still our slut here Milan. We can do whatever we want with you, and you know that Nikolai doesn't give a fuck about you, or everyone around here. He only cares about himself, and his reputation all of you don't mean nothing to him, nothing at all. Now, be a good girl, and give me a good fucking time!" He unzips his zip, and yanks Milan up, and pins her against the wall his hand on her neck. He tears her jumpsuit, and buttons fly in the air leaving Milan stark naked! I don't dare interfere because I know that Milan will deal with him accordingly.

He forces his tongue inside Milan's mouth, and Milan tries fighting him, but his grip is so tight on Milan's neck, and her eyes roll inward, her mouth gaping open for oxygen as he gripped his neck tighter. I get up from the floor as I see that he is overpowering her, he pushes her down, and her head hits the ground with a thud. He tries parting her legs.

“Open your legs you slut!” Milan is still not giving in, I slip my hand in my pocket, and come out with a pocket knife I don't want his blood on my hands, Milan must kill him herself they clearly have some unfinished business. I hand her the pocket knife, and give them my back facing the wall, I don't want to witness this. Hearing him groan cleanses my heart, and a smile creep out of my face as he groans some more until it becomes completely signs, and Milan's heavy breathing is what's audible.

“Help me you bitch! That man almost killed me!” I turn around laughing, and help her up.

Me: “Well, you are still alive, and that's all that matters.”

Her: “Whatever. Let me strip him his clothes, and get us out of here.”

Me: “Where will we go?”

Her: "You will see, and we will come back here tomorrow early in the morning so that when Nikolai comes he will find us here."

Me: "And we can go over this map that I found somewhere here."

Her: "You found what? Girl, let's get out of here before they throw in more bodies."

Me: "The uniform suits you."

Her: "Thanks my love. I got the keys," we step out of the dead room checking the coast, and it's all clear. We take the other direction. I pray that we don't get caught, yerrr the risks I've been taking ever since I've been here, yohhh, hhayi. Ku burd. But ke this is survival of the fittest...

LUXOLO

5 minutes arrival in this dead room the door of the flies opens, and it's no rocket science that it's Nikolai, and his goons it's the 5th day after all, and they are here to fetch us. I wonder what punishment awaits us. Last night me & Milan put heads together, and studied the map and its coordinates, but it was confusing in a way that we ended up giving up, there are too many passages but I will go through it again today hopefully it will be better than last night. Anyway, Milan got rid of the guards uniform she's wearing some dress that she found on the clothing line I think it belongs to one of the cooks or something like that because the smell is horrible.

Nikolai comes into view followed by his goons. He looks at us. He is wearing all white, it seems as if like white is his favorite color, let me not get started with his fur white coat, geez this man.

“Take them outside.” He orders his goons. They hurry towards us, and I shift to the side I don't want them touching me with their filthy hands.

“I can walk by myself. Thank you.” Giving the guard a warning look. We get outside, and we find all the girls lined up, they are standing in formation with their hands on their right side of the brain in fact, they are doing induction/saluting mxm.

Him: “Kneel down,” Milan & I kneel without fighting. “You are not putting up a fight now?” I nod. “I take it you've learned your lesson while there.”

Me: “Yeah. I did.”

Him: “Good. Now you will do as I order you to do without fighting it, because if you do I will kill you with my bare hands. Jaguar?” She steps forward she has a big dish with her. “Go, and put that before them,” from the corner of my eye I see Milan's face changing, her expression turns into disgust. Hold up a minute... Is that? Oh, hell to the fucking no! I'll be damned. I ain't going to participate in this voodoo shit, nah fam.

Jaguar places the dish before us, and my stomach turns as I see what's inside it's even blobbing, yuck. Human flesh in the

making, vomit goes up my throat, and without a warning I throw up inside that dish. Milan chuckles.

Him: "What? What the fuck did you do? How dare you throw up in that dish? How dare you!"

"I ain't going to eat this shit. Diamond did a real number in there!" Milan protests.

Him: "Of course. But diamond will eat it whether she likes it or not." I giggle.

Me: "Try me!"

Him: "Strip her naked right now!" He lifts his shoulders and the coat falls, but one of his guard catches it before it can even reach the ground. He loosens his tie, and fold his shirt sleeve then he stretches out his hand. I'm stark naked now, and thanks God the diamonds didn't clutter around bringing me more problems guess the cloth really did help. I haven't told Milan about them, I don't want to risk it, I mean anything is possible

and betray is a frequent language in these streets, loyalty doesn't come that cheap. A whip is what he has in his hand right now, he walks around and stand behind me. His hand finds the back of my head, and in one quick notion he pushes my face inside the dish. The smell sickens me, I try fighting him, lifting my head attempting to get out of the dish, but his grip is flipping tight! I find myself blowing bubbles inside this bloody with human flesh what- what tasting the bitter taste of the blood, and my vomit. The girls are cheering for him as usual, and Jaguar is laughing.

Finally, just as I was about to give in he takes my head out of the dish, and pull me by dread locks making me to look at him my neck is really taking a strain right now because of his strong grip on my locks. The smirk plastered in his face right now sickens me, it pisses me off actually.

Him: "How did that tasted like? Did you enjoy it?" I just stare at him. "Answer me dammit. Did you enjoy it?"

Me: "No." My voice is hoarse.

Him: "Oh, is it? Then you leave me with no choice, but to humiliate you. Lift her up." His guards yank me up roughly, and they steady me. He looks at me, and squeeze my cheeks causing my lips to form a pout. "You will leave by my rules. Take her to the pole," then he looks at Milan. "And her too."

Our hands are bound in this pole blood dripping from our toes, we are standing naked in the center of this fucking compound where everyone can see us. This is fucking embarrassing. I'm too weak to do anything, and my eyes are barely open, my body is in great pains. Nikolai, and his friend did some serious number on us. I swear to God that I saw my life flashing before my eyes. Milan groans next to me, one of her eye is swollen. She, too, just like me is very weak, but they didn't flock her like they did to me, I don't think the bruises will fade any time soon.

The clouds start gathering indicating that it will rain soon, and knowing Nikolai he won't even bother untying us, after all he enjoys torturing us. I still don't understand what is it that they want from me, guess I will never find out. Well, at least the Milan's jacket is placed not far from us. I shut my eyes, and trying blocking every negative thing but it ain't helping because my mind keeps on drifting back to the torture I'm going through here, sighs. And again I wonder how far TK is with rescuing me,

well, that's if he is making any means to find me. God better make sure that I survive this hellhole, but one thing I know though is that I will never be the same again.



NOMALANGA

Emotions are still high here, and Babalwa never stepped out of her room ever since, Okuhle is the one taking food to her. Things between Hlulani & Okuhle are not going well, their relationship is taking some serious strain, and they are no longer sharing a bed. Okuhle always wants to see herself next to Babalwa, I wonder what did Babalwa feed her. The boys are still talking as per usual just waiting for their mother to tell them who their fathers are because Mangwane told them straight up that she will not tell them, their mother must be the one telling them who their fathers are. Ai, this life thing ke scam.

Luxolo's phone still ain't going through, and that worries me a lot. I can't help it, but feel like something is wrong with her, something bad has happened to her, but I don't know what. I hope I'm wrong though. TK's phone ain't going through too, in fact everyone's phones aren't going through.

“I bet the coffee in your hands is Ice cold now.” Mmthabo says settling next to me, she looks exhausted I wonder when is she giving birth. I give her a smile.

“I haven't realized, guess I need to do a fresh one, I place the cup of coffee next to the bedside stand.

Her: “Are you okay? I mean, you don't look fine. You seem to be worried about something, I'm a good listener you know.”

Me: “I'm worried about my daughter I can't help it, but think that something bad happened to her.”

Her: “I'm sure she lost her phone or something don't stress yourself too much about her she's a strong woman, and besides we have enough drama going on here.” I nod. “Where's Mmamgwane?” She looks around the room.

Me: “She went to town she said she needs to go out, and see people before she suffocates here,” she winces, and brushes her stomach. “Are you okay?”

Her: "Yeah. I'm fine. Who did Mmangwane go with?"

Me: "Thembeke. I don't blame them though this place is boring," she let's out a whimper. "That's it. I'm calling the ambulance, is your baby bag packed?" She giggles.

Her: "Baby bag? I'm still far from giving Birth I'm barely 9 months, I'm 8 months 2 weeks," she shrugs.

Me: "Which means that you are 34 weeks, and can give birth any time from now. Or let's just say it's false labor, but we still need to get you checked up even if it is, pregnancy is very crucial around this time anything can happen."

Her: "No man, I'm fine honestly it's just minor pains I'm sure the baby was turning. Besides this is not my first pregnancy."

Me: "Exactly. Pregnancy differs Mmathabo. Just because you gave birth smoothly the first time without complications previously doesn't mean that you will not have complications

on this one too, pregnancy is very tricky maarn. Anyway, I don't want to argue with you about this issue we can't risk you losing a baby, not that you will anyway.”

Her: “Yohh hhayi Noma, it's no big deal.” Too late because the phone is already on my ears, if she thinks that I will let her be then she has another thing coming I'm not about to sit here, and pretend as if everything's fine. I keep on stealing glances at her, and she keeps on brushing her tummy. I doubt that she's 8 months, but hhey, I can't really phikisa her right?

I end the call after the brief talk I had with the hospital receptionist, apparently their ambulances are not around, and here I was thinking that we only experience such in South Africa, guess I was wrong.

Me: “Go, and get your bag I'll drive you to the hospital,” she nods getting up from the bed then walk out of my room. I change into more comfortable clothes

and follow after her, I will need to let Sabelo know about this though. TK hired four cars for us to use when we want to go somewhere, at least he was thoughtful to hire us cars, I don't think I would've survived using cabs even back in South Africa

I've never used taxis hence I always went to work with staff transport. And well, Muzi used to take me to town while we were still dating I wonder how is he, and how is his relationship with Bhebetsi. I still can't get over the fact that he hurt in this manner. Life.

“I'm ready to go. Must I let Sabelo know?” Mmabatho says dragging me out of my thoughts Her baby bag is in her hands.

Me: “I will tell him once we get to the hospital, let's go.” We walk out of the hotel, and straight to where the car is. I get in the front, and order her to sit at the back. I set up the GPS and I bring the engine to life, I need to be careful when driving I'm so used to speeding, argh.



LUXOLO

I'm frozen like Ice up in here, and gritting my teeth ain't helping, hhey let me not get started about my toes. It's past midnight, and the compound is so silent not even a sound of night insects is heard, the lights are off. Milan hisses, and I try looking at her, but my head ain't having it.

"I'm cold diamond," she tells me.

"Me too." I respond gritting my teeth. "I wish it was morning already."

Her: "I wouldn't wish that if I was you."

Me: "Why not?"

Her: "Because everyone will see us, and we will be here the whole day without having anything to eat."

Me: "I don't care, I need to be out of here."

Her: "I know, and I want to be out of here too but it seems like we will be here for a very long time things are not coming together, just when we have things under control something comes, and block us from going any further it's frustrating."

Me: "Tell me about it," while we are busy having our conversation I spot a figure passing us by in quick motion.

Her: "What was that?"

Me: "I don't know." I try moving my legs trying to see who is it, but hhayi shame kuyabhala my legs aren't having it. They are not the mood. I feel a presence behind me, my mouth is covered with a cloth before I can even turn my head to see who is it. I wobble my feet side to side trying to free myself, but whoever the person is parts my legs apart, and his hand covers my breasts more like squeezing them. Nausea simmers up my throat when I hear him unzip his pants. No, no, no. This can't be happening, it can't. It seems as if like my worst fear have become a reality this is what I was fearing mostly. Before I know it there are more man present one of them gets hold of my legs making sure that I don't move them.

"Fallo in fretta prima che il capo ci trovi qui!" (Do it fast before the boss finds us) says one of the man in a language I don't understand.

“Non riesco a trovare la parte del foro più ampia delle sue gambe!” (I can't find the hole part her legs wider) the one behind me responds. The one holding my legs parts them wider. I'm trying to make out their faces, but they have balaclavas on making it harder for me to spot them guess I must listen to the voices, and work with them.

“Impegnati di più Jaguar vuole che i risultati ricordino la ricompensa che ci ha promesso. Ti ha scelto perché si fida che non la deludi” (Try harder Jaguar wants results remember the reward she promised us. She chose you because she trusts you don't disappoint her) Oh, seems like Jaguar have something to do with this.

The one behind me tries inserting his dick inside my vagina again, but he's failing. Every time he is close to pushing it in he gets stuck somewhere, I don't even know what's happening, but whatever it is makes me happy at least my fear will not come to reality.

“Non riesco a penetrare, qualcosa mi impedisce di entrare oltre!” He half shouts sounding really annoyed (I can't

penetrate, something is preventing me from entering any further) he zips his pants.

“Lasciami provare, sei così stupido che mi chiedo perché Jaguar ti ha scelto per fare questa missione perché davvero non riesci a portarla a termine, fatti da parte.” (Let me try, you are so stupid I wonder why did Jaguar choose you to do this mission because you're really failing to accomplish it, step aside) says one with a rough hard voice.

“Buona fortuna, e farai meglio a farcela. Dimostraci che non sei un fallito,” (Good luck, and you better accomplish it. Show us that you are not failure)

“Non ho bisogno di fortuna, l'ho fatto per tutta la vita. Questa troia non è diversa dalle altre, lascia che ti mostri come lo fa il vero uomo.” (I don't need luck, I've been doing this all my life. This slut ain't no different from the others, let me show you how real man do it) he bellows, and presses his body against mine I can actually feel his bulge, tears are already streaming down my cheeks as his strong hand parts my legs moving it up my thighs, and uses the free one to unzip his pants. He directs his dick straight at the entrance of my vagina, and in one

forceful push he is in, I can't even scream since the cloth have covered my mouth.

“È di questo che sto parlando, amico, è così che lo fanno i veri uomini, non quello che stava facendo questo gay!” (That's what I'm talking about, man, that's how real men do it, not this gay) says another voice that I'm familiar with, and the others laugh. He moves inside me twice, and stops moving.

“Che cosa? Che cos'è?” (What? What is it?) Ask the first one who tried penetrating me.

Him: “Non lo so amico, davvero non lo so amico, il mio cazzo è bloccato e non vuole uscire!” (I don't know man, I really don't know man, my dick is stuck it doesn't want to come out) the fear in his voice is not to missed I wonder what's going on.

Man 2: “Cosa intendi uomo?” (What do you mean man)

Him: “Il mio cazzo è bloccato!” He shouts more like wanting to cry. “Aiutami amico, aiutami per favore, sto implorando

ragazzi,” (Help me man, help please, I'm begging guys) and now he is crying.

Man 3: “Oh merda, è stata marchiata! Che cazzo amico, questo non va bene. Non va bene per niente, merda!” (Oh shit, she has been branded! What the fuck man, this is not good. Not good at all, shit)

Man 1: “Cosa significa?” (What does that mean)

Man 3: “È stata segnata, è stata segnata fottutamente e ci sono molte conseguenze che ne derivano. Mi dispiace amico, ma questo? Non so nemmeno cosa dire.” (She has been marked, she is fucking marked and there are a lot of consequences coming with it. I'm sorry man, but this? I don't even know what to say)

Man 2: “Morirà?” (Will he die) his voice is so low.

Man 3: “Non lo so amico. O forse rimarrà paralizzato.” (I don't know man. Or maybe he is going to be Paralyzed) I wish I

understood what are they saying because the conversation sounds too intense, and shocking too. The man behind me is shaking vigorously.

Man 1: “Questo è un casino. Ora cosa faremo?” (This is a mess. Now what are we going to do?)

Man 3: “Ce ne andiamo e non ne parliamo. Non abbiamo altra scelta che mentire a Jaguar e dirle che abbiamo fatto quello che ci ha detto.” (We leave, and don't say any word about this. We have no choice but to lie to Jaguar and tell her that we did what she told us)

Man 2: “E lui?” (What about him)

Man 3: “Dobbiamo separarli,” (we need to separate them)

Man 1: “Come lo faremo?” (How are we going to do that)

Man 4: “Mi aiuti per favore.” (Please help me) his voice is now raspy. One of the three cuts my hands loose, and they push me

to the ground I'm face flat on the ground with the 4th man's body heavy on my back. They count to three, and yank him up, tsi. They try again, and this time they succeed.

Man 2: “Fammi ispezionare il tuo cazzo,” (let me inspect your cock man) I hear him gasp, and so are the others.

Man 3: “Ha bisogno di aiuto medico immediatamente, andiamo dal dottor Famito.” (He needs medical help urgently, let's go and see Dr Famito)

Man 1: “Prima legatela, non vogliamo che nessuno sospetti nulla.” (Tie her up first, we don't want anyone suspecting anything) They pick me up, and tie me back to the pole again, and I see them walking away. And my tears keeps falling, I'm even ashamed to look at Milan, but I do take a quick glance at her, and her eyes are covered with a cloth together with her mouth no wonder she was so quiet. Fuck, these men. I close my eyes trying not to think about what took place earlier on. I'm hurting. I'm embarrassed, I've been humiliated even though he did not do much, but the fact that he penetrated, and pushed in twice while inside me sickens me even more, and I wonder what actually happened that made him stop.

Listening in on their conversation I heard them mentioning Jaguar's name over, and over again which means that Jaguar is behind this. But why? What is it that she actually wants from me? What is her problem with me? I guess I will find out soon, and when I do it won't be nice. I wonder how much torture am I going to endure here, this ain't no walk in the park. Life, yeah. Fuck it.

TSAKANI

Pictures of Sol have been distributed to the relevant parties, it's been days now and still nothing from any of them, it's frustrating honestly, but then again I can't just sit around and not do anything I need to go out there, and find bubbles myself then bring her back here safe. This sending out orders is just not working out for me, tonight I'll be flying to Russia hopefully once I'm within Sol's country I will find him or any of his family members even if it means paying a lump some of money to get the information I will, as long as they will lead me straight to Sol. The gents decided to go out today they've been scooped up in my house for far too long now, Talon was already complaining about weight gain. I understand his frustrations though.

My phone beeps indicating a message, I quickly pick it up from the table maybe someone is sending me some information. I view it, and its those insurance messages mxm, bullshit. I flip it on the couch, and go to my bedroom I need to start packing, and I will not tell the guys anything because I know very well that they will want to tag along. They've done a lot for me

honestly, and I'm grateful for having friends like them in my circle not everyone gets to have supportive friends like them.

“And then? Where is you goes?” Talon asks leaning against the door frame with a plate full of meat & wors in his hands. He raises his brow. I wonder when did they get here.

“I'm not going anywhere, I'm just packing.” I tell him this zipping the sport bag.

Him: “Ucabanga ukuthi ngingudam'shishi wena saarn neh? Ngathi uyakhohlwa ukuthi ngikucava ukudabula wonke amajita la.” (You think I'm a fool? Is as if like you're forgetting that I know you better more than the guys)

Me: “Angikushayi nombolo 2 ntwana saarn, benginga kushova kuze ngingathinki kakhulu ngo bubbles. (I'm not lying to you, I was just pushing time so that I don't think too much about bubbles) I need to keep busy before I go crazy man.”

Him: “Mara mus sikhona thina ntwana,” (But we are here) I shake my head.

Me: “Even with you gents around, I just cannot stop thinking of bubbles because every second she pops into my mind I'm sure she's even given up, and she probably hates me because I can't help her,” I heave out a sigh of defeat. I've failed bubbles, I really did.

Him: “Ngiy'cava ukuthi uyazidla blind ngalo mntwana futhi nenhliziyo iyagologoza, ungavumile ukuba buthakathaka. Iba ne themba lokuthi kuzolungunga, zim'thola u bubbles ngoba solanka usahlangahlangane so angeke um'thole. Umnqondo wakho uyazulazula skhokho, hlehla kancane.” (I know that you love this girl so much, and your heart is hurting but don't allow this thing to weaken you. Have hope that all will be well, we will find bubbles because with you being this messed up in this manner we will not find her, relax) I shake my head.

Me: “Ang'kwazi ukukhululeka ndoda! Intomb' yami phela le uya understander mara?” (I can't relax man. Do you understand that this is my woman we are talking about) he nods, and brushes his chin I guess he's still thinking of what to say next. Or

not. I take another bag on top of the wardrobe, but this one is a bit smaller it can only carry my toiletries.

“Ngiyacava ndoda, ngiyacava. Mara still skhokho, you need to relax sesiyela ekukhanyeni u Lindiwe uyazwakala vandag kushokona ukuthi kuzoba nomnyakazo.” (I Know man, I know. But still you need to relax we are marching towards the light, Lindiwe) he tells me this with mouth full of meat I sometimes forget that manners is what he doesn't know, and no matter how much we reprimand him he will only stop for a day or 2 then go back to his bad habit again of which is annoying if you ask me.

Me: “Awucavi nex Talon. Bubble needs me, I need to find her, I need to save her before I lose her completely, and that's why I'm flying to Russia tonight. I need to find her.” And my mouth just slipped up, now he knows that I'm leaving, but he still won't convince me otherwise. I'm not staying, and my mind is made up.

Him: “Bhi. Ngakubamba galakatshane, hehe. So, bowuyovaya ungas'bikelanga? Thina amaroto wakho? O skeem feder feder?” (You were going to leave without telling us? Us your friends)

Me: “Cava hier Talon,” I let out a deep breath. “I didn't want you guys knowing because you've done a lot for me already, and I know that you would've insisted on coming with...”

Him: “Good.” He chirps in. “Sihamba sonke ke, enhlek athi ngofaka lenyama ku Tupperware sekuwumphako wonke lo.” (We are going together then, in fact let me go, and put this meat in a Tupperware this meat is now my food)

Me: “But... Urhm, yeah, whatever dude.”

Him: “I hope you will not try to run away from us because I'll be guarding you like a hawk mfana. Athi ngotshela amajita songena phakathi kwamafu.” (Let me go, and tell the guys that we are going to fly)

“Sekayasibiza uTa God njalo?” (God is calling us just like that already) Batista asks standing behind Talon.

Him: “Hhayi, wena jinda lento yakho yokuthi uzoya ka God, ngoba ayikuncwanywa lendoda mara ke asikho lapho. Siya e Russia ngezinkathi sodla izibheva daar.” (You need to drop this thing of you going to heaven because that man doesn't like you, but we aren't there. We're going to Russia at night we're going to play heroes there)

Batista: “And you are only telling us now? What if we had plans?” Talon chuckles.

Him: “Yingoba nami ngiyibamba manje leway, fida uyasijwayela lo ngathi ngingamuchacha nou.” (That's because I also found out now, his plan was to leave without telling us, but I caught him still packing. He is disrespecting us this one I wish I can panel beat him)

Batista: “So, you were going to leave without telling us? After all the shit we've been through together? Usijwayela kabi wena, we are all going ngeke sizwe ngawe wena saarn. Talon go and tell the gents to start packing then take Lee to the secret location and gather all that you can.” Talon nods, and walks away. “TK bruh, you're not alone we are with you all the way, remember that we all vowed that we will die fighting together

unless one is sick don't break the rules, we are your brothers and wherever you go, we go to its simple as that. The only way you can stop us from coming with is if you kill us of which I know very well that you won't do, get done packing then come and join us in the lounge, don't even try to run away TK.” He walks out immediately as he said those words. Shit.

I sit down on the bed, and rub my face with my hands. These boys are unbelievable honestly, but then again Batista is right; they've been through a lot with me, and for me to decide to skip town without telling them was going to be a bad move, and I also don't know what awaits me in Russia, so I'm forced to go with them after all I'm not immortal. I pray that us going there will brace us with good news, and all that shit. I have a little bit of hope that bubbles is somewhere there in Russia doing Lord knows what. Well, that's if they haven't killed her, yet. Thinking about her being no more sickness me, and it's wounding my heart in a way that it feels cramped making it hard for me to do anything just like it did a few days ago, I swear, I was staring death in the eyes for that few seconds but it eventually stopped, and I felt so emotional afterwards. But I did not dare cry, men don't cry.

“Ek'se, I came to check if you're still around in fact let's go,”
Batista tells me. I chuckle while shaking my head, wow. I get up
from the bed, and follow after him. So, they don't they trust me
kahle kahle? Ayt then.



LUXOLO

Every day is a different torture, my body have bruises that I don't think will ever heal no matter what I do, but my heart is more bruised. I've been fed human feaces by force, been stabbed a couple of times on my back, beaten more than all the girls here, and I'm still limping. I've even given up on praying & hoping that TK would've found me by now, I just have to make peace with the fact that I'll be here for a very long, and possibly find myself being gang raped in the process. Vele after that rape saga I gave up all in all I no longer care what happens to me right now honestly, but what I do know is that I'm ready to kill. Being here taught me a lot, they taught me to toughen up and welcome every blow thrown my way with courage, and without fear. Unfortunately for them I'll be using those skills to kill them one by one.

Anyway, the guard who raped me is fighting for his life in hospital here in this very compound angisho it's an all-in-one compound with every facility you can think of. Oh, yes. It is said that the man who raped me worms are starting to come out of his dick, and he smells awful even the Dr's can't help me. I don't know if I'm the cause of it all or what, but I'd like to believe that it wasn't me because I've been sleeping with TK and none of this ever happened to him. Maybe the guy was sick or something because wawu. Jaguar still dislikes me, and now it has escalated to a point where she asked some of the girls that we stay with to try, and kill me, but unfortunately for them I'm a light sleeper once I hear some movements I shoot my eyes open, and they would pretend to be looking for something. Milan is still 100 with me, and now she's busy trying to contact her friends outside I think she works with some of the guards because they're the ones who convey the messages to both parties, all I need is a sim card now.

I get off bed, and cross over to one of the girls bed who tried to kill me countless times thinking that I'm sleeping, everyone is sleeping peacefully, well, I'm not sure but yeah. I look at her, and she's peacefully sleeping I tilt my head, and tighten the grip of Okapi in my hand. Wawu, sis is even snoring. I shake her

lightly, and she opens her eyes slightly, but widens them as soon as she sees me watching her like I'm some sort of a serial killer, I quickly cover her mouth before she can even attempt to scream. I give her a smile, and seeing her this scared fascinates me, it gives a certain adrenaline I've never experienced until now. And boy, I fucking love it, and unfortunately for her I'm not instilling any fear on her, I'm going to kill her in cold blood I want my face to be the last thing she sees before she dies. Tears fill her eyes, she's pleading with her eyes. I shake my head, and lift the Okapi, and lodge it straight in her heart. She widens her eyes

and they start rolling, good. I lodge it deeper and utter.

“Rest in fucking pieces,” I yank the Okapi from her heart, and blood start coming out of her mouth. I look at her one last, then put my hand on top of her mouth, and drag myself to the second girl's bed. I look at her, and she's sleeping freely like she did not try killing me two nights ago. Nah, this one I will not kill her, but I can always frame her. I purse my lips together preventing myself from chuckling, I take the Okapi and place it on her hand. I smear the other girl's blood on her dress, and sheets then walk back to my bed, we shall see what's going to happen 4 hours from now because her & more others usually wake up 2 hours early to do their dirty deeds, like having sex

with the guards, and shit. Oh, almost forgot that the second girl will be the first one to notice her friend's dead body, and of course realizing that she's actually the one who killed her. I take off my bloody gloves, and hide them underneath my mattress they never check the mattress of anyway, in fact they don't check our rooms. I pull up the blankets up until my neck, and I'm satisfied.



VUYO

No activity is taking place in this yard, but I do know that- that drunkard of a woman is here because I've hopped from tarven to tarven looking for her, and she wasn't in any of them. Immediately as I woke up in the morning my mind reminded me of this house, this very same house that have all the answers that I need. A man comes out of the house fixing his pants, he looks really drunk hey, and he looks quite old or maybe ke phuza face that makes him look this old mara m'dala yong. He- lits up a cigarette guess she's waiting for Blessing's mother to come out of the house so that they will leave together, and go back to wherever tarven they found each other. I really don't understand as to why is Blessing's mother is ruining her life like this, I mean you can see that this woman was a boss back in her youthful days I wonder what happened

or what changed for her to turn out this way, and hate her child in the process like she didn't give birth to him or something.

Blessing's mother comes out of the house wearing a gown after the man shouted her to hurry up because their friends will finish the alcohol, and they will have nothing to drink. They link arms, and Blessing's mother is holding a half empty bottle of castle lager in her hand. I step out of my car as they reach the gate, and walk up to them.

“Sanibonani.”

“Hhayi ke. Hhayi ke. Ufunani lakami? (What do you want in my yard) Isn't it enough that you took my son away from me?” She asks clearly annoyed.

Me: “I'm sorry for coming unannounced, but I came here because of a serious matter I have questions of which I want you to answer for me.”

Her: “Askies ang'zwanga?”

Me: "I have questions, and you are the only person who has answers for them," she laughs.

Her: "Are you a detective or something?"

Me: "No. But this is more of a personal matter."

Her: "How am I involved in your personal affairs? Ngiyazazi ukuthi ngiyadakwa mara cela ungazoza lakami unghlohle imbuzo anginazo izimpendulo ozifunayo baba, idla utshani." (I know that I'm a drunkard, but don't come to my house and start asking me questions because I don't have the answers you need, now leave my house)

Me: "Please. I really need those answers or at least hear me out."

Man: "Hhayi maarn Nokwazi amabhiya ayaphela ka MaSibiya futhi uyazi ukuthi asinamali sowathenga ngani." (Nokwazi, let's go alcohol is finishing at Mam'Sbiya's and you know very well

that we don't have money, how are we going to buy them) He burps.

Her: “Yah, sahamba manje ngisatshela lo izandaba zakhe, hamba ngizokuthola phambili,” (we will go now I'm still telling this person where to get off, you may leave I will find you half way) the man nods, and starts walking away. “Back to you. Ufuna what answers?”

Me: “Nomcebo. I need to know who her mother is.” Her expression changes from something else.

Her: “Uzele ukuzong'buza amanyala kanti? Ave ujwayelana amasimba. Hamba la jou moerskont!” (You came here to ask me shit? Leave my house) she looks for something on the ground. “Ngithe hamba before I call the community on you, and tell them that you want to rape me. Leave!” I stare at her, and her eyes are covered with a veil of tears. “Voetsek maarn! Hamba la!” I turn on my heels, and go back to my car peacefully I don't want to draw unnecessary drama.

I bring the engine to life, and drive off leaving her standing at the gate tears already streaming down her cheeks. I wonder why did she snap like that, but I will not give up I will still come here, and demand answers she knows a lot, and she's definitely hiding something but I will find out what... Life though. Blessing is attending school now, and he is one bright student I don't understand why this woman forbade him from attending school, sighs.



TSAKANI

We are on our way to the airport, and Lindiwe said that she will meet us there. Yah, her boss decided to let her go after so much convincing she did that's what she told us, the more the merrier I guess. My phone beeps indicating a message as soon as I switched it on, I wonder who is it because everyone whose important and have these numbers of my second phone is here with me right now, this one is for the gang, bubbles and some other associates of mine njer and whoever it is they better make sure that they're sending me something valuable I'm tired of useless messages filling up my phone, and yet again I'm too lazy to delete the messages. I pick it up, and view the message...

“Emergency, please help, Italy Cosa Nostra.” It reads. I go over & over it again until it registers that this can only be bubbles, I stop the car abruptly on the highway almost bumping the car before us.

“Hhey wena masaka sofuna sife nou?” (You want us to die now) Talon asks with so much urgency in his voice.

Me: “Change of plans. We are going to Italy, bubbles is in Italy.”

Batista: “What? Man we are going to die there!”

Me: “Then you can stay behind Batista, and if the rest of you feels the same you can take your shit, and leave but as for me I'm going to save my bubbles with or without you.” I look at the traffic, and it's a nightmare I don't even know why there's traffic now because we were driving just fine, it is when I hear the screams of people sounding in the air, cars going up in flames, and they are all running to our direction that something is happening. Shit.

Leon: "It has started, we better get the fuck outta here the black gang have started the war. Grab all that you can!" We grab all that we can and fall with the rest of the people running for safety, this is messed up. Now how am I going to save bubbles? Tell me the fuck how? But now we need to save ourselves, and come up with a strategy to protect ourselves. This came unexpected, and it is too soon, very soon this place will be filled with blood, inno-fucking-cent blood, shit just got real. But I'm sure that there other gangs have been alerted, kushubile.

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LUXOLO

I hope Tsakani got my message, and he is on his way here. Anyway, we are outside going to witness Aisha's punishment for killing Nikita, shame poor Aisha is crying. Nikolai is standing before Aisha looking very much livid, and Jaguar is perplexed I'm sure she's thinking to herself that Aisha didn't kill Nikita in cold blood because they were very close, well, Aisha did kill Nikita she was founapi in her hand of course. Why am I even believing that she killed her whereas I did? That's because she killed her, fucked up shit, I know.

“You know I never saw Aisha as a killer she was the quiet one out of all the girls here, and why would she kill her best friend?” Milan asks nudging me.

“Shit happens. I'm sure they had some quarreling, and Nikita said some hurtful things to Aisha, and she lost it. Quiet people are the most dangerous ones I tell you.”

Her: “But it's shocking honestly.”

Me: "Indeed."

Her: "Are you sure sure that you don't have anything to do with this?"

Me: "Oh, wawu. Are you hearing yourself? Like girl; why would I waste my time killing someone who adds no value in my life? I feel insulted right now." I didn't tell her that I'm the one who killed Aisha, I still don't trust her, and she doesn't know that I stole one of her sim cards after all she doesn't know that I have a phone, I still don't trust her completely. She needs to earn my trust first, who knows what she talks about when she talks to her outside friends? Skelem this one, until I can trust her fully I will not give out everything.

Her: "I'm sorry."

Me: "Grand." Nikolai raises the black sword, and in one cut Aisha's head falls to the ground, and rolls over until it stops before Jaguars feet, I chuckle. "Bravo," clapping hands. Everyone turns to look at me. "What? We are all fucked up in

here, all of us including you Nikolai.” I shrug, and turn on my heels, and walk away with Milan following behind me.

“Diamond.” That voice alone pisses me off. I stop on my tracks, and turn to look at him, my throat goes dry instantly when I see who he is with. He looks so pale. I should've known that he was part of this too.

“Diamond. What happened to you?” He asks walking towards me.

Me: “Life happened, and good seeing you again Sol.” I honestly have no energy for him, none whatsoever. I attempt to walk away, but he grabs me by my hand.

Him: “You need to prepare yourselves, the war have started in South Africa.”

Me: “And you are telling me this because?”

Him: "You are flying there in 2 weeks time, and don't worry about this I will deal with Antony myself. When I told to train you, I didn't mean that they must torture you, that was not part of the plan. They went against my orders, and they will feel my wrath. Go, and rest I need you fully healed before we head to South Africa I'm sure you've learned a lot while here. I want to see you becoming successful, and leading the masses before I die. Get enough rest all trainings are cancelled." He tells me this patting my shoulder. "Make me proud, go and fight side to side with your man. Go and protect your people diamond, I believe in you." I push back the veil of tears that are threatening to come out, and I just give him a nod.

Me: "Thank you, and I will make you proud." He nods, and walk past me with Antony on his heels.

Milan: "You know Sol? You were working for him?"

Me: "Yeah. Let's go." I'm so overwhelmed by all of this, but above everything else I'm going back home, but I will not go back without killing Jaguar. She must die...

We get into our dom, and I throw myself on top of the bed looking up. Am I ready to take on the world though? To be amongst ruthless men & women killers? It's fucked up.

TSAKANI

We are at Talon's house planning how to overtake this war, and head straight to Italy to save bubbles before it's too late, knowing that she's still alive gives me new hope. It tells me that she's fighting to stay alive, fighting, waiting for me to come and rescue her. We've been here for more than 24 hours now going through different plans, and we are running out of alcohol. Talon place is not that big, in fact it's a bachelors flat with 2 bedrooms, kitchen/lounge, and a bathroom obviously. It's clean too, and that's only because he's forever messing my house.

“My mind will explode now gents, I need a breather and it seems as if like we've run out of cigarettes,” Batista says getting up from the beer crate, Talon have only one couch, and one chair this guy is not serious about life I tell you, he's not.

“Mine too, but we need to find a clear route or something. Anyone has any idea how vast the war have spread, and how many people were killed so far?” Leon asks.

Talon: “Fokol, nex. Ngapha netililing yami ayina mlilo,” (my phone don't have a battery)

Me: “Mine is low too. Enhlek Talon, why don't you have a TV?”

Him: “For the why? Angijindi la mus mina, ngijinda emadladleni wenu, nabona sidle nomphako wendlela. So, asikho is'khathi sokuthi ngithenge I TV bese ngigcwalisa is'bandisa makhaza sami ngegawulo yami nendawo yokufihla igawula yami for nina kuthi nizoshaya vithi igawula yami. Nadlala nina, too much.” (I don't stay here, I stay in your houses, you see that we've eaten the food for the road. I see no need to buy TV then fill my fridge & cupboard with food just for you to come to my house and finish my food, you guys play, too much)

Leon: Laughing. “Oh, so you are basically a blood sucker? Uyi street kid wena because you depend on hand outs, you eat free food in our houses, but then again I understand your situation, you can't afford and it's fine. But, be rest assured that you will no longer eat at my house as I will stop buying food too.”

Him: “Angikuncengi cabanga u TK uzwakele, ngeke angincishe igawula of kanjani TK?”

Me: “Yeah, sure.”

Batista: “But it will be short-lived once diamond stays with him fully.”

Him: “Nah, bazobamba idladla e grand, e new bese kulawula mina kule ahlala kiyo manje.” (They will get a new house, and I will head the one that he's staying in currently)

Me: “Ngiyaniva na ringa bafethu, but I way forward. We need to find a way forward, mele sivaye by midnight.”

Lee: “Too bad we don't own private jets.” Then it hits me.

Me: “I know just a person who can lend us his without hesitation.”

Batista: "Who is that?"

Me: "Dom. Italian Dom. Talon, please pass me my phone I need to make a call," he does what I tell him.

Him: "Dom? Uhlanguana njani no Dom wena? Phelainja yama talian leya, ezinkulu zakhona ama pitbull."

Me: "We once worked on some deal, the very same deal that made me what I am today, and what he is today." He nods. I punch in Dom's numbers and his phone ring 4x I'm about to hang up when he answers.

"TK. How can I be of assistance?"

"Let me get straight to the point and not waste your time. I want you to lend me your private jet I need to fly to Italy as soon as possible."

Him: "I'll get one of my pilot to bring it, just send me the location."

Me: "Thanks man. I owe you one."

Him: "I'll hold you to that," he hangs up. Yes, finally.

Me: "Well, we've got ourselves a private jet we're flying midnight I'm so happy. I'm finally going to get my bubbles."

Leon: "That was smooth. Are you sure that, that's the Dom we know? Billy?" I nod. "That man is heartless bruh, and I heard that he's selling girls as sex slaves, how true is that?"

Me: "100% true."

Him: "Wawu." Lee's phone start ringing.

Lee: "It's Lindiwe. Let me hear what she wants," he excuses himself.

Talon: "Sebayanyobana laba?" (Are they fucking each other now) we laugh.

Batista: "Banyobana what time labantu? Ndoda, they've never had sex let alone kiss."

Him: "Fo sho bachamisana nge bhelas laba, mxit style.
'Ugcokeni? Send me a picture, yoooh sibuya kude bafwethu."

Leon: "Back then I was a real player, I had all the girls eating at the palms of my hands, plus my nickname then was 'Charma boy', yesis bengibadla abo lovey mina blind."

Batista: "I'm glad I never had any of those things while growing up. Guess you can say I'm anti-social, I don't really like people."

Me: "Yeah, right." Lee comes back, and settles down he doesn't look fine. "What's wrong man? Why the sour mood?"

Him: "Things are bad gents, flights are being bombed left-right & center. The Iraq's have arrived too, things are about to get

worse from here. TK man, I don't know how that Dom's jet is going to get here. Lindiwe is somewhere in the bushes with some of her members, and they are on their way here, they are walking on foot to avoid being spotted.” Fuck! This is not happening.

Me: “What exactly are you saying Lee?” I'm already pacing up & down.

Him: “There's no way we can leave this place, the sky is covered with spaceships & planes. It's a sky war up there, we can only hope that they sleep or tone down the shooting then we can leave.”

Me: “That's bullshit! I need to go and fetch bubbles gents, I need to save her before I lose her completely. There must be a way, there must be one!” I'm boiling inside, I don't like what's happening right now, not even one bit. It seems as if like all my efforts of trying to find bubbles are going in vain, they are all not coming together! Fuck it maarn.

Leon: "You just heard what Lee said. The sky is raining bullets & explosives, these people mean business TK, and if we are going to sit around and not do anything just know that we will die in this war. Forget about bubbles for a minute, concentrate on what's happening right now people are dying man, we need to join in the masses maybe that way we will find a passage to use, and fly to Italy. Right now we have a serious war in our hands, we need to save our country before it turns into ruins. Trust me when I say diamond is fighting too back there in Italy for the fact that she sent you that text means that she's fighting too, she's alive. One way or the other you guys will be together again, let's save our country." I nod.

Lee: "He's right. We need to fight for our country." I hate to admit it, but they are right. Bubbles better keep on fighting, and never give up.

Me: "Guess you guys are right, let's do it. Let's save our country, gear up."

Talon: "Isukile habashwe," he whistles, and stomps his feet. "Makunyiwe ek'se, makufe abantu." He takes the gun that was in Batista's waist, and shoot the single. Talon though.

I wonder how is everyone else taking it, especially the gangs. We needed to become one before this war started, but we were wrong. Each to their own. Just then my phone rings, and it's Ludo.

“Sure.”

“Where the hell are you man?” He is breathing heavily, and the gunshots in the background are too loud, but luckily for me, I can hear him loud & clear, and it's quite strange considering the fact that the gunshots sound too close, more like near Talo... Wait, a minute. Could it be that they are here? But how does he know where Talon lives? It's strange honestly. “Never mind, I know where you are. We will be there in three minutes,” angry growl follows immediately he said, and he hangs up. I hurry toward Talon's lounge window, and I see nothing.

Batista: “Who was that?”

Me: “Ludo. They are on their way here.”

Talon: "Ini? You gave them my address?"

Me: "No. He sounded as if like he knows where you stay because..." I stop talking as soon as Leon screams like a girl, only to see Ludo standing before us. But how? How did he get in because we did not hear the door opening?

Him: "Boys."

Talon: "Um'thakathi bafethu umthakathi! Ek'se ungene njani la wena saarn?" (It's a witch gents a witch. How did you get in)

Him: "The door was open. Feder? All good?"

Me: "Dude, you are creepy."

Him: "I know, but don't let my wife hear you say that."

“Say what my love?” A woman close my age if not older steps in followed by some other woman, and some man. “Gentlemen.” She greets, and we all nod. And they all have the same tattoos on their necks, guess it represent their gang.

Him: “Nothing my love. Oh, where are my manners,” he introduces us

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then introduce them to us. Lorna, Anthea & Mandla are their names.

Anthea: “Why are you all sitting here whereas everyone is out there fighting?” She looks scary, and the contact less aren't making things any easier for me.

Leon: “We were about to go out.”

Mandla: “Don't tell me that it's just the 4 of you, this better be some sick joke,” he snorts.

Me: “It is just the four of us. Always has been, always will be.”

Anthea: "Impressive. Let's go then." Those who were sitting get up, and we all take our weapons & head out. "We are all going to be using one transport." We get outside, and we find a rusted bus parked outside the yard, it looks really old. "Don't judge the cover before you see what's inside, let's get in." I look up the sky, and the sky is filled with black smoke.

"You guys were going to leave without me?" We all turn to look at Lindiwe. She's with ± 20 people with her, they all look like tired & hungry, but I don't blame them the bags that they're carrying look heavy.

Lorna: "Na... Lindiwe. Where the hell have you been?"

Her: "I will tell you once we're inside, we need to go." We all get inside the bus, and it's nothing like what it looks like outside.

Lorna: "We finally have a small army of our own. You can all take your seats." Geez...



LUXOLO

Sol have summoned me to his office, and right now I'm on my way going there. I've been watching the news lately, and things are looking bad in my homeland people are dying like flies and I guess that's the reason why TK couldn't come to my rescue. They can't fly here, my heart is bleeding for all those innocent people who lost their lives, and those who are yet to lose them, no one deserves to die like that. I wonder what are those two gangs hoping to achieve with all this war they've just initiated in my country, but what they don't know is that I'm already done planning my destruction, I'm going to make my own massacre they won't see it coming. I'll be heading straight to the Lion's heart, and that will slow down their attack in my country, and the team is already on standby. And in all this that's happening. I pray that TK together with the gang are safe, and they're fighting hard to save our country.

“Come in,” he yells from the inside after knocking. I open the door, and get inside. There's blood on the floor, and it is about to seep out the door, I look at where it's coming from and it's Anthony's. He's lying on the floor in his own blood, and it looks like his manhood has been chopped off too. Shame. Poor him, he deserves it though. I settle down. “I've dealt with him as

promised, and I've long called the people who clean up the mess, and they're not here yet. You look a little better today.”

“I am feeling better. So, you called for me.”

Him: “Aren't you hungry?”

Me: “I am.”

Him: “I'll get us something decent to it, I'm sure these people here were feeding you nonsense. I still don't understand why they've failed to follow the simple orders that I gave them, I told them to train them not torture you. You are not a soldier. They really disrespected me by going against my orders, but I'm more disappointed in Antony, I don't know what came over him.”

Me: “I hear all that, but why did you tell them to train me? Train me for what?”

Him: “Good question. The moment you came to my club looking for a job I saw something in you, something that I haven't seen in a long time. I saw the fierceness in you, how fast your instincts kicks in, the boldness in your voice, and how you carried yourself through the entire interview, you didn't even stutter like most people do when in my presence, even some men stutter in my presence. I also liked how you were able to stand up for yourself and refused being a pushover. You acted selflessly, and since I didn't trust a lot of people in my circle especially when it comes to my business I saw it fit to hand it to you because you have the potential to lead it, and know how to lure the crew. I needed someone I can trust, and that someone is you.”

Me: “But how does me becoming a club owner requires me to be trained?”

Him: “Because it is a very dangerous business, too many enemies hovering in corners waiting to strike, too many competitors wanting to take you out, to see your business fall. And as you know that it is said ‘it's a man's world’ in this game of business. You need to be strong, and be feared. You also need to protect yourself from these vultures there will be a lot

of them who would want to bring you down, and try by all means to kill you. Jealousy dominates in these streets.”

Me: “Oh, I see. But, what's going on with you? You look pale, and like you are about to die any minute.”

Him: “I have stage 3 cancer.”

Me: “What? But how? Weren't you attending chemotherapy or something?”

Him: “I don't do well with doctors. I'm fine as I am, at least now if I die I know that my club will be taken care off, and in good hands. So, I don't mind dying now.”

Me: “Wawu Sol. You refuse getting help? Nizofa yazi, ai.”

Him: “What was that?”

Me: “Nothing important.”

Him: "Have you been watching the news lately?"

Me: "Yeah. Things are looking bad in my country people are being killed like they're nothing, it's painful."

Him: "That is why I will be sending you back much sooner because staying here another more weeks will not work, I'm sure they would've taken the whole of SA by then," I chuckle.

Me: "I'm not going there yet, I'm changing my destination. Remember that two can always play this game, I'm joining the game."

Him: "What do you mean?"

Me: "Watch & see," I lean back on the chair and fold my arms over my chest.

Him: "You've changed, a lot for that matter."

Me: “Your people created me, they made me what you see today. A monster, the one with no soul. This is all on them, and I must condemn them. They really did a very impressive job, a fucking impressive job better than the training you had in your mind, right?” He nods.

Him: “Beyond what I had in my mind. Do you like yourself like this?”

Me: “Of course I do. I love this new me.”

Him: “If you are happy then I'm happy too, I actually have a name for you. This one will fit you perfectly”

Me: “Oh, let's hear it.”

Him: “Tammy Guns. Your new name is Tammy Guns.” I like it, I really do. “Do you like it?” He raises his brow.

Me: "Like heck I do. It's even better than diamond. This one I love a lot."

Him: "Very well then. About that food?"

Me: "Please bring it. So, now that Antony is dead. What are you going to do with Nikolai & Jaguar?" He chortles.

Him: "Between the two of them; who would you love to kill?"

Me: "Both. I'd love to kill both of them."

Him: "Do you know how to kill a person though Tammy?"

Me: "Yeah, I do. I've killed 3 so far."

Him: "I'm giving you 2 days to kill the two of them, just 2 days Tammy and don't disappoint me." I smirk.

Me: "I won't Sol, I promise you."

Him: "Make me proud." I nod. I have 2 days to kill these people only 2 days, well, I can also kill them in one day. But nah, I will not let them. "If you are done with killing them then you can leave to your journey, and I know that 98% of those girls don't want to travel with you, how true is this?" I chuckle.

Me: "Very true, and when I ask them they aren't giving me straight answers," shrugging.

Him: "Clearly someone has poisoned their ears with lies about you."

Me: "And I know exactly the person, I'm fine with the 6 girls who didn't listen to her. Me & these girls will go very far."

Him: "Yes you will, but don't trust the ones you've just recruited. Stick with Milan, I've been told how that girl has been loyal to you, she defended you, and even shot Jaguar just, so

she can be locked up with you. Now, that's what we call team work. Hold on to her," I nod.

I step inside our dome, and all the girls are getting ready to go and have lunch. Milan & the 6 girls are sitting on my bed, and they are in a deep heated conversation. I wonder what are they talking about, I would love to eavesdrop, but I have a mission to carry so eavesdropping will waste my time. Time that I don't have.

"I wonder what are you girls talking about."

"An escape plan. I'm joking, we are talking about today's meal."
Milan responds.

Me: "What about it?"

Her: "Xia saw Jaguar giving one of the cooks' money, and something wrapped in a newspaper. She also overheard Jaguar telling the cooker to use it on the big 7's meal (that's what they call us here) and they better make sure that our food is separated from the rest of the girls, I think Jaguar wants to kill us diamond."

Me: "Don't worry I have an idea, and my name is no longer diamond, but I am Tammy Guns." She widens her eyes, and the others just look at me as if I said something awful.

Xia: "Since when?"

Me: "Since a few minutes ago. Sol gave me this name, and to tell you the truth I like it."

Alita: "Well, I guess we must all have nicknames, and we would really appreciate it if you can be the one naming us," I laugh.

Me: "Right. Let's go and kill people then I will give you nicknames. As much as I'm full from the meal I ate few minutes ago I don't mind going to that kitchen, and cause chaos."

Xia: "Fully behind you. We are going to turn that kitchen into royal rumble I know that there are people who hate each other here, and would love to use their hands to reprimand their baits. It's going to be fun."

Me: "Right." We walk out of our dome, and walk to the kitchen having nonsensical conversations.

LUXOLO

We get to the kitchen, and fall in line after the others some are already eating. Jaguar is standing right next to the food warmers guess she wants to make sure that we get our food as per instructed.

“Look at how creepy her smile is,” Xia says sneering.

“She looks like something disgusting. Looking at her right now makes me nausea, she's disgusting me.” Milan hisses.

Lian: “I hate her. I really do.” All this while I'm looking at her, and she's looking at me too with eyes full of hatred, and a very evil grin is plastered on her face. “She's annoying. Bloody bitch.” I giggle. Our turn comes to dish up, I'm behind Milan.

“Hey, big 7. You can come, and dish up this side we decided to make you a separate meal. Big boss's orders.” Jaguar yells.

“Special girls of this place,” she says immediately as we pass her. Vele our plates are lined up.

Xia: “That's the cook I saw Jaguar talking too,” she whispers in my ear. The cook is the one dishing up our food, ‘special food’ as they call it.

Jaguar: “I hope you will enjoy your meal,” she gives us her best fake smile. The lady pushes our plate towards us.

Me: “This food looks good, I hope it tastes as good as it looks.”

Cooker: “You will even lick your fingers afterwards,” she gives me a warm smile. If only she knew that this will be her last smile this very now.

Me: “Good. Taste the food,” she widens her eyes.

Her: “Pardon?”

Me: "I said taste this damn food. Don't make me go crazy and kill half of these people here. I can shoot the gas stove, and you will all die here, and all these peoples blood will be in your hands. Taste the fucking food!" She shakes her head, tears already blurring her vision.

Jaguar: "What the fuck? Cookers are not allowed to taste the food that's not how things are done here, diamond."

Me: "Would you rather taste the food on her behalf?"

Her: "I would if I ate chicken, but I don't eat it, so I can't taste it."

Me: "You're lying and you know it, but don't worry this cooker will taste this fucking food that she cooked." Everyone has stopped eating they're now focusing on us. "Ek'se taste this food right the fuck about now, don't piss me off."

Cooker: I- I can't..." her voice is trailing.

Me: "Then I will help you." I get on top of the counter my boots making heavy noise. "Awwuuuu!" I squat before her. My hand makes their way to her cheeks, and I squeeze them for dear life. "Listen here you bloody fool; you're going to taste this fucking food right the fuck about now with everyone here watching, and as I said; I will help you eat it." I remove my hand from her cheeks, and lay my fingers at the base of her scalp, then trail all the way down to her neck. She winces in pain, with no warning I push her face in one of the plates, she attempts lifting her head but my grip be so tight in this motherfucker. Jaguar can't do anything but to watch, the girls are surrounding her.

"I- I will taste the food. Please let her go," Jaguar pleads. I laugh.

Me: "A whole you pleading? Outchea acting as if like you haven't been trying to kill me these past couple of days? But worry not because I will deal with you, for now I'm busy with this cooker that you gave poison to use it on us, and unfortunately for you, she will die by that very poison you gave her to kill us. Her blood will be in your hands," I push the cooks's neck down further making some of the food to spread on the sides of the plate. I yank her face up, and it's full of food.

Chicken. I take a piece of chicken, and force her mouth open then throw it in. "Chew."

Jaguar: "That's enough!" She pushes the 6 girls, and attempts coming toward me, but someone trips her, she loses balance and fall of the ground. The girls erupt in laughter, I let go of the cooker's neck, and she stumbles backwards and bubbles surge out of her mouth, she trembles and I watch her as she falls down still trembling... And she stops moving, dead she is. The other cookers gasp, and some start screaming. I get on my feet, and kick one of the plate, and it flies to one of the girls and it lands on her forehead. Xia whistles, Milan & Lian get on top of the other tables, and start kicking the pots, before I know it, the kitchen turns into a royal rumble.

I scan my eyes around the kitchen, and the girls are at it fighting each other, royal rumble type of shit. From the corner of my eye I see Jaguar exiting the kitchen I will not bother running after her because I will find her the least she expects it, and that's tonight. I walk on top of the counter singing, whistling, and kicking anything in my path. I find all of this exciting, it's so thrilling. The warning siren ring, fuck this. But the girls ain't stopping attacking each other there's too much bad blood amongst them, and this is the right time to cleanse it. I get off

the table, and make my way out, a kick lands on my back almost making me to fall, that was unexpected. I quickly turn to see who it is, and it's that very same girl who once spat on me few weeks ago.

“Hey diamond.” She smiles tilting her head, and punch me in the nose without warning. Dammit, she's fast this one. She attempts throwing in another punch, but I step aside and her punch meets the air before she can turn around a kick on her back from my boot sends her to the ground scraping her elbow in the process, she attempts getting up, but I push her back down with the boot, and squash harder.

Me: “Hey. Your name again?”

Her: “Fuck you diamond. Fuck you!” I laugh.

Me: “I'd real love to fuck myself, but my boyfriend is a fucking sex God in that department. So, no. I will not fuck myself. Now, what the hell is your problem with me? Like bitch, what did I ever do to you? Not that I care about you hating me, I just want to know what I did to you.”

Her: "Nothing. You did nothing. Let's just say; I hate you for no apparent reason. I mean, we all have people we hate for the sake of hating them, and in this case I hate you, diamond."

Me: "Well, unfortunately for you, I don't hate people for no apparent reason, I hate them with a reason, a valid one for that matter," shrugging. I retract my foot from her back, I want her to fight me. "Get up. Let's end this shit once, and for all."

Her: "And it will end with me killing you," she jumps off the ground, and gets on her feet. I stretch my neck, and it snaps. Someone whistles, and we both turn to look and it's one of her friend, she throws her something looking at it flying in the air I have no doubt that it's a dagger, the very same dagger Milan lost a couple of days ago. A smile creeps out of my face... She's about to catch the dagger when I kick her on her stomach, and she goes flying. The dagger lands on my hand, and I run toward her. She gets up, but her dagger is already lodged in her neck, she bulges her eyes open as I lower the dagger slicing her neck, collarbone, chest and circles it around her breast, underneath it, and push it upwards and kick her on the stomach, and she

goes down hand covering her chest. Her dress bloody, I laugh, and walk away like nothing happened.

The guards coming running my way, but pass me, and head straight to the kitchen as multiple gunshots ring muffling the screaming of some girls. I wonder where is Nikolai in all of this, he needs to be killed. Anyway, Sol must fly us out tonight I can't be here any longer, I need to go on a killing spree. Sol better get me all the weapons I will need, I don't even know if amongst my crew there's someone who knows how to launch explosives from the sky, but I'm sure they know phela they've been here for a long time, it's obvious that they were taught a lot...



NOMALANGA

My head is spinning, everyone is up on their feels, stressed about the blood shedding war going on in South Africa, we are praying day in day out for our kids to be safe. My heart goes out to all those little innocent souls who know nothing about this, the pregnant women, the ones in hospitals, workers in fact everyone back in my homeland. According to the journalist there are more than 100 000 people dead so far, and more than 500 000 injured, and the hospitals are full it's clearly evident that they will not be able to help more people, and of which that means more people will die while waiting for help. Unfortunately, there's nothing we can do from here than to keep ourselves updated with the news and keep on praying.

Bulelwa have even lost weight from all this, and let me not get started about Mmangwane. Mmthabo is still in the hospital she gave birth to twins, and the second one has breathing difficulties, but she will be discharged today if not tomorrow, and that's such a huge relief for all of us. The boys are not taking this lightly, they are too scared about all of this. I wonder how Luxolo is in all of this, I have hope that she's still alive. Yazi she should've just come with me here, she would've been safe here with me, but instead she's caught up in that blood shedding war.

“Do you think the guys are still alive? Thembeke asks with a shaky voice. “I mean, TK, Lee & everyone?”

“Of course they are still alive they will not die Thembeke. Please, stop stressing it's not good for the baby.”

Her: “I can't help it, the father of my baby is back in South Africa amidst of all this war I don't want to raise this baby alone Nomalanga, I really don't want that.” She fights back the tears threatening her eyes.

Me: "If he knows that you're pregnant I'm sure he will fight to stay alive. He will fight to meet his unborn baby. Stop stressing Thembeke, the baby doesn't need you stressing right now or else you will lose him/her," she nods not sounding convinced. I'm not about to worry myself about a grown woman like her, I need to worry about my daughter.

Her: "I will try not too, but it's hard." I nod.

Me: "Join me in the 'stop watching news' movement until further notice because I'm definitely not strong enough to watch any further. My heart can't take it anymore, seeing all those dead people lying there ain't doing any justice to my fragile heart." She nods. "This is just not on honestly I'm not ready to see my daughter's body amongst those bodies that keep piling up daily

in fact let me switch off the TV." I pick up the remote from the coffee table, and switch off the TV. Peace of mind, finally. Well, or not.



TSAKANI

People are running in different directions screaming, I don't even know where they are going because the shooting is spreading like wildfire there's nowhere to run too. The bus that we are cruising with is really strong and bullet proofed. These people know the true meaning of war they have all the necessary equipments needed. But Talon, still doesn't trust them. In fact, he doesn't want to associate himself with “witches” as he calls them hence he's sitting a few meters away from all of us.

“Gear up ladies & gents. I just got off the phone with diamond, and they are waiting for us,” Anthea tells us wearing her bulletproof. Diamond? Could they be talking ab...? argh, nah, highly impossible. Bubbles is not around she's still stuck in Italy, and even if she was here I doubt that she would know who these people are, but then again anything is possible in this life.

“Now that's one impatient motherfucker,” Lorna responds sliding in her bulletproof. “Sometimes I wish that I can kill her, but then I always remember that she once came through for me, well, not entirely for me, but he did my twin a favor because she owed him, so yeah,” she continues to say. The bus comes into an abrupt halt, we have our M14s & O.4 mm in our hands ready to shoot at anything and anyone standing on our

way. We do a chain with our hands, and pray we're praying for God to guide us & be with us through it all.

Batista: "We all better come out of this war alive or else I will hunt all of you even in death," they laugh except for Talon.

Me: "Talon." He lifts his head, and looks at me his right hand placed in his chin. "U grand?"

Him: "Yeah. Ngim'jojo ntwana mara kune kgutes eyi one," (I'm good, but there's only one problem) here we go again.

Me: "Wagan?"

Him: "Kungenzeka thina s'bhode bese lemithakathi le iyaphila, phela ba snax labantu futhi ke bagcwele ubumyama fo sho izizukulu zaka Satan," (it might happen that we will not make it out alive, but these witches will be the only ones surviving. I mean, these people are full of darkness I'm sure they are Satan's great-grandchildren) Lee laughs.

Lorna: "You're right. We're Satan's children, we don't fear death because death is us. And besides one way or the other you will eventually die whether you like it or not. Now, it's either you get up from that seat and join us in saving our country or remain seated like a bird that you are, I was going to say like a chicken but then I remembered that a chicken protects her chicks, and maybe birds do too but I ain't sure. Are you going to be man enough, and go out there and fight to save our country, or must I bring you a nail technician to come and do your nails?" The others laugh, but Talon is breathing fire, he is angry never did someone tell him where to get off like this woman did right now, and worst of it all called him a weakling? I'm impressed!

Batista: "So, what's going to be Sis Talon?"

Him: "Voetsek wena Batista voetsek maarn jou shit!" He gets up from his seat clicking his tongue, and throwing in his bulletproof then he takes his gun that was next to him, and pushes past us heading straight to the door and yank it open.

Anthea: "Now you are being useful," we all step out of the bus. Guess we're going to use the bushes, and kill whoever is lurking in these shadows.

Lorna: "Where's diamond now?" She looks around.

"I'm here you bitch. Let's go, the others have already left," speaks someone coming behind us, she has a balaclava covering her face as soon as she takes it off my heart almost freezes. She's a replica of bubbles, but much older than bubbles. Lee nudges me, shocked too by this woman standing before us looking like bubbles. Could she be bubbles sister?

Lindiwe: "Damn diamond you resemble some girl I know, she looks exactly like you if I didn't know any better I would say that you guys are sisters she is a younger version of you. Niyafana maarn."

Her: "And you are?"

Lindiwe: "I'm Lindiwe, and what's your name?"

Her: "Luxolo." Lee gasps.

Lindiwe: "What a coincidence, her name is Luxolo too."

Talon: "Yah, masimba straight lawa ayenzeka la fo sho saphupha or mhlambe sidakiwe ngoba kuyanyiwa, kuyi mess!"

Her: "I don't know what the fuck you are talking about because I don't have any siblings, and my mother passed on years ago, I don't even remember how she looks like. Let's get going we have no time to waste people are dying out there."

Lindiwe: "Trust me. That's your fucking sister deny it all you want, ok'salayo she's your sister and you will meet her soon... I'm sure your mother was replacing her with you hence she gave her the same name as yours, this life thing is a bitch ishhuu. In fact, ke Sister Bettina Hibiri.

Her: "Shut the...," she doesn't even finish her sentence when 2 bullets fly past our heads, we all get down and start shooting

randomly as we move with our stomachs to get inside the bushes. From a distance we can hear some rambling sound clearly it's explosives being dropped here in this very same bush.

Lorna: "Simanye! Clear the path for us!" A deep growl comes out of Ludo's mouth upon hearing his wife's voice, since he's next to me another shiver sending growl follows, before I can even comprehend what's happening he has evolved into something scary. He leaps off from the ground, and disappears in the bushes. I'm stuck, I can't even move but my eyes are hurting, they're stinging like never before blurring my vision. Amongst all of this shit a surge of new strength emerges from deep within me.

Talon: "Hhayi! Ek'se!" I get from the ground feeling stronger than before.

Me: "All of you follow behind me, I will shield you until we get to our destination," I look at my friends, and they look shocked as they get on their feet, mouth agape.



LUXOLO

My legs are stretched out in Jaguar's coffee table, she's taking a bath if only she knew that this is her last bath, but I'm sure they do bath pha kwa hell once it gets hot. Her room is not that wow, it's so dull more like our dome but at least her wall is filled with naked men, I'm she masturbates with the pictures seeing that there's no TV here. I whistle playing with the short sword in my hand, I was going to torture her, but I unfortunately for her, I don't have the luxury of time in my hands, I have some serious damage control to do, once done with that I will come back for Nikolai. So, I will kill her fast masinyane without torturing her because that will only hinder us from flying out of here 15 minutes from now. The "Dark Angel's" are making sure that we have everything we will need, yeah that's our gang name. Xia came up with it, and well, we all liked it, I'm yet to give them nicknames.

Jaguar stops on her tracks, and widens her eyes as she sees me sitting on her couch with a conniving smile plastered on my face. "What are you doing here & how did you get in?" She asks so calmly drying her head with the towel.

"I'm here to kill you, and I got in through the window. You need to learn how to close windows," I tell her this already on my feet. She laughs.

Her: "You? Kill me? What kind of sick joke is that?" She snorts.

Me: "This ain't no joke. I actually feel very disrespected right now Jaguar. So, what's your problem with me?"

Her: "I don't have any problem with you, I'm just following the orders given to me nothing hectic."

Me: "And those orders include you sending your girls to kill me in my sleep?" She gasps.

Her: "What?"

Me: "Oh, please Jaguar. Don't act surprised you know exactly what I'm talking about."

Her: "Even if I do, what difference will it make because they are all dead now, and I guess you have something to do with that."

Me: "Yeah. I killed Nikita & framed Aisha, and she got killed too by Nikolai. Your girls were armatures next time learn to do things yourself, and stop being a coward. As it stands now I've brought myself on a silver platter for you to kill me."

Her: "Nah, you ain't worth it. Now fuck off my room before I kill you for real," she holds a gaze and I return it, and shake my head.

Me: "Yeah, sure." I turn giving her my back as if wanting to leave, and that's when she cocks her gun. A side smile forms on my lips as she calls my name, I slowly turn loosening the tight grip on the short sword that I have in my hand. I come face to face with her, she tilts her head with a satisfied smile in her face. I watch as her 4th finger settles on the trigger I've been calculating her moves, and what she does before firing a shot I've been watching her from a distance.

Her: "Any last words?"

Me: "RIP to you," her hand twitch, and she pulls the trigger she's aiming straight for my forehead, I sommar tilt my head

and the bullet passes me by hitting the wall. I let go of the sword, and direct it straight to her neck, it lands, and she bulges her eyes open. I walk toward her, and take the gun from her hand, and shoot her twice she stumbles backwards, I laugh as blood start gushing down from her neck. The window, she is just right where the window is plus there are no butlers here. "R the fucking IP. See you in hell," I kick her on the chest, and she falls out the window the glass shatters and down she goes. Bitch is finally resting.

"You guys do realize that there's no guarantee whether we will come back alive or what. You're agreeing to come with means that you've accepted loosing your lives in this battle." I tell this to everyone present here 5 minutes later after killing Jaguar, the other girls decided to join us in this war while some will be deported to South Africa. Well, at least we're 110 now, and they are determined and reading to go into war with me.

"We don't mind laying our lives, whether we die or not its still the same, and besides we have nothing to live for other, we have no families. So, why not use all the skills we learned here into something tangible? This is like a dream come through for us, we are made of steel, and we were taught to ignore pain." Says one of the girls. I nod.

Me: “Everyone sharing the same sentiments?” They all nod in unison. “Great, let's get on with it then.” They all leave going into different transships, Sol made sure that we have everything we will need like shelter, and food, he even gave us phone numbers of some of his contacts back in Chicago who will help us, and he gave us all the hotspots of these black chain gang members, apparently they consist of six tribes. Sol actually made things easier for us, and well, I've signed the contract of me becoming the owner of Sol's club once everything goes back to normal, I need to do this for him, but most importantly for my country, and my man of course.

Milan: “Let's go captain,” I chuckle as she clasps my shoulder.

Me: “You are such a bore.”

Her: “That's why I'm your second in command,” we both laugh as we walk toward our transship. This will be my first time riding in such, and my nerves are shooting right up the fucking sky. Nikolai is watching us from his bedroom window, I will come back just for him.

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★Insert 37★

LUXOLO

“I'm so hungry,” I tell Maxine throwing myself in the couch. Sol really came through for us this house he got us for a time being is huge, it fits all of us or maybe it's because of the fact that we use sponges to sleep on.

“Indiana is almost done with cooking.”

Me: "Where is Milan?" I ask scanning my eyes around the room. She, and few other girls are not here, the others are playing Cards and some getting tattos.

Her: "She went to check out the hotspots, and how busy they are, and if is the anyway we can attack without killing a lot of people," laughter bubbles up, is she being for real right now?

Me: "You must be out of your damn mind. Why must we spare some people's lives whereas they are killing everyone in my country? Think about all those innocent people who died back in South Africa. They did nothing, but they are dead. So, what's special about these ones?"

Her: "Nothing I guess. When are we attacking?"

Me: "Tonight we have no time to waste we're here to do business not vacating, tell the girls to be ready by 20:00pm," I look at the time on the watch attached to my wrist, and we have like 3 hours left.

Her: "I will, but for now let me go and check if everything is still intact, and we have enough weapons I don't want us running short. Should we organize the bike for you since you said you wanted to go and check out the sapphire tribe?"

Me: "Yeah, I've completely forgotten about that, thanks for reminding me."

Her: "Pleasure," she gets up from the couch, and walks away. I heave out a sigh, and get off the couch too and walk straight to where the window is, from here I can see the view clearly. I lit my cigarette, and take one pull as I take in the view.

The streets are lively and people are walking up & down, care free not giving a shit about anything. Not caring that few hours from now their city will turn in rubbles, they will die. Shame, if only they know what was going to go down they wouldn't be gallivanting like they are doing right now, they would've locked themselves in their houses cooped up in one corner together with their families shivering in fear, I laugh shaking my head.

“The bike is here.” Xia tells threading me off from my thoughts, I turn my head and look at her, she gives me the helmet she has in her hand.

Me: “Where the hell were you?” Taking the helmet from her hands.

Her: “Checking the coast, and girl these people are heavily guarded. The walls are sky high more like Nikolai's walls, there are like 50 guards inside the mansion and maybe 20 guarding outside the yard. But there's a party happening at the silver tribe, and boy isn't it packed? It's fucking packed it seemed as if like all the rich and the famous were there, or still are there. The way the smell of food was inviting I almost invited myself, and I would've asked them to dish for me, and leave after,” I chuckle.

Me: “It's a good thing that you still have some little manners left in you,” she snorts and punches my shoulder lightly. “And Milan? Where is she?”

Her: “She went to check the coast at the diamond tribe side, apparently that is the 2nd large feared tribe around here the first being the sapphire tribe, 3rd the gold tribe, and the rest are just average.”

Me: Nodding. “I see, guess we just gotta attack the least they expect it, argh what am I saying? They're not expecting anything after all. Let me get going,” I throw the remaining cigarette through the window.

Her: “Be quick about it Tammy, time is not on our side,” I nod walking away. I yank the door open, and the black with a touch of white here & there bike is standing right outside the yard obviously yearning for my attention. I throw in my biker jacket matching my spiked heeled boots, they are quite heavy though, but I can do with them, I need to train my feet to get used to them. After strapping my helmet I climb this beauty before me, and bring the engine to life, driving off leaving trail of smoke behind.

An hour later I'm parked outside this huge building painted in light green, “Sapphire headquarters” is written in bold letters covering half of the wall, I shake my head as I climb off my bike.

The gate is wide open, and people are walking around freely with no care in the world, and here I was thinking that people as powerful as these ones always do private parties, guess I was wrong, because what I'm seeing here is the complete opposite of my thinking. But, I don't blame them though because there are too many guards present here roaming around with guns in their hands, and they look scary. I shrug climbing off the bike removing my helmet in the process.

I step inside the yard after being searched, and they didn't ask me who I was or asked where my invitation card is, guess everyone is invited. I take a glass of wine when one of the waitress passes me by, and gulp it down one time, I look around, and the bosses of this place are in a private area. Now, I need to find a way to get to them, but which way?

“Well well, and who do we have here?” I turn my head to look at the person talking, and well, he ain't bad looking. At all. He is wearing all white flanked by his guards, his head bald & shiny with colorful tattoos covering his face, rings full in his hands, and eyes so dark as if it's Satan's eyes. Weehhh, I don't even know how Satan looks like. “Bolo. My name is Bolo.” He extends his hand for me to shake, but I just stare at it.

“Charlene. My name is Charlene,” I respond after debating with myself whether to respond him or not, even though it's a fake name, but yeah. Who knows? Maybe he might be the one to show me around, and then I will get to find the entrance to get into the VIP area. I give him my hand to shake accompanied by a smile.

Him: “Lovely name. Why do I get the feeling that you're not from around here?”

Me: “That's because I'm not, I'm here to visit my uncle,” he nods.

Him: “Can I guess where you are from?” I shrug. “South Africa. You are from South Africa.”

Me: “That's because I am from there. And you? Where are you from?”

Him: “Argentina,” I nod.

Me: "So, what brings you here?"

Him: "Just needed to unwind, and I decided to come here since the clubs are empty. Later on I will head to Tunnel nightclub one of my boys is throwing a massive party, you should come with. And you? What brings you here?"

Me: "I needed to unwind too, and I heard about that party. I might pop up if bored there by my place."

Him: "I see. How about a tour?"

Me: "Yes. Please. Are you familiar with this house that we are in?"

Him: "I live here. Well, not entirely but yeah I live here. Let me take you on that tour."

Me: "Wait. Won't the owners have a problem with us touring their house?" He chuckles.

Him: "Let's just go," I nod and follow behind him. The looks some of these women are giving me are not ayoba, if only they knew that I'm here on a mission not to entertain men- men who aren't even interested in them either way. I need to focus & study this place thoroughly so that when I come back I won't get lost, I will just head straight to where I'm supposed to go and do my shit. "Never mind the look that these women give you, they're used goods anyway. They still crave my dick, of which you might get tonight after the party if you're lucky enough," he winks, and I chuckle, as if.

Me: "Right." We step inside the private area, and there aren't more than 100 people here, only the bosses sitting in that round table laughing watching the war taking place in South Africa, and this fuels me. I breathe in & out trying to contain my anger, and Bolo is way ahead of me, it seems as if like he's forgotten about me immediately as he saw that brunette. Fuck. I turn around, and walk out of the private area heading straight to my bike. 3 hours will be too late, I take out my phone from my pocket & ring Milan.

“Tammy.”

“Get the girls, we are attacking with immediate effect. These fuckers are having the time of their lives here enjoying the killing spree in South Africa. First stop, attack the bronze tribe, and find a way to send a message to the sapphire tribe. Tell Xia to plant the bombs in each and every place that is filled with people.”

Her: “Finally, some action. We on it boss lady,” she hangs up. I look at the house one last time, and take off.



TSAKANI

The bullets are bumping my chest none of them are penetrating through, but as for me I shoot to kill. We've been at it for 2 days now with no rest, no food, nothing. It never gets better, but it's getting worse instead a lot of bodies are piling up

hospitals are packed, and morgues too and these foreign gangs are still pouring in, as for us we are slowly but surely decreasing, there's no rest but we are still fighting to keep alive, to save the remaining innocent people. We've lost a few of our soldiers, and if this drags longer than anticipated we are going to die. We don't even know how sleep feels like any more, at night we must be vigilant, hide. These helicopters are also not resting with their bright blue lights.

Ludo is also fighting in his beast form, and he is really eliminating, but once he gets tired and goes back to his normal self, yohhh. Kuyanyiwa, we have to hide, serve him water, and he will be fine. Everyone is playing their role, and I'm grateful for that, even Talon is in action. The cities have been destroyed.

“I'm hungry, if this war doesn't kill me, then hunger will kill me,” Leon tells me as we are hiding behind the tree.

“I know man, if only we had time to eat, and possibly nap for few minutes I'm sure we will have new strength, as for me I'm not tired, I'm just hungry. Whatever I have inside me doesn't want me to rest, it wants me to keep on fighting & fighting none stop.” I tell him loading my gun with bullets.

Him: “Whatever it is, tell it to keep protecting us until this war is over. Man, these gangs don't want to give up. They keep pouring in.”

Me: “I know right, and I'm afraid that we are running short of weapons, and very soon we will be cleaned out. We will be vulnerable, and they will kill all of us.”

Him: "Don't talk like that man, I'm sure something will come up. I trust that the grillers have more weapons, and besides diamond has called for back up."

Me: "I still can't believe that this diamond have the same name as Luxolo, and looks exactly like her, but few years older. I wonder if bubbles know that she has a sister," he shakes his head.

Him: "I don't think she does, and it seems like this diamond doesn't know that her mother is still alive. Could it be possible that maybe she dumped her somewhere, and never looked back? And when bubbles was born she decided to name her Luxolo clearly replacing the old Luxolo. This is creepy man, why would she name bubbles Luxolo whereas she has a daughter named Luxolo?"

Me: "I have no idea man, and I wonder if they share the same father."

Him: "I doubt. I wonder what's going to happen once they meet because the old Luxolo is kind of friendly, and accommodating whereas your bubbles on the other hand nc nc nc," he shakes his head.

Me: "I can't wait for that day to come, but ke it will come once I've spend enough time with my bubbles, it's been so long without seeing her."

Him: "More reasons to stay alive, and keep fighting."

Me: "Just that nothing more. I wonder where Lee is in all of this, I last saw him days ago."

Him: "I'm sure he's with the other gang since we splited, I hope he's still alive."

Me: "I hope so too. Break have ended let's continue fighting," he nods. We both get up from the grass, and head forward gun fully loaded...



LUXOLO

“Everyone in position,” I tell the girls who are ready to go and cause chaos out there. I'm going to split us in groups of 10. We must do some serious damage, and not give them any chance to retaliate.

“I think it's best if you remain behind Tammy,” Lian says to me.

Me: “And do what?”

Her: “Cooking maybe?” I chuckle.

Me: “No. I want to be there I want to witness everything, I want to see hotels, hospitals, morgues, stadiums blow up. I want to hear people screaming, bodies dropping on the ground, blood decorating the whole city red. Kill every fucking thing standing your way even if it's a dog just do away with it.”

Her: “No need to tell me twice. We meeting up here once done right?”

Me: “Yeah, this part is safe for now. Now go, and make me proud,” she nods picking up her sniper from the mat, and hanging it on her shoulder.

Her: “Oh, and by the way. The military outfit look good on us, babe you did the things, I'm impressed.”

Me: “That's why we are going to be killers with some drip, I don't want us to be seen as killers before we can even let ourselves be known who we are when we are walking around. I still want these niggas to drool, and these hoes to envy us.” She laughs.

Her: “I stan a queen. See you when we come back,” she clasps my shoulder for a couple of minutes then walk out, her boots making some annoying noise irritating me in a way.

We climb off our bikes once we get to the airport one of Sol's contact own. We are here to fetch a helicopters and more weapons, this is more like an army place, but nah it's not, it's more than that this whole thing is just a front nje.

“Tammy guns, welcome.” An old maybe in his late 60s welcomes me, his hands are full of grease. “I wish I can give you a handshake, but ad you can see my hands are greasy. Sol didn't tell me that you were this young, you look pretty young to be doing this mafia shit. These people die they're not immortals,” he says wiping his hand on his overall that he is wearing.

“If I had a choice I wouldn't be here, but circumstances are forcing me to be here young as I am, and besides we will all die eventually, I mean we're not even immortal ourselves,” shrugging.

Him: “I see, but violence never solved anything.”

Me: “Not unless it involves a loved one.”

Him: “These are your weapons since you will be using the helicopter. We have M60D machine gun, minigum 7.62mm, m3 cannon, m197 glatinh gun, m75 & m129 grenade launchers, falcon, sparrow, sidewinder, bullpup and to name a few. You

will also need CS- 1 riot control agent this one is very poisonous it poses serious health risk. You will also need napalam, you will also need a Nestor. I believe that you have radios for communication,” I nod. “Pick that up, and let me take you to your AH-1G Hueycobra, and don't worry it is bullet proofed nothing will happen to it, ubldzz otherwise.”

Me: “Do we really need all these things?”

Him: “Yes, and don't worry you will not be confused I will give you the guide, and it will tell you when & where must you use them,” I nod.

Me: “This is big.”

Him: “Do you have grenade launchers with you?”

Me: “Yeah, I do have them.”

Him: “Then you are sorted, and if you need any weapons feel free to contact me or you need some back up don't hesitate to call me, my men will be on standby. Goodbye girl, go and fight on behalf of your people.”

Me: “I will, thank you for helping.”

Him: "All is well. Shush now, off you go," I give him a smile and step into the helicopter. Nashy is our pilot until further notice, and granny will be our launcher together with Azia.

Seeing the buildings up in fire, people running in different directions screaming excites me, and makes my adrenaline rush.

Me: "Get ready to launch girls, it's show time." Granny & Azania position themselves accordingly. I take the binoculars and the emerald tribe ain't far from us, we're going to hit it, then hit all their warehouses we leave this place in rubbles, it will no longer be recognized once we're done with it. "Ready?" They show me their thumbs. "Launch!" They throw in the MK-15 and fire at the emerald tribe. I look down, and it is chaos ku messy just like back in South Africa, the only difference though is that they don't have enough armies since they sent them to South Africa. They will come back here, and find nothing. I hope Lian made sure that the drones are capturing everything...

NOMALANGA

I know I said that I'm taking a break from watching news, but after learning that there's also war taking place in Chicago I had to watch them, it's clear that very soon it would spread across the whole entire world. Everyone will get to experience the war, even us here in Samoa, this is bad. Messed up even. Guess there's no place to hide because it seems as if like everywhere is not safe, sighs.

“I should've just stayed in South Africa and didn't come here. What's the difference because right now we are all going to die. It was going to be better if I died in the comfort of my own home, in my own bed with my family. Not to die here in this foreign country!” Mmangwane complains getting up from the couch. “I can't take this anymore, this is just too much & scary at the same time.”

“It might be scary, but I don't think it will reach us,” Sabelo says taking a sip of his coffee.

Her: “And how do you know that Sabelo? You can clearly see that this is getting out of hand, very soon they will be attacking us!”

Sabelo: “They won't. I did my own research and it turns out that the gangs attacking in South Africa are from Chicago the very same Chicago that is under attack currently. The person who orchestrated the whole thing is someone from South Africa, they're are doing the exact same thing the Chicago gang did, attack without giving a warning. And in this case the South Africans will conquer the battle in Chicago because they've sent 98% of their gangs into war. Now, what's a mere 2% going to do when there's tons of South Africans attacking them, and beating them at their own game, and to tell you the truth I'm impressed. No one saw it coming, so I'd suggest that you all relax all this will blow over soon and we will go back home.”

Me: “Home? There will be nothing left there when we go home. We will have to start afresh, and build South Africa and of which we won't succeed in doing so. Anyway, those South Africans attacking Chicago how did they fly out of the country because the sky is raining bullets & all that?”

Him: "I don't know. But they are there doing some serious invasion."

Mmathabo: "What if those people attacking Chicago are not South Africans? What if it's Iraq or Afghanistan attacking? South Africans are held prisoners in their own country my love. There's no fucking way that it's them attacking, they will all die!"

Me: "Stop that! What if his source is telling the truth."

Her: "Truth? What truth? There's no truth here. His source is misleading him! We all watch news and we see how people die. How many hospitals did they destroy? How many!"

Me: "They've destroyed a lot of them that we all know, but why can't you guys be positive for once? Let's be positive, and trust that those people attacking Chicago are really South Africans," just then my phone rings and it's an international number. I wonder who is it because this is definitely Lindiwe's numbers and the code is different, I excuse myself and go to a quiet place. "Hello."

“Hey my love.” I let out a scream when I heard her voice I'm so relieved, she sounds good, unharmed in fact, she sounds happy. I'm just glad that she's safe and to think that I was worried sick about her, Lord. “Wuuuh, did you faint or what?” Her question is followed by a giggle.

Me: “I- I'm still here my Nono, I'm still here my angel. I'm so happy to hear your voice Nono. How are you? Where are you? Are you okay? Safe?” She laughs.

Her: “I'm fine Mama, and I'm in Chicago.” I gasp. What the hell is she doing there amidst this war? In fact, how did she get there?

Me: “What? What are you doing there Nono? Ufunani lapho Nono? Abantu bayafa wena uyakhekheleza lapho!”

Her: “I'm here to save our country. I couldn't just sit, and watch our country perishing right in front of our eyes Mama. These people wanted to ruin South Africa! They wanted to destroy our country and leave us with nothing. Who knows? Maybe

they were planning to take over our country. I'm doing the very same thing they're doing, no one will survive here and I'll make sure of that!" This is not my sweet Nono. What happened to my sweet respectful Luxolo? This is definitely not my daughter she has changed a lot.

Me: "What? What happened to you Nono? I don't know you like this. You've changed."

Her: "Life happened. And I'm no longer the old Luxolo you know. I've went through a lot, but I will tell you all about it when we meet again. I love you, and don't worry no one will attack you there in Samoa, I will make sure of it."

Me: "I'm scared. What if you...?"

Her: She cuts me short. "I will not die Mama, and don't worry yourself about me, I'm a big girl now I fear nothing, nothing at all. Tell everyone not to panick you will all be home soon."

Me: "Are you sure that you have all this under control? I fear for you life Nono."

Her: "I have everything under control wena just pray for me, I love you and see you soon."

Me: "Love you too Nono. I-" great she hanged up on me. "I will pray for you," I say retracting the phone from my ear, and a sigh of relief escapes my lips. Thanks God, she's safe.

My fear of Luxolo turning into someone she is not has finally become a reality. I'm afraid that she's talking my eldest daughter route, but how? How did she end up being what she is now? What pushed her because I don't think Tsakani knows about this. I'm shocked to say the least. And once again history is repeating itself.

"Hey, are you okay?" Thembeke asks standing besides me. She loves me lately, wuhhh. I wonder why.

Me: "I'm fine. Juat got off the phone with my daughter," her eyes lit up.

Her: "Are they safe?"

Me: "Yes, she's safe. I don't know about Tsakani and the rest of the gang because my daughter is in Chicago, and she's not with them."

Her: "Oh," the disappointment in her voice is not to be missed.

Me: "Why are you so worried? I mean, yes we all are worried but you're more worried. What's going on? Oh, wait. The father of your unborn baby is back in South Africa, and you are worried that he might die leaving you behind, and not meet your unborn baby. In fact, ubani igama lakhe vele lomfana because I'm quite sure that he's friends with Tsakani."

Her: "No. He ain't part of the gang, pshhh."

Me: “Liar. You are lying straight in my face, but I will not force to tell me. Excuse me, I need to go and let that others know to relax, and enjoy themselves because they will not be bringing the war here.” I turn on my heels, and walk away leaving her standing alone. I don't have time to entertain her, some uplifting news finally. Now we will relax, but not entirely because there war is still going on in South Africa. Praying is what we will keep on doing.



LUXOLO

So, after talking to my mother I felt a sense of relief, and remembered how much I love her, and how I missed hearing her sweet voice. Now that I've heard it, I'm good to go. We did some serious damage here, the buildings are in rubbles. Cars, house, in fact, almost everything have burnt beyond recognition and the streets are already cleaned up. No sign of a living being or animal on sight. They really did not see it coming, and now I'm heading straight to the main masterminds, the fuckers behind the attack in South Africa. The sapphire tribe, the roof that shelters its babies, the very same babies who are destroyed. Word is out that they're looking for the culprit, the destroyer that came uninvited and destroyed everything that breaths.

I find it ironic that they say they're looking for the culprit, but have locked themselves in that secured house hiding themselves like owls during the day. What they don't know that though is that I'm coming for them, and they will feel my wrath.

“Well, we've done a pretty good job didn't we?” Maxine says standing besides me. I'm standing on top of the destroyed hall looking at the mess we've created, it's all gone and there's no way to that they will revive this part maybe the other parts they'll be able to revive them because we didn't do enough damage, solely because the tribes were situated in one location just different hoods.

“Yeah, we sure did. You girls really did some pretty good job here, I'm impressed.”

Her: “Thank you. But can I ask you something? Not that I'm being noisy or anything. I just want to know that's it.”

Me: “Shoot.”

Her: "How well do you trust your new recruits excluding Milan. That one is very loyal to you, and she has proven it a thousand times, her loyalty to you is real. I'm asking about Xia, and the rest." I chuckle.

Me: "I don't trust any of them. Why?"

Her: "I was just asking out of curiosity."

Me: "No. You weren't. What is it? What did you hear? And don't even think about lying to me because I will blow your fucking brains out right now."

Her: "I just have bad vibes about those girls, especially Lian & Xia. They've been meeting up a lot for the past day, I can't help it, but feel is if like they were sent to kill you or something. They are dodgy, and their eyes are always wandering around." She's right. There's something off about those girls, Milan did say that she's catching some bad vibes with them. And it explains their sudden volunteer to join us, they are girls on a mission, and that mission is to eliminate me for good.

Me: "I know what you mean. And I'm quite certain that Jaguar or Nikolai sent them."

Her: "Thought you weren't noticing. Anyway, what are you going to do with them?" I give her a side smile it's a good that she asked this question.

Me: "Do you enjoy working with me?"

Her: "Hell yes, I do. I can even do anything to be part of your gang, anything. I really love working with you, and you are a great leader," she sounds so excited.

Me: "Hmmm. Now

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I'm going to test your loyalty by showing me that I can trust you, I don't want people who will double cross me because I don't take betrayal lightly. Am I making myself clear?" She nods. "Good girl. In order for you to join the gang you will have to kill Lian or Xia on my behalf, and bring me their heads so that I can see that you really want to be part of our gang, but

whatever happens don't die. Bring me a head of one between the two of them. Don't double cross me because you won't like what I will do to you. Now, leave.”

Her: “I will prove my loyalty to you, and make you proud Tammy. Hail to you,” she bows her head, and turns on her heels walking away. I take in the view one last time, and look at the mansion standing alone meters away from me. I fix my jacket, and jump to the ground grazing my hand in the process, fuck it man.

To tell you the truth I'm exhausted. All of this is draining me, but since I'm a girl on mission I just need to wear my boots like a big girl that I am, and soldier on. And besides I have scores to settle, and people to kill, sighs. I take out my half hands glove and put them on then head straight to the tank M67 Zippo flame thrower, I throw in my helmet, and glasses then get inside and bring the engine to life, the manual is really helping guys. A lot even.

The gates are shut closed, and no sign of movement not even the guards are here roaming around. Nc nc nc. I press the fire button, and the gate shoots open. I don't understand as to why

must I feel the impact of it whilst inside, even if u it releases you can feel the pressure. Wuhhh, this tank bathong. I drive in, and the guards are out already firing shots with their pumps gun, and shit. They are in full protective gear, including helmets and all. What a sick joke is this. I press the fire button again, and off it goes burning a few in the process, and the left wing of the mansion have already caught fire. Very soon it will spread like wildfire.

Angisho they've failed to look for me, now I'm presenting myself to them in style. What I like about this unexpected attacks is the fact that they won't do shit once you attack first. Another fire sent to the guards, I laugh as they run around the yard screaming trying to put of the fire but they're failing dismally. I drive straight inside the house knocking down the wall, and all the men jump from their seats. Hau, they were relaxing thinking that I won't come inside the house? Mxm they thought wrong. I send another fire and it catches few men, these men with big bellies can't even run to save their lives. This is what I hate about leaders, they are always sending those poor people to do their dirty job for them while they sitting behind their desks, or laughing with their friends over glasses of whiskey, cigars and bitches entertaining them. They don't care whether their men die or what. I mean, after all why would

they worry about whereas they know very well that they will find another men to take the deceased positions. Basically, they have nothing to loose. They don't give a flying fuck about these people, nxa.

The house is crumbling down judging by the cracking wall. I stop the tank, and climb out of it. I take my lighter, and throw it inside the tank, and run out of that house I don't even know where these fuckers are hiding, but I do know that they will not escape the fire. The house explodes, and I find myself flying out of the yard and into the street lying face down, I swear to God I broke my bones. But this ain't no time to be a smelting butter, I need to go home, I can't waste any more time. I force myself to get up, and I eventually do. Sighs. Luckily for me the helicopter is still intact, and very much safe where it is parked. Now I need to wait for Milan & Maxine to get back then we take off, guess I will just have to do with the two of them for now. Or not, that old man said that if I need an army, I must tell him, they are there on standby for me. All is not lost after all.

Anyway, I don't even know where other girls we came with are, I don't know where they disappeared too, but they are gone. Or maybe they just went home to their families, back to where they belong... I would too if I was them, besides they really

helped a lot I'm sure they will be better people once they get to their homes. Now it explains it, as to why they wanted to go according to where they come from. They thought it well, bravo.



TSAKANI

We've been at it for days, and to tell you the truth we are getting tired, it just doesn't want to end. But there was something different about this war last night especially the gangs that are attacking, they've somehow managed to slow down with the attack it was as if like something distracted them. They looked out of it, if not shocked. Whatever it was- was clearly big. Anyway, that distraction of theirs gave us an upper hand, and we attacked them like never before. We were eliminating as much people as we can, and we were very impressed thinking that we will defeat them. Haike, this very morning they rose up, and came back guns blazing and it was back to square one. There's no break here. Talon groaning is what brings me back to reality. He got shot on the leg, and his left side of the rib.

“I'm here man, I'm still here. Be strong njayami. I'm with you.” I assure him. The bleeding have stopped, but not entirely and he's very weak. The doctor cleaned him up, and gave him painkillers to make him sleep. He didn't want to be left alone, or with the doctor, he doesn't trust him. Poor doctor though, argh. This is Talon after all, the man with many issues.

“Hhayi. Zing'khawathile lezinja skhoskho. Zikhawathe mina wonke lo. Mina Talon mfethu. Banesibindi yeva, hhayi zine liver lezinja mara zizogcwala ngiyazwakala mus.” (Those dogs did me bad man. They've hurt all of me. Me, Talon. They have audacity, those dogs have audacity, but I'm coming back. They will know me) I laugh.

Me: “Sho. Bazokwazi skhoskho.”

Him: “Ngapha yile yama wires fida ing'hlohla amapilisi. Angiguli mus mina. Ujwayezwa yini? Uyang'nyela yazi lo, zom'dubula afe mina sies maarn!” (On the other side, this doctor with stethoscope is busy feeding me pills. I'm not sick. I wonder what makes him to be familiar with me. He is shitting on me, I will kill him) he keeps dozing off, guess the pills are already

kicking in. Finally, he will sleep hhayi phela he is stubborn this man.

Me: “Sizom'nyisa ndoda ungafi.” (We will deal with him don't worry)

Him: “Yizo,” and he shuts his eyes close. The new sound of a helicopter that I'm not familiar with passes by, I step out of the bus and I see the biggest helicopter ever heading straight to the gangs firing shots, and dropping bombs. I don't know who they are, but as long as they are fighting the enemy, and not us then I'm all good. Another one passes by also heading straight to the gang firing shots, and throwing. What a turn of events, I think God, has finally answered our prayers. I look at the direction of where they are coming from, and more are coming.

“What's going on?” Lindiwe asks appearing from the bushes with some of the girls. “Who called this flying squad to our rescue? Tell you what? I don't even want to know, I'm just glad that we are finally getting help, that's all that matters.”

Me: "Exactly. Hopefully, they will deal away with the gang I need to go to Italy, and fetch my woman."

Her: "I will accompany you. I miss that bitch too."

Me: "Language." She chuckles.

Her: "Right."

LUXOLO

Sebastian really came through for me with the back up army I didn't think that by him offering us an army he meant half of his men, no females, and here I was thinking that he was going to give me 100-200, but nah, man gave me his veterans and a couple of trainees. I was taken aback when I saw them standing in formation waiting for my command, their formation was professional, geez. And to tell you the honest truth, we wouldn't have survived this war just a few of us, especially since we are females, and less than 20. These people are too many, and the flags flying effortlessly in the air are the exact same flags from the 6 tribes in Chicago, the sapphire flag is the largest of them all. My stomach was in pits when I saw the situation live not from the TV and stuff, the pile of dead bodies, and some buildings still on fire infuriates me yazi. These people really meant business, and when I looked down at our country saviors as we were approaching the scene they wouldn't have survived this one, one way or the other they were bound to die at some point because they are not enough. And there're millions of these black chain gang, and those other gangs, and more are coming, but they weren't expecting us. We came right on time for the rescuing, before everyone dies.

Maxine really did bring me Lian's head, it was still fresh because blood was still dripping from it. And boy, wasn't I impressed? I was fucking happy, it showed that she desperately wanted to be part of us. She proved that she wanted this more than ever I'm sure she was even dreaming about it way before I recruited them. Milan was impressed with her bravery as well, well, we both were impressed by it. These are the kind of ladies I need in my clique, ladies who will stand their ground, and let no man weaken them, or easily break down their walls. Xia apparently ran away. We don't know where to, but we will find her, and we will deal with her accordingly. All I want is loyalty from these women and so far they've both earned their loyalty from me, I have no doubts that they will double-cross me in future. I have a tight squad in both of them, hopefully once we dominate the industry we will have more loyal recruits, and all these gangs led by men will be shaken. Their kingdoms will be shaken when they hear thtw there's a new boss in town, they will ask around about me, they will retaliate, threaten me, and I'll be ready for them. Guns blazing in full armor, and shit. My dream will finally come alive, and I already have plans for Sol's club it's going to be more sophisticated, and more advance than how it was before. Oh, and no old workers. Well, that's if they didn't blow it up. Even if they did, I will build it from the

scratch because I know that the furniture & all will burn, but the building will still remain it will only be left with black walls...

“Sky riders green barret, (flying squad) tighten the formation now!” I tell them using the radio as I see the tribes starting to form, and as more tanks invade the country, and I also heard that they are sending their subway ships this side hehe, they won't even get to the land. We have tons of helicopters, and they have tons of tanks, your ‘cruiser tank, Hobart's Fannies, M2 series, flame throwers and many more. “Sky riders red barret, (tanks squad) tighten the formation right now!”

“Red barret in formation.” Commander Hayden says.

“Green barret in formation.” Commander Waynard says.

Me: “We have a situation.”

Waynard: “I'm aware of it. We are waiting for your command.”

Me: “Hayden?”

Him: "Same here."

Me: "Waynard, get the fire arrow & steel ball squad to prepare themselves. They are going to deal with the ships approaching on the horizon, tell them to send the arrows with immediate effect. The rest of us, attack at once. Attack, and don't allow them to retreat. This will send out a message to those who also wanted to try their luck here."

Waynard: "Order well-received. On it."

Hayden: "Same here."

Me: "Attack!"

Now, we are not showing any mercy. We kill without fear or favor avenging all those Innocent people who died. All the blood that was shed without a care in the world. The grenades exit all at once in formation heading straight to blow up the tanks because they will cause one massive distraction that can

possibly kill all of us as they come as one, and there are too many of them. Even though we've already eliminated 60% of them, and we are still counting going forward we will not retreat. I mean, even our fighters did not yield nor surrender, courageous people they are. Yes, we've lost a few of our own as they retaliated immediately as they took notice of our presence. Well, on the bright side at least their attention is on us now, and not on our fighters who are fighting on the ground, but either way the ball is in our hands. We are leading now, and they're dying like flies, more of our tanks are already here assisting. I laugh as they blow up, but knowing people like them, they are not ones to give up easily they will die fighting, die with honor & dignity.

“The blue sailors are on board. Swavoki relying the message,” he alerts us. “Flame arrows already sent out.” Too much back up you all, it's shocking.

Hayden: “About time you pussy.”

Him: “I had to save your ass you asshole,” I look at Maxine and we both laugh. To think that I only saw them once, and possibly last time seeing them is soul crushing. They are such a vibe I tell

you, and they will get along just fine with Talon. All of them are crazy...

I've never imagined my life to be like this, never saw myself heading a war battle. Guys, it's too much. Wuhhh, hhayi, after all this is over I need a holiday of a lifetime, lots of sex or something, because wawu I've been through a lot of bullshit to last me a lifetime even if I were to tell my kids about this in future they won't believe me. Hahaha. I need to rest, and finally sleep peacefully without having any worries about who wants to kill me in my sleep. But then again that's highly impossible because we still need to rebuild the country, I don't even know how we are going to do that because a lot of damage have been done. People lost their jobs, businesses lost money, yazini everyone is affected by this. Everyone is asking themselves "where will they start when all of this is over?" Like, how are they going to survive because they have nothing on their names. Yerrrr, disaster. Mess. But hopefully something will come up, and slowly but surely it will get back to what it used to be before even though it will take us years & years to rebuild it. Sighs. Luckily some other provinces are untouched, I'm sure we can negotiate with them to harbor the homeless until we figure something out.

“For a woman you sure as hell enjoy seeing blood being spilled, and giving out orders of which is very rare.” Cznë says taking a sip from his cup of lemon water, he's dramatic this one and talks a lot. He annoys me.

“I'm not any woman. I'm Tammy Guns. And yes, I enjoy seeing blood being spilled and people dying like flies especially when I'm the one doing all the killing. And again, these orders were given to me by your superior.”

Him: “You are weird. Are you sure that you are not a man trapped in a woman's body? Your obsession with blood is shocking.” I laugh.

Me: “I might be one. Anything is possible in this world wena motho. And I bet you are obsessed with bending over for your seniors right?” He sneers, and his expression changes, what I said wasn't a lie though. Him, and a couple of other men are the wives to these seniors, such is life kodwa. “Exactly. You now see that everyone is obsessed with something?” He clicks his tongue, and walk away leaving me laughing at him. Excuse him. Who does he think he is telling me shit? Yuck. Maxine is busy smiling finding all of this hilarious, and it's not maarn.

My eyes go wide as I spot a group of people hiding behind some bushes a few meters away from our actual location, the one with dreadlocks catches my attention. I have no absolute doubt that it's Tsakani, he never misses me shame, but he looks different. He is more buff than how I last saw him. I pick up the binoculars from my thighs, I need a clear view. And just as predicted it's him, I can spot Lindiwe too, and some people I don't even know they are in action mode, I must help them. Thanks, God, they're still alive & still fighting. Wait a minute, and what kind of a human being is that- that looks like a beast? Or maybe it is a beast

but how? Ai, let me not crack my head Tsakani will clear everything for me, but right now I need to get to my man, and fight with him by my side. Damn. How I've missed that mathafacka! Yay, I put the binoculars down, and untie the seatbelt. Maxine will take over the wheel, Milan is busy having sex with one of the soldiers here at the back.

“Hold the forth, I'm going down,” I tell Maxine getting up from my seat.

Her: "Where are you going Tammy? We are in the middle of war here, and you might die before you even reach the ground! Do you see how fast these grenades move?" She looks at me not believing me.

Me: "I'm going to my mans, Maxine" picking the parachute from the backseat, and wearing it. My guns are placed safely on my thighs, waist & shoulder holsters. 2 grenades safely in my pockets. And one gun on my hand. My pocket knife tucked in my boot. "I won't die, and besides I'm not heading to where the bullets are going, also remember that you are on formation."

Her: "You are ditching us for a mans? Anyway, It's still dangerous Tammy. You might die!"

Me: "I don't fear death Maxine. And you will not stop me, I'm going to see my mans,"

Her: Sighing in defeat. "Fine. I understand you. Salt ain't child's play. Go, and get your mans baby girl, I will take over from here. Wait, where will we find you once we are done?"

Me: "At those bushes," pointing to where the guys are. "Milan, stop fucking around come and help Maxine I'm going down!"

"Down where? Ouch. Be gentle you fucker!" She yells back, and I chuckle.

Me: "The ground you bitch!"

Her: "What ground? Don't tell me that you are landing Tammy!" I look at Maxine, and she laughs. I shrug then shake my head. "I'm coming too. You ain't leaving me here!" As if.

Me: "Let me out before she gets here." Maxine nods, and opens the door for me, I put on my glasses as the wind hits my face, and I jump out of the helicopter screaming. I'm so excited, finally, after months of not seeing my man, I'm finally reuniting with him. God, you are the real deal.

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TSAKANI

The rescuing team really did come through for us. Our energy was renewed by them, and yet again we are soldiering on. A new surge of hope have been brought upon us, Lord knows how thankful we are for the second chance he gave us. I've seen such in my life, all that I'm witnessing right now, in fact, being part of feels surreal. I used to see these things in movies, never in my life did I think that I will be part of it one day. Talon is still out of it, and I'm quite sure that he will be pissed once he wakes up realizing that he has missed all the action. Realizing

that we are finally free from this war that was forever going on. argh. He will survive maarn, azike zim'dlule kayi one maarn.

“Look out.” Lindiwe yells, I step aside before the bullet can hit me on my arm. I pull the trigger, and shoot the man who attempted shooting me twice. I still don't know where Lee is, hope he is fine wherever he is. Lindiwe climbs on the tree, and start shooting randomly her girls follow after her, they want to be close to her at all times, and they never laugh no matter how funny the joke may be it's like they were programmed not to laugh at anything, or talk to anyone without Lindiwe giving them a go ahead, yet Lindiwe is forever talking. These girls are skilled shame, you can tell that they were trained by professionals, if only bubbles can acquire one of their skills then she'll be set for life. I wonder how she's holding up there in Italy, I have no doubt that she's still alive waiting for me to come for her, and I will.

Bullets are flying in the air, ducking & rolling on the dusty ground or on the grass is all that we do, shooting back I miss my target. Shit. He opens fire again, and another member of his gang appear behind aiming his shot at me. I'm surprised when I see them flying as the sound of a pump gun echoes on my ears making me deaf for a few seconds, I look around trying to see

who it is because the last time I checked I was alone. Now, who on earth came to my rescue. The sound of the grass alerts me, instincts waking up, there's someone here. I point the gun toward where the noise is coming from, and into view bubbles comes out dusting herself, she looks different. I blink, and rub my eyes I'm sure they are deceiving me. She giggles immediately as I open them, tears covering her eyes. She attacks me with a hug, and I return it back holding her for dear life.

“I'm back baby. I'm back.” Her tears leaves my vest wet.

“Thank you, God. I love you baby. Like heck, I missed you woman!” She lifts her head chuckling, and in one quick notion she buries my face on her shoulder, and shoot twice. I lift my head from her shoulder. I still can't believe that she's here with me, I wipe the lone tear as I take her it all in. My palms are on her cheeks, she blinks, I smash my lips into hers it's been long since I last taste them, they are still the same.

Her: She pulls out resting her hands on my chest. “You've missed me I know, and I've missed you too, but this is no time for bonding it's time for fighting,” she winks at me.

Me: “But how? I mean...,” I don't even know what to say, I'm speechless. She's all changed. Hardcore like never before, she's completely a total different person all together I'm impressed, and once more I'm in love with her all over again. Seeing her in action turns me on, but why wouldn't it be whereas the last time I had sex was a decade ago? Can't believe that I'm fighting side to side with her.

Her: “Go down!” I quickly lie down, and a grenade explodes a few meters away from me. I roll over, and shoot at the two men advancing toward me ready to shoot. Bubbles is also fighting her own opponents, her blade throwing is perfect more like Anthea's. I roll over again, and I see senior Luxolo running our direction, shit. Junior Luxolo spins around, she's sees senior Luxolo, and tilt her head. Senior Luxolo stops on her tracks, shocked, confused.

“Who the hell are you?” They ask at the same time looking at each other.

Bubbles: “Love, who the hell is this? Why does she look like me?”

Senior Luxolo: “No bitch. Who are the hell are you?” The attitude in her voice is not to be missed.

Bubbles: “I'm a nightmare in broad daylight. Now, who the hell are you?” She pulls her by her hand as if wanting to embrace her, but instead she sends her behind her back falling on the grass, and shoot at the man we didn't even realize was around. Okay.

Luxolo: “None of your business.”

Bubbles: “K.” Senior Luxolo snorts, and pushes bubbles forward, guess her aim was for bubbles to fall but bubbles have balance for days. She holds her head high, and chuckling spinning around, and a spin kick sends diamond to the nearest tree as she hit with her back breaking some bones. Erh. She coughs trying to get up, but bubbles is too quick for her, her boot is already on her neck making it hard for Luxolo to get up. “Next time you pull a stunt like that I will kill you. Chop your body parts, and feed you them, then present your incomplete body in your family's doorstep. Don't bullshit me, you don't know me like that. Tsek!” I'm stunned. Wawu.

Me: “Wawu.” What did these people do to my bubbles? Ai, whatever it is that they did to her, I love it. Mama sgebengu, gintsakazi lami leli, mshayeli wempilo yami. Hhayi bafethu I'm in love.

Okay. Now it all makes perfect sense, she came with the rescuing team, but how? How did she pull this off? Hhe, this life thing ke Shaka Zulu, in fact, Mbombombo. Otherwise, we are happy for their arrival they sure did arrive in style.

LUXOLO

Finally, 2 days later some peace. We are war free we've defeated the enemy, even though the aftermath is hectic, and we've lost a lot of people, but overall we got our country back. And that's what makes us happy. Milan & Maxine haven't arrived yet, but I hope they do soon, Waynard and the rest of the army left a day ago. We need to leave this place, in fact, we all need to get some proper rest we've been through a lot. Tsakani pulls me toward him, and embraces me once more.

“The war is over bubbles, some peace at last it's been long overdue, and it's all thanks to you, if it wasn't you who came here and rescued us we would be talking a different story now. So, thank you a lot.” He kisses my cheek, and I just nod then bury my head in his chest. “How did you do it?” Lifting my head, and look at him.

“It's a long story.”

Him: “And we have all the time, you can tell me.”

Me: "I will. But first, I need to bathe, eat, and sleep 24 hours straight because wawu it's been one hell of a journey I've been too."

Him: "I can tell. You've even changed, and I'm not complaining I like the new you more, truth be told, and for the fact that you haven't forgotten about me, hhayi uyang'ncwaya straight," I laugh.

Me: "Nawe uyang'ncwaya because you also haven't forgotten about me. You should've seen you face when I popped up, geez, man. You were shocked!"

Him "Do you blame me though? I wasn't expecting you, I honestly thought that you were going through the worst there in Italy."

Me: "I did go through the worst, but that abuse I went through whilst there straightened me, and made me stronger. It actually resurrected whatever was buried deep within me. You've changed too, I wonder what happened to you," he chuckles.

Him: "Witchcraft happened. Anyway, we will talk about this once things go back to normal. I've missed you."

Me: "And I missed the sex more," he laughs.

Him: "Not like I did. In fact, if it was up to me, I'd tear off your clothes right here, right now and have my way with you anyway I want," I laugh.

Me: "I don't doubt that," I heave out a sigh. "So, that lady who came to me as if she knows me. Who is she?"

Him: "Her name is Luxolo also known as diamond, and she's a leader of the grillers," I sneer.

Me: "You said what? She has the same name as me, and looks like me. It's quite creepy if you ask me, I'd like to believe that people do look alike. There's no way that she's Nomalanga's daughter. I'm the only daughter of Nomalanga."

Him: "Guess your mother is the only one who can clarify this for you. You guys look exactly the same, we were so shocked the first time we saw her, and when she told us her name kwaba worse."

Me: "Nomalanga can't do me like this, sis can't do me like this. But then again you are right, Nomalanga will clarify things for us. Ned uyaphapha, she's too forward," he laughs.

Him: "And you dealt with her the best way you know how, umnyisile baby. Unyile. Next time she will know not to step on your toes and expect you not to retaliate, she's learned her lesson," we both laugh.

Me: "Indeed. How's Talon holding up?"

Him: "Fine. But pissed off."

Me: "Pissed off because he missed all the action?" He nods. "A cry baby he is, he will be fine maarn."

Him: "Yeah, I just wish that he can talk to me at least." I laugh.

Me: "Just let him be my love."

"Hi." We both turn to look as Luxolo greets us.

"Hello."

Her: "Can I talk to you."

Me: "Talk?" I chuckle & roll my eyes inwardly.

Her: "Please. Can I please talk to you, in private." Tsakani kisses my forehead, and walks away. "Firstly, let me apologize for my behavior."

Me: "Accepted. Should I apologize too?" She giggles.

Her: "No. You are not at fault, there's no need for you to apologize."

Me: "Cool. So, what's up?"

Her: "As you can see that we resemble each other, a lot even, and everyone around here thinks that we might be siblings. What do you think about all this? Do you think there's a possibility that we might be siblings?"

Me: "To tell you the truth; there might be a possibility that we are indeed siblings. But first, where's your mother?"

Her: "The last time I saw her I was 8 years old. She left me at her friend's house with toys, and a bag full of clothes and told me that she's going to work she will see me later. That was the last I saw of her, days turned into weeks and weeks into months and months into years, if only I knew then that would be the last time I will see her, I would've forced to go to work with her, but I was young. I didn't know anything back then, as I grew older and became wiser it was clear that she abandoned me, I don't even know what is it that I did to her for her to

abandoned me. Life haven't been good to me whilst growing up, I was abused at home, and always reminded that I don't belong there I was even bullied at school, it was tough, but I kept going.” She sighs.

Me: “Go on.”

Her: “Anyway, after matric I looked for a job, and I found one as a waitress then later on I found another one, I was working as a stripper there. I saved up enough money, and moved out of where I was staying and looked for a place to rent, I was a loner, I never really had friends while growing up. So, one of the girls I was working with at Club Canava told me about this other drug lord who needed girls to distribute drugs for him, and hijacking cars, after all women are never suspected that they distribute drugs or do hijackings they are too clever, and know how to distract situations, I agreed. I needed money, the money I was making was no longer enough, I needed more. To cut the story short, Gian, taught me a lot. I killed him, and took over his empire but a lot of blood was spilled before I took his whole empire, in the end I won. I formed my own gang, and it contained mostly men, women can be reckless at times.” I nod.

Sis here, be contradicting herself. Gzus, and the family of heaven please intervene. Nare she said “women are too clever, and know how to distract situation”, and in that very same sentence she said “women can be reckless at times”, well. She's right. In fact, cut cut...

Her: “So, for years I've been trying to trace my mother with no luck. I have a feeling that she changed her name.”

Me: “You've been through a lot of bullshit, but look at how powerful you are now. You are a power house, a force to be reckoned with. Anyway, what was your mother's name?”

Her: “Maybel. Her name was Maybel,” I gasp. My mother's second name is Maybel, but she doesn't like it because it brings her bad memories. Could it be? Fuck. It might be possible.

Me: “How old are you now?”

Her: “Turning 36 in 2 days time.” Wawu.

Me: "I see. Your father? Where is he?"

Her: "He is around, but he has his own family and doesn't care much about me, I only saw him once."

Me: "So, you are basically an orphan?" She laughs.

Her: "Clearly."

Me: "I think we must wait for Nomalanga to come back, she will clear everything up. I wonder how is she going to explain herself." Now I can't help it, but wonder if what she told me about being abused and raped was true or what. Who exactly is my mother? It seems like she's a woman with lots of secrets stuffed in her closet praying daily for them not to make a nasty entrance, after thinking about this carefully I'm now more convinced that she is indeed my sister, blood sister. How can my mother hide such from me? What exactly happened back then? Jesus is Lord.

Her: "Yeah. We need to exchange numbers so that we can be able to keep in touch. If we are indeed sisters then I will be very happy, at least I will have a younger sibling, and someone to bully," I laugh.

Me: "If you still value your life then you will most definitely not dare bully me, you saw how bad I can be."

Her: "I saw, and I don't want to get on your bad side. Uyasheshiselana." We both laugh, and she throws her arm around my neck. "I love you."

Me: "I love you too

but let not my boyfriend hear me say that to another person," she chortles.

Her: "Insecure man he is, but I like him for you. Girl, you have an eye. You sure know how to take a snap baby girl," we both laugh.

Me: "So they say! You married?"

Her: 10 years, and counting.”

Me: “Must be nice.”

Her: “Very. Let's go back to the others I'm sure your boyfriend wants you all for himself now, it's been long.” I nod, and we start walking.



NOMALANGA

Free at last. Now we can go back home! Everyone is happy, I don't blame though we hardly slept always watching the TV for new updates, when the reporter announced that the war is over we stood up screaming, and hugged each other even though there's some bad bloods between others we all managed to be happy for those couple of minutes. I can now

go back and be with my daughter in peace, I mean like, I need to rest and forget all of that has happened in my country, and here. We thank God for the fact that they are all still alive, well, Talon is a little injured just as long as he's alive his injuries means nothing.

“We can now go back home. I wonder when will they book us tickets to go back home, I miss smelling the soil of my land when wet, and get to walk barefoot in the streets not forgetting the buzzing streets all day every day,” Mmathabo says.

“I miss all that too, but I miss sewing more.”

Her: “You sew?”

Me: “Yes. But I only sew for me & Luxolo, and even tablecloth covers, curtains, duvets, mats anything you can think of I do sew.”

Her: "Are you trying to tell me that, you sew to keep busy and not to make money?" She sounds shocked.

Me: "Yeah. I honestly wouldn't know where to start selling even if I wanted to, my daughter was willing to help me though, well, and this war thing disturbed that."

Her: "But, as we will be going back to South Africa you are going to start selling right?"

Me: "Sell to who because people are broke now, millions lost their jobs? How will they afford?"

Her: "You can sell online, and besides is not as if like they destroyed the whole country only those few portions."

Me: "I will think about it, thank you."

Her: "You are welcome. I also would love to help you market your business I'm an influencer, and I know my way about dealing with people."

Me: "I'm impressed."

Her: "Me too," we both laugh. The boys step inside the lounge they still haven't confronted their mother about what Mmangwane said the other day, maybe they were just waiting for the war to be over then they will confront her. Think I forgot to tell you that they're not on speaking terms. Babalwa gets up from the chair she was sitting on, and Hlulani stopped her with his hand.

"Sit." She sits back down without putting up a fight. "Now that all this war is done & dusted care to tell us who our real fathers are?" She looks at Mmangwane then back at the boys.

"Why don't you ask the person who told you that? Was I the one who told you that you have different fathers? I think not," her attitude is bitchy.

Him: "Yes. You aren't the one who told us, Mmangwane didn't tell us she only said what she said out of anger, and how you

were coming for her. How long were you going to keep this secret for us?”

Sabelo: “Fuck that. Who are our fathers? Do all of 5 of us have different fathers, or 2-3 share a father whereas the other ones have different fathers?”

Her: “I don't know what you are talking about Sabelo.”

Him: “You do. You know very well that you do. Just tell us the damn truth Babalwa, be honest for once in your life!”

Her: “There's nothing to tell. Excuse me, I need to breathe you are all suffocating me, and making me nausea.” She gets up from her seat. “And for your Information, your fathers are all dead. All of them have departed this world, so, stop this nonsense of yours busy asking me useless questions. Okuhle, are you coming with?” Okuhle roams her eyes around until they lay on Hlulani whose not even bothered.

Okuhle: “Baby.” Hlulani stares at her. “Can I go with her?”

Her: "What? You're asking permission from your husband to leave with your mother-in-law? I thought I taught you well, I told you to never allow a man to control you or make you do things you are not comfortable with!" This woman is real crazy.

Hlulani: "Do whatever you want Okuhle. In fact, let me make things easy for you. You & I are done, seeing that you love my mother, and never listen to what I tell you- you might as well marry her because I'm done with you. Once we get to South Africa I will ask Ntando to draft us divorce papers, I'm tired of your shit Okuhle. Tired!" He takes off his ring, and throws it outside through the window. Everyone in the room gasp, Okuhle's eyes gets filled with tears. Babalwa is left shocked, she can't believe it.

Sabelo: "You finally stood your ground as a man, I'm impressed. Okuhle can continue being mother's puppets, she was weak for you anyway."

Okuhle: "Yo- you don't mean it right?" Her voice is breaking.

Him: "I meant every word I said. We are done Okuhle!" He clicks his tongue, and turns on his heels leaving. Okuhle gets up from her seat, and runs after Hlulani.

Mmathabo: "I hope you are happy. You just broke your son's marriage, only evil people do that. You are officially a homewrecker, congratulations woman. Almost forgot that you broke down an entire family because of your stubbornness, bravo." She claps her hands. "I'm sure you are aware that you don't have a family anymore, you will be miserable until you die." She spits on the floor, and walk out. The guys follow after her, I look at her, and tears are streaming down her cheeks. Fake tears they are, she's such a bad mother. I mean, she broke her own family because of being stubborn, and very disrespectful.

Keeping secrets is never a good thing especially to your kids about their upbringing, and stuff. Mothers need to normalize telling their kids about their birth rights, and all that stuff. Life. I turn on my heels, and walk past hiccuping Babalwa, I don't even know why she's crying because she brought this upon herself, and now she can't stand the heat. Women & secrets, never a good idea.

★ » ★ «

TSAKANI

My stomach is grumbling, I'm so hungry I need food, pap & lots of meat mixed with wors and some peri-peri chakalaka on the side, but the ladies are cooking mince & rice in the other bus. Talon is still not talking to us, we've tried everything to cheer him up, but he ain't taking shit even now he has distanced himself from us, all this drama because he missed out on the action? Yuks. I can't wait to remind him about these past couple of days once he is his old self again for now I will just let him be.

“Want to go out for a smoke?” Batista asks his hand already on the handle.

“Sure. Why not.” We walk out of the bus, and getting outside we find bubbles chatting to some two ladies, I've never seen them before, and they are most definitely not South Africans. They look so foreign, and their bodies are masculine you can tell that they've been through hell, they've survived a lot of shit, and dodged bullets. Bubbles lifts her head, and our eyes meet she giggles, and whisper something to the girls because they both turn to look our direction. They come our way, I look at Batista and he is just standing there not blinking or anything. Could he...? No flipping ways, my nigga is gone, he is actually looking at one of the girls as they walk toward us. I chuckle, and shake my head. Who would've thought that one day Batista will look at a woman like he does now after what Enhle did to him. That girl made him cry like a baby, and didn't want food for 5 days.

“Hey, my love. Batista,” she punches him giggling, Batista shakes his head. In fact, he is shaking the nasty thoughts he was having away. “Allow me to introduce you to my girls, this is Maxine and this is Milan. Girls, this is Tsakani my mans also known as TK, and this is Batista his friend. Oh, Batista is taken away by Maxine, he can't seem to get his eyes off her. “And the heart is finally unlocked,” we both laugh.

Me: "About damn time. Lovely meeting you ladies."

Them: "Likewise TK."

Maxine: "Tammy. Why didn't you tell us that South Africa have fine mans? Are you that stingy?"

Her: "You've never asked Maxine."

Milan: "They are hella fine, hopefully I will find myself an African mans and settle down with him," bubbles smiles shaking his head.

Her: "There's plenty of them, you will find your mans don't worry. But for now, let me go and introduce you to the rest of the girls, I also don't know all of them," they laugh. "See you in a few my love," we kiss, and they walk away.

Batista: "Man, I'm whipped. Did you see how hot she is?"

Me: "Yeah, I did."

Him: "I'm hooked man. I think she's the one I've been waiting for all my life."

Me: "Most probably, you guys will make a cute couple."

Him: "You reckon?" I nod. "Then I will have to make my move fast before the gents see her."

Me: "Get right on it, and she seems tough. Best of luck you will need it shame," he laughs.

Him: "I really do need it." Batista deserves all the happiness, I hope him and this girl work out.

TSAKANI

“Breakfast is ready!” I yell so that everyone can hear me, but I doubt they will with all this noise they are making. It has been weeks ever since the war ended, and let me just say we tried all that we could to help all those homeless people. We are currently residing in my old house, luckily for me, it ain't destroyed, none whatsoever guess they were still coming. And as for bubbles home, it has been destroyed completely only a lone wall stands, but half of the house is off vele. We are living with bubbles newly found friends, Lindiwe, and the gents obviously. Maxine & Batista have been very close lately, but they aren't spending enough time as they want because we are crowding them, and quite frankly bubbles & I hardly have time for ourselves with all these people present here. Funny enough their houses are intact, but here they are crowding us, and I still have to make them food in my own house.

“We've been waiting for breakfast,” says one of Lindiwe girls who step inside the kitchen. This girl is giving me bad vibes, I don't like her she's like some bad rash that refuses to go away no matter how much you try to remove it, she annoys me.

Me: "I called out," I continue dishing up.

Her: "Guess your voice wasn't loud enough because none of us heard you. I wonder why is your girlfriend not helping you. Where's she anyway? And don't tell me that she's still sleeping!" Told you that she's annoying, and crazy too because she asks a question and answers it herself, anyway she behaves like this only when bubbles is not around she's low-key scared of her, her eyes always shoot open when bubbles steps inside the room. I ignore her. "Well, I can always help I don't mind," she smiles and bat her lashes.

"Ek'se msunu wakho vaya la jou shit before I tell the boss lady about your nonsense, and she won't hesitate snapping your neck. Voetsek Nja! Leave!" Batista roars stepping inside the room looking pissed as hell, the girl jumps when she hears his voice, and quickly hurries out of the kitchen heading back to the lounge. I laugh. "This girl has it bad for you man, she needs to go," he takes a strip of bacon from one of the plates and throw it in his mouth.

Me: "Exactly. In fact, all of you must leave my house bubbles & I need our own space now we need to start making babies," he chuckles.

Him: "You still call her bubbles even though you were told that her name is Tammy Guns, not bubbles."

Me: "She's Tammy Gun to her friends, and you. To me she's bubbles, and she knows it."

Him: "Right."

Me: "It seems as if like things are getting pretty serious between you & Maxine."

Him: "They are, but we are taking things slow, after that shit Enhle did I'm guarding my heart, and it seems like she too has been through a lot, and doesn't know what love is. We are actually learning to love each other."

Me: "I'm glad that you finally decided to give love a chance."

Him: "I had too, when I saw her something in me moved. I thought that it was going to be a passing phase, but I was lying, this is real, and I like the fact that she understands me. Not forgetting that she's a strong woman too, but why wouldn't she when she's friends with Tammy?" We both laugh.

Me: "At least we have strong women in our lives not some weakling who will cower when things get heated or we are going through shit, they will fight with us tooth & nail. Bonnie & Clyde type of shit."

Him: "Vaar. Mara, have you realized how distant Talon has been lately ever since mentioning that the families are coming back tonight?"

Me: "I've been observing him man, he looks really stressed I wonder what's stressing him. He's not the same Talon we know, and what irks me more is the fact that he doesn't want to talk about it."

Him: "Even Leon can't get him to talk no matter how much he tries talking to him, he shuts him out."

Me: "Let's just let him be, he will tell us once he's ready I can't force a grown man like him to talk to us about what's troubling him, all we have to do is to be there for him and try cheering him up the best way we know how."

Him: "You are right."

"Gosh, you boys are gossiping like little girls instead of bringing us our breakfast, you are gossiping. Who are we gossiping about?" Milan says wrapping her arms around our necks. She's such a vibe.

Me: "We are talking about Talon."

Her: "Argh man, he will be fine I'm sure he's stressed about whether his pregnant girlfriend is still alive or what." Whoa, what? Batista & I look at each other this is new to our ears. Who on earth did Talon impregnate?

Me: "Askies? What did you just say?"

Her: "Wait a minute. Don't tell me that I just snitched on your friend, I thought you guys knew since you are his friends. Well, he didn't say that it's a secret after all. Next time I need to tame my mouth to stop tumbling words freely. Anyway, let me take this food to the lounge gents." She picks up the first tray, and walk away leaving us shocked. But how? When? And mostly importantly who did he impregnate? This is confusing.

Batista: "Dude, you believe her?" Do I? Of course, I do believe her.

Me: "I do. You?"

Him: "Me too. Any idea who he impregnated?"

Me: "None. And as far as I know Talon was never in a serious relationship, and even if he impregnated someone why is he hiding this from us?"

Him: "There might be a possibility that we know this person, and he doesn't want us knowing who she is."

Me: "I wonder who is she," Batista shakes his head. Right now I can't think of anyone, not a single person comes into mind. Milan comes, and takes the remaining trays.

Her: "I think you will have to prepare another breakfast. You know what; I think it's time we all leave your house we can't be finishing your food like this."

Me: "Of course, but I will have to look for a place for you to stay first then once I find one you will all leave my house in peace, and regarding the breakfast I'm no longer hungry I lost all my appetite."

Batista: "I'll pass the breakfast too, go and eat."

Her: "Cool." She shrugs, and walks away. Batista & I step out of the house, and head straight to the garden we need air.



LUXOLO

Some peaceful sleeps finally. I sit upright, and stretch. My phone rings underneath the pillow I get hold of it, and it's Luxolo. We've been communicating a lot lately, but today she will be coming this side because my mother is coming back this very morning, I'm sure they are on their way right now, and of which means that we might see her in the early hours of the morning,

“Biggie.”

“Hey small one. Still sleeping?”

Me: “No. Just woke up, what's up?”

Her: “Nothing much I'm just bored.”

Me: “Where's Ali & the kids?”

Her: "I don't know where they are, they left me sleeping they didn't even bother waking me up," I laugh.

Me: "Maybe you talk too much, who knows."

Her: "No, never. I just don't tolerate nonsense. Still living with your guests?" I heave out a sigh, they need to leave all of them.

Me: "Yeah. And they are starting to annoy me, I need my space, Tsakani and I need our own space!"

Her: "Chase them away sis or else they will not leave. It's been weeks with them staying in your space, I'm sure Tsakani's friends have places of their own. Why don't they go, and shelter there for a time being?"

Me: "I'm in no position to kick them out this ain't my house is Tsakani's."

Her: "Flip, almost forgot about that. If it won't be a problem for you & Tsakani I have a spare house that I don't use you can stay there for a time being."

Me: "I will have to talk to Tsakani first. Wait, why not shelter all these people crowding us right now?"

Her: "That could work too. Have a word with Tsakani, and hear what he says."

Me: "He will be very happy biggie, whuuu I'm sure he'll even do a celebration braai." She laughs.

Her: "He surely is fed up. Anyway, let me prepare myself something to eat. I will see you later, should I bring anything?"

Me: "Just yourself, and some energy to confront your mother."

Her: "Will do, but I will need to be tipsy in order for me to confront her. Honestly, I don't know what I will say to her, what

her reaction will be like once she sees me. A lot is going on in my mind right now smally, I'm nervous."

Me: "You will do just fine I'll be with you through it all, don't worry. We got this." I still can't get over the fact that my mother dumped her child in her friend's place I wonder what was going on in her mind that time. Worst of it all, she named me after her clearly she was replacing her with me, gosh. Unbelievable!

Her: "Thank you. Let me go, love you."

Me: "Love you too," I hang up, and place my phone next to me. I'm not in the mood to face all those people, they are too noisy, especially Milan & Lindiwe, yerrr those two can talk shame for hours. Maxine yena is crazy in love with her mans, she can't stop raving about him when we are together, and Batista is actually her first boyfriend. Well, she ain't a virgin though as you all know that they used to rape them there at that Arena/hell place nxa.

I get off bed, and go and stand near the window looking at the view. The view is not appeasing though

sighs. But I will stand anyway, and take in its dullness. So, I turned Sol's club into a shelter for all these homeless people. Half of the roof was out, but the building remained standing. We manage to fix the roof, windows, and the doors too, it seemed as if like some of these gang members were staying there because it was in a bad state. Takeaways, beer bottles, and cigarette butts were sprawled out on the floor, wuhhh how can I forget used condoms. These men were nasty as fuck. I've put the men, and the young boys on the main floor, and the women together with the young girls on the top floor they all have their bathrooms, they only share a kitchen that's where they have their meals. Anyway, Sol passed on a few days ago. May his soul in rest in peace. At least he gave me his blessings.

“And she's finally awake.” One of Lindiwe's friends says stepping inside the room. See? We don't even have privacy they just budge in anyhow they want, they just fucking don't care. I simply roll my eyes at her. “You know I wa...” she doesn't even get to finish her sentence when Milan gets hold of her hair twisting it, and she yelps.

“You bitch have some nerves to come into Tammy's bedroom the way you please. You think I don't know that you have your eyes on Tammy's mans? You are just waiting for her to mess up, and then you are going to step in, and try warming yourself to TK. But, baby girl that will shit will never happen. I will kill you even before you jump into bed with him, I will kill you!” Milan tells her.

Her: “Let go of my hair you are hurting me! And I don't know what the fuck you are talking about!” Milan pushes her forward, and pulls her back with her hair, and she screams tears threatening her eyes. “Pl- please.”

Milan: “I've been watching you sweet little girl, you are such a bad actress. Now fuck out of here before I kill you for real!” She let's go of her hair, and sis hurries out of my room wiping her tears. “That bitch be disrespectful nxa. Anyway, I only came here to take her out of your bedroom uyaphapha!” I laugh. Whoever taught her the “uyaphapha” word really did us bad, sis loves the word gosh.

Me: “Thanks babe,” She nods, and walks out. Milan really got my back, and I'm grateful. I wear my slippers, and step out of

the bedroom heading to where Tsakani is. These people must leave, I shake my head as I pass them making noise in the lounge. I get to the garden, and Maxine is sitting on top of Batista's lap.

“Tammy to the rescue. Hello guys.” They greet back. “My love, can I please talk to you? In private.”

Him: “Yeah, sure,” he gets up from his chair, and we walk away.

Me: “I don't know how this is going to be delivered in your ears, but Luxolo told me that she has a house that she doesn't use. So, she suggested that we go and stay there for a time being, and leave everyone here. But, I told her to take everyone of course this is your house after all.”

Him: “Call her back, and tell her that we will take the house we will leave everyone here. Well, not really everyone because Batista & Maxine are leaving tonight they're going to Batista's house. It may be my house, but I don't need it anymore, we will have to buy a new house once everything is back to its state.

And I miss worshipping your body,” not me blushing because wawu.

Me: “Well, if you say so. I will tell her to take us there tomorrow, I hope she has some clean bedding. Anyway, the families are coming back tonight where will they sleep?”

Him: “Don't worry. I've already organized a place for them. I can't wait for Sabelo to tell me about all the drama that took place, he said that secrets came out, and a lot happened.”

Me: “I wonder what secrets are those, and what happened.”

Him: “We will find out tomorrow. Hhe, almost forgot to tell you. Talon is going to be a father,” I gasp.

Me: “What? Who's the baby mama?”

Him: “I have no idea, but I have a feeling that is one of Lee's sister just don't know who though.”

Me: "Hectic!"

Him: "Too much. Have you eaten?"

Me: "Nah, I haven't. I don't think there's anything left in the fridge these people are here finishing our food, food that they don't even buy. Nxa," he chuckles.

Him: "Exactly. I also haven't eaten, after hearing that Talon made someone pregnant I lost my appetite, yoh, hhayi." I laugh.

Me: "Shame. Anyway, who told you this?"

Me: "Milan. She thought that we knew, but dololo. We didn't know anything cabanga my love, Talon didn't tell us anything, yet we are his friends."

Me: "Maybe he's waiting for the right time to tell you guys, just let him be."

Him: "We are doing exactly that."

Me: "I love you. Let me go and take a quick bath."

Him: "I love you too. I wish I can join you, but these people occupying my house are noisy they will want to jump in the shower with us," I laugh, and start walking. He's right, these people are a nuisance!



NOMALANGA

I can't wait to get to my homeland, and see my daughter how I miss her, and I wonder if our house is still intact even if it ain't, I'm sure that Luxolo or Tsakani made a plan for us. Hlulani really ended things with Okuhle, six years of marriage down in the

drain only because of a woman who likes controlling. Okuhle did ask for a second chance but Hlulani refused even though she told him that she's pregnant, but Hlulani being Hlulani said that he will support the child, but he doesn't want her anymore. It ended in tears. Babalwa has lost too much weight, guess this thing of her breaking her family, breaking her son's marriage really hit her hard, the boys don't want anything to do with her. They've disowned her as their mother.

“Wuuuhh, finally. I can't wait to drink some Russian bear, and excite my throat it's been long since it tasted something strong, I was getting tired of those cocktails, and juice,” Mmathabo says clapping hands, she's happy. I don't blame her though, we are all happy, and we are going to be reunited with our families, I hope Muzi & Bhebetsi died in that war, sies.

“You can't be drinking strong drinks your baby isn't even 4 months. Yet, you are ready to take is vodka's? Do you know that vodka burns the milk right?”

Her: “Hhayi, sis Noma. I've been through a lot, please allow me, I need to relax, and relax my mind too. Don't start with the

lectures, and I was bound to stop breastfeeding at some point anyway," I nod. I will not argue with her.

Me: "Okay."

Hours later we land in this very beautiful place, it's even clean I wonder who does it belong too. We all step out of the plane, and take in the African smell. It's good to be finally home. From a distance I can spot Luxolo she's talking to some woman, I wonder who is she. Anyway, we left our luggage in the plane. The kids run around this place clearly happy to be back home too. I'm about to reach Luxolo when the woman she was talking too turns, and faces me. My heart stops beating for a few seconds, impossible, it can't be. I blink thinking that I'm seeing things, but she's still here looking at me with eyes full of sadness. My knees start being wobbly, tears threaten my eyes, I can't move, but my breathing is heavy, and I'm sweating. My legs go heavy, and I sink down, and hang my head low. Impossible... I looking at Nono, and all I see is hatred in her eyes. But how?

NOMALANGA

I can feel their stare it's not giving me any peace, I'm not comfortable with them even though it's 3 of us, but they want answers, answers that I shall give them. I didn't expect my welcome to be like this, it was just unexpected and trust me when I say I thought my eldest daughter is a "ghost", I thought I was seeing a ghost, but no I was seeing my own daughter. The very same daughter I gave birth too, and abandoned in a strangers house telling her that I'm going to work I'll be back for her, and that was the last time she saw me let alone hear my voice. Now here she is in front of me looking at me with eyes full of questions, yes, I was doing my follow-ups on her until I learned that she passed away, and that's when I stopped following her. I saw no need to follow her anymore, and that was years ago. Seeing her now is shocking, and she has grown so much, and she looks exactly like Nono just that she's too yellow.

"We are waiting Mama. Give Luxolo all the answers she needs," Nono says her voice firm, and she has truly changed. She's no longer the old Nono I know she's someone else, someone I

don't even recognize. My sweet Nono is gone, but something else took over, and I'm not happy, not even one bit. I don't dare lift my head because I don't want to see their stares, and I'm definitely not ready to talk to them about this. "Mama, why did you dump Luxolo in your friends house?"

"I'd also like to know. But I do know that she never really loved me as her daughter, I mean, what kind of a mother are you that dumps her only daughter at a friend's house without giving her any reason why? You know if you really loved me as a child you would've taken me to one of your sisters or aunts rather than send me to your friend's house. Do you know all the shit I went through in the hands of that friend of yours together with her family? Do you? Nah, I don't think you do because you never cared about me, not even a little bit. And I also don't care about you, but I want to know why did you dump me at your friends, you owe me that much." She's already in her feet, hands on her waist.

Nono: "Oh, yes. Please tell her the reason you dumped her Nomalanga, and once done kindly please tell me why did you name me after her, we just want the truth nothing more." I shake my head. Not so long ago I was judging Babalwa for keeping secrets to her sons forgetting that I have my own

secrets too, secrets of which I never thought would come out, but look at me now, hahaha. Guess I'm the joke because the secret is out, bleh.

Luxolo: "Talk woman! I don't have the whole day. I have a family waiting for me back home, spit!" She hits the table making me jump, and my lips start quivering. Jesus, this child.

Nono: "Mama, please." Tears are already veiling my eyes, great.

Luxolo: "Nomalanga stop wasting our time talk! Bear in mind that I don't want a relationship with you, I just want the truth then I'll be out of your fucking life."

Me: "Ca- can I at least get a glass of water?" My voice is low barely audible, but what can I say because I'm shit scared.

Her: "Speak up. We aren't hearing you." I nod.

Me: "Can I have a glass of water." My voice is a bit higher now.

Her: "Tammy, get your momma some water so that we get this over & done with." Nono gets up from the chair and drags her feet to get a glass.

Nono: "Plain or with ice?"

Me: "Plain will do."

Her: "Have you taken your medication?" I shake my head.
"Where is it?"

Me: "Inside my bag," she nods and fills up the glass with water then come back, she places the glass before me.

Her: "Take your medication, I will prepare you something to eat so long. Diamond, you want some?"

Luxolo: "No, I'm fine I just want the truth from Nomalanga or should I call you Maybel?" I throw in my pills, and drink the

water. "I'm not leaving here until you tell me truth Nomalanga." She means it. I heave out a sigh, and clasp my hands together, here goes nothing. I think it would be best if I tell them this not looking at them.

Me: "Well-," I look at Nono, and she's not directing her attention to us, but to whatever meal she's preparing. Luxolo raises her eyebrow waiting for me to talk, kunzima. "I- I had no choice but to...," sighs. "Give you away."

Her: "You had no choice but to do what? Who in their right state of mind give their kids away? So, whatever choice you chose was better than I? Is that what you are saying?!"

Me: "You don't understand."

Her: "Then make me understand what you mean! Help me, dammit woman!" She puts her hand over her head pushing her hair back as it was coming to the front of her face. I don't know how she looks like when she's angry, but looking at her right now she's mad pissed off.

Me: "Situation forced me. It was either you or your father," she laughs, she's being sarcastic actually.

Her: "And you chose a dick over me. A dick that you would've gotten randomly, but no. Instead, you chose that very same dick that's living happy with his family completely forgotten about you, and for what? Nothing. He left you either way, with nothing. And maybe that's another reason why you didn't bother looking for me because I was going to be a constant reminder that Gorge Mbethe left you with. I really don't understand women who choose their man instead of their kids. What's going on in those mind of yours vele? Or the dick is good in a way that makes you all lose your senses?" I shake my head. "Why are you shaking your head? Am I spewing nonsense? And I'd appreciate it if you answer me with words not nodding your head is irritating."

Nono: "Here's your food," she places the food on top of the table then she sits down, and places her legs on top of the table crossing them. She pulls out her phone from the pocket, and start getting busy with it.

Me: "Th- thank you," as if I will stomach anything right now.

Luxolo: And?"

Me: "He promised to marry me," wiping my tears. "He said he will marry me only if I let you go. I loved him Xolo, I had no choice but to do away with you. You were standing in my way of happiness, I thought he loved me, I thought he will marry me as promised, but he lied, he gave false hope," sniffing. "He lied to me for years. I'm sorry Xolo, please forgive me." She laughs.

Her: "You must be high on something. Going further; why didn't you come and get me after your never happened wedding? Why? You had a chance to come, and fetch me, but you didn't. Why Nomalanga?"

Me: "I was ashamed, I was ashamed of being an embarrassment in the community, to my family. I was left with no choice, but to leave everything behind and start a new life. Please, try to understand."

Her: "You are expecting me to understand the bullshit you are telling me now?" I nod. "You must be out of your damn mind,

I'm not going to understand all this shit you said because it's pathetic! You sacrificed with my life to your friend trying to save your face, you gave me away to those abusers on a silver platter. Hehe, you know what? I always thought that you were dead, kanty no man bengihlanya kahle kahle bengizihlanyisa. You were living your life without any care in the world, without even thinking about me. Worst of it all, you had Tammy here, and you gave her my name. My name. Why? Were you replacing me with her? You figured that since you dumped me, you will have to have a mini me right? You actually wanted to forget about my existence, but you couldn't because you couldn't live with the fact that you abandoned your first child. Tammy is basically living my life right?"

Lord. How do I answer all these questions? I mean, I'm in a pool of tears, but no she doesn't care all she wants are answers, and half of the things she said are actually true. I look up wiping my endless stream of tears.

Her: "Your tears don't move me. They don't shake me, in fact, they are annoying me because they are fake tears. Let me guess; no, let me rather ask Tammy here. Tammy." Anyway, where did Nono get this Tammy name and what does it mean? And I wonder what is she asking her. Nc nc nc.

Nono: "Sup?" She puts her phone on top of the table.

Her: "I'd like to take you back to your childhood."

Nono: "My childhood?" She looks at her tilting her head.

Her: "Yeah. Like, how your favorite bedding looked, the color that dominated your clothes, your hair and all."

Nono: "Oh, this ought to be interesting."

Her: "It is because I want to show Nomalanga here that she replaced me with you. The color of your bedding was purple decorated with unicorns, and please correct me if I'm wrong," Nono nods. "Your hair was always tied in two twisted ponytails using unicorn ribbons, and the color that dominated your clothes was maroon, you had like 3-4 bright clothes. And your dinner plate was decorated with flowers, hoho, and once me correct me if I'm wrong. Oh

I almost forgot. I'm sure your morning breakfast was Maltabella with a strawberry topping?" Nono chuckles shaking her head.

Her: "You are very much correct now that you mention it, I was actually living your life, guess guilt made her do all those things hey. To tell you the truth I'm so disappointed in her, what she did was really heartless. Choosing a man over you was a real blow truth be told, but it's all in the past now."

Her: "It might be all in the past, but I'm not one to easily forgive. I don't live up to my name, and by the look of things I will never forgive her. I was never taught forgiveness, and me not forgiving her won't affect me anyway, and besides I've lived for years without her, and I will continue doing so. She was always dead to me, and she will remain dead. No relationship is going to be fixed between us."

Her: "And it's okay. No one will crucify you for that. Anyway, mama I also have questions of mine that I want to ask you, but I will ask you once you wake up because you are sleepy now. Go and take a nap. Will you be able to walk?" I nod getting up from my chair, and drag my feet to my room. I'm so shattered. That was intense, and I don't blame her for not forgiving me, I

deserve it, but hopefully one day she will find it in her heart to forgive me. Then Nono has questions of her own too, I wonder what questions are those.

I throw myself on top of the bed, a part of is relieved that at least she found closure, and still alive. Oh, Gorge. I hate you! You ruined me. You fucking ruined my life, but it's too late to blame him now, I allowed him to ruin me. Sighs. I close my eyes as I feel sleep so close...

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LUXOLO

We are on our way to the house that Luxolo told me about, after confronting mother Luxolo suggested that we leave immediately she can't spend another seconds there because she will vomit as she still smells my mother's scent filling up the kitchen. She hates her, yoh. Anyway, I've realized that she loves bone thugs & harmony because even now she's playing their album, and as for me, I don't understand anything. I prefer music that make noise...

“Are you okay?” I ask her immediately as she parks the car in the driveway, if this is the house then I'm impressed. This is a mansion not just a house, the wall is covered with charcoal granite, and the garden here is beautiful. I wonder how inside looks like.

“I'm okay. I'm just glad that she told me why she abandoned me, even though her choices were stupid she at least told me the truth, I can finally move on and live my life, not that it was stuck anyway,” she shrugs. “Let's go and see your new house I hope you will like the furniture, and you can add some too because it's not much.” We step out of the car, and head inside

the house. She unlocks her glass door, and push it open then she gets in first, and I follow after her. The kitchen is Breathtaking, and huge too. I wonder how her house looks like if this one is like this, hmmm. People are living out here, wuhhh hhayi. Sikhaphile.

Me: "You have a beautiful house."

Her: "And I don't like it. Ali was living here with his ex-wife, and when he married me I suggested that we move out of here, and buy our new house to create new memories and that was 8 years ago. That's how long this house was vacant, but we do come and clean it every now & then. You like it?"

Me: "I love it!"

Her: "Welcome to your new house," I giggle as she hands me the keys. We hug, and I look around taking it all in. Tsakani will love it here because there's actually a soccer room with a mini bar fridge, like guys. He better not bring his friends here, maybe he's brothers can come nakhona not always.

Me: "Thank you. Should it happen that we buy a house in the near future I'd like to buy this one if not the same as this one."

Her: "You can have this one for free, you are my little sister after all, and I must look out for you. I got you young one," I laugh.

Me: "Ain't I just the luckiest girl alive right now? Thank you biggie," we hug. "And when am I meeting your mini family?"

Her: "Once you are settled here," I nod.

Me: "I'd really love to meet them," I look at the time on my wrist watch, and it's just after 20:00pm, and I'm hungry. "Let's go. Tsakani & I will come here tomorrow."

Her: "I'm glad that you like it."

Me: "Will you ever forgive our mother?"

Her: "I don't know hey, or maybe in the future or after life I will."

Me: "I understand." We walk out of the house, I lock the door, and we walk to the car laughing. First thing tomorrow morning I'm confronting my mother that sob story she once told me about my father was all lies. She lied, she will tell me exactly who my real father is maybe me & senior Luxolo share a father. Hhayi shame, Nomalanga. Nomalanga wehhhhh, a woman full of secrets. Hhey, shook!



TSAKANI

The noise in the kitchen it's so annoying, tonight it's Milan's turn to prepare supper for us and the girls are helping her, Lee will be the one doing dishes well, not entirely alone Lindiwe will help him. Batista & Lee are gone boys, and as for Leon he ain't

interested in relationships. He hardly talks to the girls around here no matter how much they try chatting him up, he gives one word answers. I get him though, these girls can be too much when they want to, at least we have Milan who put them in their place without thinking twice.

“Ek'se TK,” Talon greets settling next to me. He's still not himself this thing is really stressing him out.

“Ek'se Talon. U grand mfethu?”

Him: “Dololo kuma line ntwana ngifathulile blind.” (Nothing is going well, I messed up)

Me: “Ngizindlebe boi, fidar?”

Him: “Ngididiyele ama salad ntwana. Shuthi manjer bekuyi zinto za once off nge skoen kanty kuzosala kuhlala I cream yami daar, indaba beseku 200° da so bengeke ngiphume kuvutha, haike leyo cream yakhona yamasimba ya tshuna into encane mfana.” (It happened that it was a once-off thing without a

condom, I couldn't pull out because it was hot, and now those sperms of mine created a baby) I laugh.

Me: “Nizofa ningakabanga ready Talon. Usase yi ntwana laaite. Kanty manjer inkinga vha? Enhlek ubani le thekeli?” (You will die unexpectedly. You are still a boy. Now what exactly is the problem? In fact, who's that girl)

Him: “Hhayi ndoda azikhulunywa ezinjalo, and bese kaba I chappies yakena. Indaba ang'mcanywa u girl, besi dakiwe, salalana k'phela bro.” (No man. We don't talk about those, she was starting to become a bubblegum. The thing is; I don't love the chick, we were drunk and had sex that's it)

Me: “Ubani igama lale thekeli? Phela asifuni ugcoke I banana,” (Who's the chick, we don't want her trapping you with a baby) he looks around, and shakes his head.

Him: “Thembeke. I sisteri ka Lee.”

Me: “Ini? Hhayi ndoda. U gogo mus loya bowum'ngene ngani? Ek'se Talon, niyaganga bafethu.” (What? No man. That's an old woman, what were you doing with her? Hhe, you guys are stout)

Him: “Phola njandini. Akekho gogo uwela la kubo 40s khona, khona daar yi milf yena shame. Mara yena ntwana uyayi reya I out. Ukhuluma amalimi daar, kuyanyiwa!” (Relax. She's not that old, she's in her mid-40s, somewhere there she is what we call a milf. But man, she knows how to ride, you end up speaking in tongues) I laugh.

Me: “Nizoguga nibancane Talon, qhubeka. Manjer uzom'bekela le story u Lee?” (You will age young, go on. Now are you going to tell Lee)

Him: “Ang'keni ndoda yakena. Indaba ngi dinka I film azong'yenzela yohh, hhayi. Ngihlukumezekile ngi grand now,” (I don't know man. The thing is I'm thinking about the action he will give me. I've suffered enough, I'm okay now)

Me: “Mele um'bekele yi mpintshi yakho le, and besides I think sekaya kena already ned he's waiting for you tell him. In fact,

me & Batista knew that usibekile mara besime ngawe ukuthi usibeke)

Him: “Ek'se. For sho nibekelwe yile parrot, nxa yaphapha lendoda le yasis angazi bengim'bekelelani,” (I'm sure you were told by that parrot, she's too forward I don't know why I told her)

Me: “She did good. Bewusha ndoda, manje vaya uyobekela u Lee I story,” he nods. “Vaya nou. We need the old Talon back not this sponge cake you are right now,” he gets up clicking his tongue.

Him: “Uyanya swine. Tsek futhi,” he walks away leaving me laughing at him. At least things will get back to normal now, and Lee will be understanding. But for Talon to impregnate an old woman? Ayisembi ngoku, wuhhh hhayi. Life.

TSAKANI

“Where are we exactly going bubbles?” I ask bubbles as we drive around the quiet beautiful neighborhood of Hillcrest view. The most expensive hood around here, even me myself I can never afford a house here, it will cripple my pockets to a point of no return. I wonder who are we visiting here.

“You will see. Park right here,” she points towards this other beautiful mansion with beautiful flowers attached to the outside wall, and the light walls are still on, but it's 6:30am after all maybe the owners forgot to switch them off when they woke up or they are still sleeping. Bubbles step out of the car, and walk to the gate, she presses the buzzer and the gate slides open I look at her shocked, and drive inside the yard. I don't ask her anything as I step out of the car. Or maybe this could be her sister's house.

The lawn is beautifully Trimmed, and the yard is too big people are living the life out there, if this house was mine I'd make sure that my friends never come here we will meet e mall or

something, but not here. They have this tendency of taking over my houses, ai.

Her: "Are you ready?"

Me: "To meet your sister's husband?" She laughs.

Her: "No. But are you ready?" I tilt my head.

Me: "To die?"

Her: "And he finally caught on," she laughs opening the door. "Welcome to our new house!" I widen my eyes.

Me: "Wait, what?" I'm so not believing this. This is some prank...

Her: "I know right? I, too, was just like you when Luxolo told me, I almost died, but I woke up fam. Nawe snap out of it my

love, take it all in. This is our new home go on and take a tour to our new house, you are so going to love it!”

Me: “Is this some kind of sick joke or what?”

Her: “It's not my love. This is our house, now you can give Talon that old house of yours plus he's going to be a father he will need a much bigger space to accommodate his family.”

Me: “Are you being for real?” She nods with a wide smile plastered on her face. I pick her up, and spin her around, she giggles as I put her down. “This is unbelievable bubbles, I'm in awe. This is paradise to me, wow babe.”

Her: “I was impressed too when I saw it yesterday, anyway Luxolo gave it to me because it has been vacant for 8 years. It actually belonged to her husband, but they moved out because her husband was staying with his ex-wife. She wanted to create new memories with Ali, so they moved out.”

Him: “Wow. Can I?”

Her: "I long told you. Ngithi the sex we are going to have here, haha I can't wait to fuck on the balcony and walk around the house naked without worrying about your friends throwing themselves in uninvited," I laugh, and she clicks her tongue.

I'm sold. This house is the ish, and knowing that I have my own TV room to watch my soccer nights games undisturbed is flipping awesome. How rich are these people to be affording such a massive house? Shit. And don't let me get started about the master's bedroom, there are two walks in closets for her & him, the wall is gray and the bedding is pure white even the carpet too. Damn.

"You like it?" Bubbles asks as I step inside the kitchen.

Me: "Lwami, I love it. This is like a dream come true. Your sister is the real plug, I fuck with her already. Damn."

Her: "Yeah, she's the baddest bitch. So, we need to buy grocery, and a few things that we will need I don't know what

those things are though because the house is fine to me as it is, what about you?"

Me: "Same here, I like it just the way it is. But we do need to buy grocery."

Her: "And bevs. We will need to stock up on alcohol my love so that we won't get bored. Plus there's a braai area just near the garden we can always hlwi hlwi every time we feel like it."

Me: "Hmmm, imagine how flames the sex is going to be? Kuyoshisa mus," she laughs.

Her: "And I've seen a lot of spots to have sex in, we can even have it on top of the room, no one will see us anyway," we both laugh.

Me: "Let me start by having you here on this very same floor with both your legs stretched out, and your hands grabbing on the feet of the table, then we take it to the lounge, the garden,

roof, in fact, everywhere maarn. Kushunqe I smell esi natural k'phela,” I wink at her, and she blushes.

Her: “I wish I could, but I still need to go and see my mother.”

Me: “I understand, and I also need to go and see my brothers, Sabelo called a meeting.

Her: “Do you guys ever chill all together and have fun as brothers?”

Me: “No. We all have our own things going on, we just call each other once in a while,” shrugging.

Her: “Now this explains as to why you are always with your friends,” I nod. “So, when are we going shopping?”

Me: “I don't know what time the meeting is going to end, but if it ends I will call Batista to accompany me.”

Her: "Okay. I was going to say call me, but then I remember that I still need to pass by the club they asked me to come they need to discuss something important with me. And you must take the key with you when you get to town please make another one just so we can have our own keys."

Me: "Will do. Let's go, I will drop you off at Rasabi first then take my brothers, and go somewhere else."

Her: "So, how's baby daddy?" I laugh.

Me: "Soyang'hlebisa manje babe. Anyway, I don't know his conversation with Lee went because we left before they woke up, but I'm sure that Lee understood. Yazi, I still ask myself ukuthi what was Talon doing with an old woman like Thembeke, and he knows exactly what kind of woman Thembeke is. He knows her lifestyle."

Her: "Her lifestyle? What's her lifestyle like?"

Me: “Yoh. Hha.ah, no bubbles. Uyang'hlebisa mus wena manje haikhona. Let's leave other people's businesses, let's drink water and mind our own asingeni ndawo thina,” she claps her hands laughing.

Her: “Shame baby. But you will tell me all about it once you are in between my thighs, hehehe I can't wait to hear all about it. This Thembeke person sounds like trouble, a troublesome magogo.”

Me: “Don't let Talon hear you calling her that bubbles.”

Her: “Well, he ain't here Isn't he? So, please allow,” we walk out of the house leaving the door unlocked this is a very tight secured area no one will get here, plus there's an electric fence here. We step inside the car, bringing the engine to life, and we drive out of the yard of our new home.

Me: “What are we going to have for dinner?”

Her: "Anything, but not cooked by me or you. Just come with anything, but meat must be included in whatever you will be buying," I nod.

Me: "I love you bubbles."

Her: "I know right? Yeah, I do.«

Me: "Nxn." She giggles.

Her: "I love you too my love." We both smile at each other.



SANELE

My bags are all packed, and I'm ready to go back to the city the village has been mind refreshing. Running away from Messiah was the best decision I took honestly, and I ran away 4 days before the attack took place, and I'm quite sure that he died in

that war I wonder how many people survived, and if my hood is still the same, or they made it disappear too just like the other hoods. And as for Michelle I don't even know where she is, but she's still alive I saw her post on Facebook few days ago. She looked really stress free.

“Sanele.” Queen Nobuntu calls my name stepping inside my room. This woman doesn't age, in fact everyone here in this village isn't aging and the secret of it all it's in the river. That river runs this place without it there's no this place.

“My Queen.” I bow my head as sign of respect, and she hates being called Queen Nobuntu she prefers being called Nobuntu or Buntu.

Her: “My husband is telling me that you are leaving. Well, I guess you are truly leaving judging by the bags that I'm seeing.”

Me: “Yeah, it's been long since I got here, and besides this place is starting to bore me Buntu. I need to go back to the city, and make things happen.”

Her: “The very same city that turned you into someone you are not. We've sent you to the city to further your studies Sanele, but you decided to take your own route. You mixed yourself with bad people, and you lost your true self in the process. Now you really want to go back to that life?”

Me: “You don't understand Buntu. I'm making money when I'm in the city! And besides I need to fix things with my woman, and being here will only hinder me from fixing things with her. This place is just not for me Buntu, I need the city rush not this slow pace life that you are living here,” she heaves out a sigh and shakes her head.

Her: “You know how hard it was to convince the gatekeepers to let you in even though your hands were full of blood. We also had to slaughter a white chicken for the water to accept you, give you a second chance and not to sail you to the “Living with the dead” village, the river accepted that appease, and you know very well that we are a village of peace. I don't think you are understanding what I'm saying...”

“In simple terms it means that; once you walk out of that gate you will no longer be welcomed here, even the river won't give

you a second chance Sanele. Don't leave, stay here with your family you will be safe here

more blood will be spilled in the city, and this time it won't be from the war, but from the one you once loved.” The seer says standing at the door. He doesn't look pleased, not one little bit.

Nobuntu: “Just let him be seer. He is a grown man now, and he can take his own decisions. If he dies in the city then he will die if it's by the will of the God & ancestors. Let him go, keeping him here against his will not make any difference he will hate us more, and possibly stain our land with a dark cloud. This is not the place for people who will harbor anger in their hearts.” She looks at me. “You are welcome to leave Sanele, and May God, and the ancestors be with you, and watch over you while there in the city, and should it happen that God remembers you, may you rest in well. Excuse me, have a safe journey.” She gets up from the bed, bows her head and stride out of the room.

I sit on the bed defeated, and rub my face. I wish I could stay here, but I can't, I really can't stay here. The truth is I will not be happy here, I will not just like I'm not now. My happiness lies in the city, where life is fast not here. Yes, as the seer said that I

will die in the city, and of which everything he says comes to reality then I will just let it be, if it means dying by the hand of the one I once loved then I will be happy because I would've died where my happiness lies, in the city. In the end all of us are going to die, but what's the point of dying without even enjoying life? Like dude.

I get up from the bed, and pick up my bags. I look around at what used to be my room for the last time, and step out of it. My happiness matters most... I don't know what awaits me back there in the city, but I am heading there. Home.



LUXOLO

I greet everyone as I pass them sitting around the feasting table, the awkwardness in the table was odd of which I find odd because it's only females here. Their moods are somber it's like

there's someone who died or something. Weird bunch is what they are if you ask me.

“Urh-m, excuse me.” I stop on my tracks as someone says that to me, I turn to look, and it's Thembeke, I know this because she's pregnant, and she's really old. Tsakani was exaggerating honestly when she said that she's too old, or maybe she is really old just that the make-up is what makes her look younger. “You must be Luxolo,” she stretches out her hand for me to shake, and I give her mine, I'm trying not to be rude to her.

“Urh-m, yeah. That's me. How can I assist you?” She blushes.

Her: “There's nothing really, I just wanted to confirm if it's really you.”

Me: “Really me? Do I have a clone or something?”

Her: "Hahaha. You are so funny, not at all silly. I wanted to see the girl who saved the world, Tsakani must be very proud of you."

Me: "Woman, why are you creepy? You are creepier than creepier. Enhlek, what's your story?"

Her: "I have no story to tell you sweetheart. You know, I remember this other time Tsakani was dating Melody such an innocent, and humble girl she was. Tsakani really loved that girl, in fact, they loved each other, and they were perfect for each other."

Me: "I don't know where you are going with this story of yours, but it's boring me. Your story annoys me, and this Melody of yours doesn't exist in Tsakani's life anymore, you even said it yourself in a past tense. So, please woman don't annoy me."

Her: "You don't deserve him. You are not the one for him," I laugh.

Me: “And who's the one for him? One of your granny friends who goes around falling pregnant for young boys? Who puts on make-up trying to look young, and seduce these little boys? Awung'nyeli perhaps? Abo Talon bahamba ba pregisa yazi, imagine he impregnated an old woman who still live in the past. Mama weh, um'dala stay out of my business, and I will do the same, remember that we are not in the same league. Next time date men your age because Talon is yet to find his one, his ride or die, and you are not her. You are a sperm dish, and next time normalize ukunyela your friends or something, just not me, okay?” She gasps. “Good.”

Haike, Mmathabo's twins and noise, ai. These little things can cry maarn, I don't want a baby I won't cope all. I step inside the lounge, and I find her feeding one twin and my mother feeding the other. Now I don't understand why they are crying because they are being fed, ah. Andizi.

“Greetings,” Mmathabo gives me a nod and my mother gives me a fake smile. I sit down on the one sitter couch. “Why are they making noise?”

“They are refusing food,” Mmathabo replies.

Me: "Why would they refuse food?"

Her: "They are not familiar with this soft porridge."

Me: "Kanty what do you usually feed them?"

Her: "Smash or Nestum, but we ran out of them. Sabelo will be back with later."

Me: "Then why don't your breastfeed them or give them bottles."

Her: "Their bottles are in a jug in the kitchen."

Me: "I'll go and fetch them." I get up from the couch and hurry to the kitchen, I get the bottles and walk back to the lounge and hand them to Mmathabo. "So, they always cry when you feed them food they don't like?"

Her: "They sometimes cry for fun or to just annoy me, and at night it gets worse, phew."

Me: "Next time pour some little gin/vodka in their bottles just for fun," she laughs.

Her: "You are crazy. Sabelo will literally kill me, yoh."

Me: "You can always make him drink half a bottle of gin/vodka too. Problem solved," we both laugh.

Her: "I can't wait for the day you become a mother. This I'd love to see, and possibly capture all the moments, it's going to be fun."

Me: "You will wait until Jesus comes back for that day to come sweetheart," she laughs.

Her: "We shall see. Tsakani's surname is Ngobeni just so you know. Let me go and put my babies to sleep, and leave you two to talk," she gets up from the couch taking her babies things

with her. I look at my mother, and she doesn't look okay, guess she's still sad about yesterday's confrontation, and I'm yet to confront her even further all I want are answers only.

Me: "Are you okay Mama?" Ey, no matter what she's still my mother and her health comes first.

Her: "I'm okay Nono. You said you have questions for me, what did you want to ask?" I look at her, and her eyes are half closed.

Me: "No. You aren't. Did you recently took your medication because they are the only ones that makes you sleep?" She nods. She's lying. I know how her meds drug her, but this is different. Something is just off about all this," I retrieve my phone from my pocket, and dial Dr Strydom number...

"Tammy. What can I do for you I'm driving?"

Me: "I need you here at the elite immediately something is wrong with my mother, I think she overdosed her pills or something," I'm panicking. My mom can't die, she can't.

Her: "I'm driving in actually, keep her talking until I get there," she hangs up. I get up from the couch I was sitting and cross to where she's sitting on zoning in & out. She's trying to keep her eyes open, but she can't. I keep on slapping her lightly.

Me: "Mama, mama, stay with me. Don't me like this mama please," tears are already threatening my eyes.

"Coming through, move, move!" Dr Strydom shouts coming in with the stretcher, she's with her workers. They pick up my mother from the couch, and put her on the stretcher they tie her with the belts, and wheel her out. Luckily for us there's a small hospital here in Elite. Dear God, please let her pull through. Was my mother trying to kill herself? But why because I'm 100% sure that It's not because of what happened yesterday. My mother survived Muzi's divorce and not once did she try committing suicide, something is off about all this. It just doesn't make any sense... But I will get to the bottom of it.

LUXOLO

“How is she?” I ask Dr Strydom getting up from the couch, she's been busy with my mother for over 3 hours. We are sitting in the lounge, Tsakani is here too they got here a few minutes ago they had to cut the meeting with his brothers short. She looks at me, and shake her head taking off her glasses in the process, she looks so drained. “Please tell me that she's still breathing, that she's still alive,” I continue saying tears already veiling my eyes.

“I'm sorry-” she looks down. “We've tried all we could, bu..., It was too late,” I shake my head, this can't be happening. My mother can't die, not yet. Tears are already streaming down my cheeks, but I steel myself to not burst out. Mmathabo's painful wail is what weakens me, and voice finding itself escaping my mouth. Tsakani pulls me into his embrace hushing me.

Tsakani: “Don't bullshit us Dr Strydom! Don't tell us that bullshit. You better make sure that Nomalanga is alive or else I will kill you. Do you hear me? Make sure that she's fucking still alive!”

Her: "I- I can't. As much as I'd like to bring her back to life, I can't. I'm not God. I'm sorry, but this is beyond me." Hhe, this woman. "She's gone, make peace with it." I lift my head from Tsakani's chest, and pin my eyes at her. The words tumble out of her mouth freely, it's like she's glad that my mom has passed on or something.

Me: "Excuse me?" I take 2 steps forward and before she knows it, I'm standing before her, our eyes lock. She doesn't seem bothered by it all.

Her: "Make peace with the fact that your mother is gone Tammy. She's never coming back!" I laugh.

Me: "My mom is still alive Strydom. What you are telling me now is pure bullshit. Ungitshela umnqundu! My love, keep everyone here make sure that no one leaves, I'll be back."

Him: "Will do just that, but where are you going?"

Me: “There's just something off about all of this, something is fishy, and I need to get to the bottom of it.”

Strydom: “And what does that has got anything to do with me?”

Me: “Because I have a feeling that you are somehow involved in all of this, and I'm yet to find out how. Excuse me,” I push past her, and rush to the mini hospital Ignoring Mmathabo calling my name. I spot one of the nurses taking a peep outside, clearly she's guarding someone. Something is going on here, and it's big.

My back is against the wall, and so are my hands, I use them to balance myself, and start walking trying not to make loud noise, even if I do make noise they still wouldn't do me shit because I will kill them without even thinking twice.

“Are you done yet?” The one who was at the door ask the other one inside.

“I can't seem to bring down the pillow to her face, I-I really can't,” she replies with a shaky voice.

Nurse 1: “Just suffocate her with the damn pillow, and I don't know why is Emma taking so long to return, I thought she was just going to convey a message.”

Nurse 2: “Why don't you come and do it? I mean, you are the brave one here.”

Her: “No. Emma, strictly asked you not me. Now do your job,” she hisses.

Nurse 2: “But I've never killed anyone before, and I will not start now.”

Her: “You will learn Jabu. Just do it, and let's get this over & done with. Kill her!” I sneer... Her eyes go wide in shock when she sees me leaning against the door frame, and she takes a step a back shaking her head.

I look at where my mother is, and she's surrounded by machines, but she doesn't have an oxygen mask on. The other nurse has dropped the pillow she had on the floor, she's shaking.

“Put the oxygen mask back in her face, then explain to me what the fuck is going on here,” I tell her taking out my gun from my waist. “Start singing,” walking around this mini hospital is not on, the smell of different medication throws me off, but because my mother is lying in one of the beds I'm forced to endure it. “Khulumani!”

Nurse 2: “W- we,” she shakes her head. I pull the trigger and shoot her on the thigh, and screams out in pain. The other nurse screams too.

Me: “Don't make me ask again, don't piss me off any further because I'm already pissed off. Hey, pretty doll. What's your name?” I ask the one who was playing guard at the door.

Her: “An- Annah Ledwaba,” I shoot her other thigh, and she screams again.

Me: "So, Annah. Why the fuck were you trying to kill my mother?" I wave the gun in the air.

Her: "I- we are jus... 't following orders," she says through clenched teeth.

Me: "Orders? From whom?"

Her: "Emma. Dr Strydom." I nod.

Me: "So, you were really- really going to kill my mother and for what?" She shakes her head. I shoot her on her right thigh again.

Her: "Ye-s. Yes, we were going too."

Me: "Do you have a family?" She quickly nods, and I laugh. "Your mother is still alive?" She narrows her eyes at me. "I asked you a question, and it will calm my tits down if you

answer it.” She nods. “How would you feel if you find someone trying to kill your mother?”

Her: “Angry.”

Me: “Exactly! And now you want to turn me into a twisted psycho, and I'm not one. But I do kill without showing any mercy, I will kill you, then kill your mother. Or I can always go and fetch your parents, children if you have any, and make you watch me kill them like cockroaches then kill you after that. How does that sound, because to me, it sounds like a good thriller movie with a twist don't you think?” She's crying, and hiccuping in between, great!

Her: “Please. Not my family, my mother.”

Me: “But you were ready to kill my mother, and for what? Money? You were promised a lump some of money I bet. I mean, you were ready to take a soul, hmmm. That's hypocrisy if you ask me. And you sweetheart what's your name?”

Nurse: "Jabu Radebe," this one has even done a number on herself. I was going to understand if she just peed, but she did the whole shitting no wonder the foul smell. Her face is covered in mucus mixed with tears. "I- I didn't kill your mother, I swear. She's still alive."

Me: "I know. Why didn't you kill her? You were given a task to carry, and you didn't do it, why?"

Her: "I just couldn't do it," wiping her tears. "I've never killed before," I nod.

Me: "Then why did you agree in the beginning to be part of all this? I mean, you could've said no the very first time they told you this."

Her: "I thought I could do it. I wanted to prove myself to Dr Strydom."

Me: "Prove what to her exactly by killing patients? Guess, this is what she always does. Kill, kill, kill, and more killing. And the

worst part of it all she uses you, her nurses to do the killings for her. Imagine how many people she killed so far? Shame, la kuse bus stop ke. In this case she will be the one dying, and you, my dear will kill her for me. She will die by your hand, understand?" She shakes her head. "Then I will kill you!" I point the gun at her...

Her: "I will do it, I will."

Me: "Get yourself cleaned up, you smell like a rotten cabbage. Out of my sight now!" She hurries away. "And you, Annah. How many souls did you take? And don't lie shame because I will turn you into a scrap baby girl."

Her: "I-, my phone rings disturbing the moment, I retrieve it from my pocket, and it's Biggie."

Me: "Biggie."

Her: "Hey, smallie. Where are you?"

Me: "I'm at the elite busy with something, sup?"

Her: "I wanted to invite you & Tsakani over for dinner tonight."

Me: "I wish we can come, but something urgent came up," I look at my mother as she's lying peacefully in that bed.

Her: "You don't sound okay. What's wrong."

Me: "Nomalanga. She's... Actually, you know what let me rather not tell you because you don't give a fuck about her or her well-being." I'm already picturing her rolling her eyes at the mention of her name.

Her: "Oh, okay then. You will let me know when you are free."

Me: "I will do just that."

Her: "I love you."

Me: "I love you too," hanging up. I look at Annah. "Where's my mother's file?" She points at the bag that is on top of the medication dispenser. "Who does it belong too?"

Her: "Emma." I nod... I get it off from the top, and put it on top of the empty bed, and rampage it.

"Strychnine," I say that out loud as I go through my mother's file. What on earth is that now? But I'm sure google can help, or Annah. She's a nurse after all she's bound to know. "Annah," I turn to face her

and I find her moving to the door with her ass, she can't be serious right now. I laugh shaking my head. "What's Strychnine?" I ask walking toward her, and I crouch when I get to her the gun is still in my hand...

Her: It's a poi-son," I gesture with my hand for her to go on. "It's a common pesticide, its style points is causing one of the most horrific deaths of all: Once taken every muscle in your body spasms violently until you die from exhaustion," where on earth did my mother get this poison from?

Me: "What?" She shrugs. "So, my mother was supposed to die a painful death, but instead Emma decided to quicken the process by wanting to suffocate my mother?" I look at her, and she nods. Fuck!

Her: "But... The poison have been drained in her system."

Me: "Then why try suffocating my mother with a pillow if the poison has been drained from her system? And how does one get the poison?" This doesn't make sense.

"It was after Emma received a call. Someone called her, and she told that person that the poison has already been drained out of your mother's system. And whoever that person is told her to try other ways to kill her, hence the pillow method. The poison is found by connections as far as I know." Jabu says stepping inside the room, she looks cleaned up.

Me: "So, there is someone out there who wants my mother dead? But who?"

Her: "I think that person is amongst all those people residing here."

Annah: "Shut the hell up Jabu!" We both turn to look at her. "You don't know what you are talking about, just stop lying!"

Me: "Now we are getting somewhere. Do you know something that we don't know?"

Her: "I don't know anything, I was just telling Jabu to stop lying because we also don't know who Emma was talking too."

Me: "Oh, okay. Guess we will find out..." I point my gun at her forehead, and shoot her twice. Her heads fall back to the wall. Jabu screams, and she pisses herself great. "Guard my mother, and she better still be alive when I come back, uyezwa?" She quickly nods. "Good." I drag Annah's body outside. And all of a sudden I have a lot of questions running through my mind, and it brings to this one; "what was Emma coming here to do? And why did she come with the nurses?" Now I believe that whoever wants to kill my mother is someone close, and present

with us... Mirror, mirror on the wall who's the culprit amongst
them all?



TSAKANI

Dr Strydom is pacing up & down as she keeps on looking at her wrist watch. She looks scared now, or guilty I don't know. But she looks like someone who has failed at doing something.

“Kanty, what's taking Tammy so long?” Mmathabo asks with a mouth full of food, manners.

“I wonder too, I need to leave in 5 minutes I have another patient to attend too. I still don't understand why we are kept prisoners,” Dr Strydom says.

Hlulani: “That's what baffles me too.”

Me: “I am smelling blood, and very close, too close.”

Sabelo: “What blood? Your girlfriend has kept us prisoners in here, and you are telling us about smelling blood? Blood that we don't even smell? Sowahlanya?”

Hlulani: “I can smell it too, Mmathabo take the kids away.”

Her: “Why? What's going on?”

Me: “Just do it. We don't want them getting traumatized.”

Her: “What? You want me to miss all the action? I ain't going anywhere, the kids can close their eyes I'm not going anywhere, nope.” Sabelo sighs, and shakes his head.

Mmangwane: “I will take them.”

Me: “Thank you.” She gets up from the chair, and tells the kids to follow her. “Hlulani, go and open the door since you are much closer to it, bubbles is nearing closer,” he nods, and attend the door. I chuckle when I hear him gasp.

Sabelo: “What's... Whoa. And now? What the actual fuck!” He says as bubbles steps inside the house dragging one of the nurses. Low gasps from everyone present comes to life.

“Unfortunately for everyone here, this is the first body of many more to come. You guys like playing God with other people's life! Innocent people for that matter, and today I'll be the one playing God in your lives.” Her eyes wander around until they stop at Emma, a smirk breaks out of her lips and Emma swallows at absolute nothing as her eyes dart to the body on the floor. “Oh, her? She was being too noisy, I had to silence her, but I'm sure she will wake up in no time,” she shrugs.

Me: “What's going on?”

Her: “Nothing. Well, not yet anyway.”

Mmathabo: “You killed a person because she was noisy!”

Her: “Yeah, and besides her presence was starting to annoy me, I had to do something. Anyway, we have a situation here. Emma, sit down.”

Emma: “For what? I can't sit I have another patient to see, and keeping me here for bullshit will delay me,” bubbles laugh.

Her: “Keeping you here for bullshit? Oh, no. Sweetheart, I'm saving whoever the patient is from getting killed by you!”
Emma gasps.

Emma: “What the hell are you talking about? I've been a Dr for close to 20 years now, and I don't remember killing anyone! Stop accusing me of things I know nothing of, Tammy! What you are doing right now it's uncalled-for!”

Her: “Shut up! Shut the hell up, Emma! You are a killer, and you know it. Ungumbulali wena mnqundu wakho!”

Sabelo: “What are you talking about Tammy? Emma has been our family Dr for close to 7 years now, and not once did she kill anyone.”

Her: “Yes. Your family Dr, not mine or my mother's. Besides, not everyone is fond of my mother here. There are those who hate her with passion, and wouldn't mind killing her given the chance. And unfortunately for them they've failed, my mother is still alive and breathing through the oxygen.”

Us: “What?”

Okuhle: “Alive? How? Because Emma here told us that she's dead, I mean we all heard her telling you that.”

Her: “That's only because she thought that her nurses would've killed my mother with a pillow by now,” we all gasp.

Emma: “What? How dare you accuse me of such? Why would I want to kill your mother? I don't even know your mother that well for me to kill her for Christ's sake!”

Her: “You are right, you don't know her, but the one who paid you to kill her even after you've drained the poison in her body know her well enough to want her dead.”

Me: “Wait. You are trying to tell us that someone wants your mother dead and that person is around here with us?” She nods.

Sabelo: “And now you are accusing the family of wanting your mother dead? You think that one of us here want your mother dead? Are you insane? Your mother is not even that special. Tsakani, you better reprimand your woman because right now she's accusing us of something we don't know of, she's trying to break the family apart!”

Her: “But then again I wasn't talking to you Sabelo. Stop being forward because right now I'm talking to Emma, and not you. Emma here knows exactly what I'm talking about. She knows, or don't you Emma?” I look at her, and her eyes are wandering around.

Emma: "I don't know anything! TK, please tell your woman to stop whatever she's doing!" Bubbles laugh.

Her: "You think this is some kind of a sick joke ne-? You think that this is a stand-up comedy neh?" She gets on top of the table, and sit down crossed legged. Her gun is in her hand...

Babalwa: "This is all just time-wasting some of us have lives, and things to do. We can't sit here and listen to rubbish!"

Bubbles sneers. "I don't have time to waste, and if what is being said here is true then someone come with concrete proof. Give us something believable than making nonsensical accusations!"

Okuhle: "Exactly!" Bubbles whistles.

Sabelo: "Me too. This is tim-," a sound of a gun shot goes off cutting Sabelo mid-sentence. The women scream, bubbles is standing on top of the table now, and she has shot Emma on the shoulder, sometimes her speed surpasses me. She's too fast when it comes to reacting to bullshit. "What the hell? Have you lost your mind!"

Bubbles: "I will blow off your brains right now Emma if you don't tell the truth. I don't bluff, and this goes to the rest of you. You bullshit me, I deal with you. I don't care whether you are Tsakani's family or what! You are all full of shit! Excluding TK, Hlulani & Mmathabo. The rest of you are nonsense, bloody swines! Fuck off!"

Me: "Emma." I look at her. And she clenches her teeth her hand covering her bleeding shoulder. "What is she talking about? In fact, what were you coming to do here?"

Her: "I- I was paid. I was paid to kill her." We all gasp in shock. "And before you called me, someone already did hence I said I'm at the gate."

Mmathabo: "What? Sent by whom and why?"

Me: "Is that person in here with us right now?" She looks down shaking her head. Bubbles stop whistling, and looks at her.

Bubbles: "That person is here, and don't worry yourself about showing us because I already know who it is, and I know exactly how I'm going to deal with them. So, Emma. Tell me this; what does Strychnine do to infants? Does it also react the way it does to adults?" She widens her eyes, shock written all over her face.

Me: "What's that?"

Her: "A deadly poison, but I wouldn't mind trying Sarin too on an infant."

Emma: "No. That's too dangerous, please don't do it."

Her: "Yet, someone wanted to kill my mother using Strychnine? Isn't it dangerous too?"

Emma: "It is."

Her: "But still someone used it on her, the only difference is that no one will be able to drain it out of the infant. How ironic."

Hlulani: "Hectic."

Mmathabo: "I can't believe you tried killing Nomalanga Emma. We trusted you as our family Dr, but all of a sudden you decided to be a killer? A whole white you, a killer? Sies, Emma. I'm so disappointed in you! Ngathi ngingakushaya ngempama uyanyanyisa! And to the person who wanted Nomalanga dead, fuck you njandini, and I'm not scared of any of you here. Show yourself mbulali!" Mmathabo is fuming, she's angry.

"Who amongst you here wanted my mother dead? And don't tell me that no one because I will fuck all of you up!" We all look at the door when we hear Luxolo's voice. She's with her husband who isn't even showing any smile, none whatsoever.

Bubbles: "Well, we will deal with that person later, don't worry. I'm surprised seeing you here."

Her: "I know. And I'm here to make sure that you are okay, I mean after the call I wasn't at ease, and I had to come and see what's wrong with Nomalanga."

Bubbles: "Haike, it's nice having a big sister mus."

Her: "And then what happened to her?"

Mmathabo: "Your sister shot her, I just don't understand why she didn't just kill her!"

Her: "Oh, that." She takes bubbles gun from her hand, and shoot Emma twice on the forehead. "Sorted," shrugging.

Bubbles: "You take after me indeed I'm impressed."

Her: "Oh, shame. Poor you. Let's go and see Nomalanga." They walk out holding hands. We are stunned, but some are traumatized. I fuck with their bond...

Sabelo: "Yoh!"

TSAKANI

No one dared said anything after bubbles exited the room with Luxolo except for Sabelo's dramatic "yoh!" that was a killer one. The ladies look traumatized, Okuhle is worse because she even passed out during the whole ordeal. Thembeke threw up on the spot, and Sabelo is shocked, and that's only because he doubted bubbles abilities. Now he knows better than to mess with bubbles, and her sister. Ali is still standing in the same position he was standing in when they got here, his eyes are the only thing moving around.

"So, hhayi shame." Mmathabo says clapping hands. "People just kill without even thinking twice, banyisana nou asiyekeni ukudelela bahlali because we will end up dying. I'm still wondering who wanted Nomalanga dead. You guys aren't scared of dying, you have livers with bones Ishuu," she continues saying.

"They really do have it. They just signed their death wishes unprovoked. Nomalanga is one of the kindest woman I know, and for one to want her dead it doesn't make any sense. And I

wonder who is it, because judging by bubbles & Emma's conversation that killer is amongst you here, but who?"

Hlulani: "The killer knows her/himself, and I'm sure they are holding poop in their pants/skirt right now because of fear. They saw how ruthless, and zero fucks Tammy gives. Now imagine the two sisters dealing with the culprit? I mean, these people don't care they don't have any mercy on anyone, I'm scared on behalf of the person who attempted killing Nomalanga. Sometimes people need to understand that other people's ancestors work overtime to protect their loved ones from any harm meant for them."

Mmathabo: "We can only wonder, on a serious note can someone please remove Emma's body here before Mmangwane comes here with the kids I don't want them getting traumatized, they are still young to be witnessing such."

Me: "Hlulani, Sabelo, let's pick her up and take her body outside." Sabelo's knees are shaking, almost forgot that he's a coward, yet he's older than us, mxm. "Sabelo!" I punch him on his shoulder.

Him: “Damn it maarn, Tsakani! What's your problem?” Eeh, why is yelling now?

Me: “We need your help in taking out Emma's body out of the house before Mmangwane comes back with the kids.”

Him: “What? You want me to help you take the corpse outside? How much more do you want to see me traumatized? I have been traumatized enough already, this is why I never watch action movies! I hate seeing blood.” And he hates action movies shame, he'd rather watch comedy or cartoons. Sometimes I think that he's lowkey-gay...

Mmathabo: “My husband is such a weakling nina, and that's I'm always strong for the both of us. I will have to take him for therapy I don't want him getting nightmares,” Hlulani chuckles.

“I will help,” Ali says stepping forward. I nod, and all 3 of us pick her up. Hlulani has her legs, Ali hands, and me her back, and we walk out of the house taking baby steps, yhiiii she's heavy nina, yoh.

We can't just put her anywhere, the big trash bin will do for now until we figure out what to do with her body.

Hlulani: "We can't just leave her here. The kids play all over the yard they might stumble upon her body."

Me: "We will put her inside the trash bin until we figure something out." He nods. We put her inside the bin.

Him: "Now that I've helped you removing evidence, does that make me an accomplice to the murder?" I laugh.

Me: "Yeah, if we go down, you go down too."

Him: "What?" Ali snarls. "Yeah, I'm an accomplice, I guess," I shake my head, and we walk back inside the house. Ali's python tattoos are the ish, but scary at the same time they are covering his neck. He is taller & bigger than me, but I can still beat him, ngingamushaya anye mina.

Me: "So, Ali. What do you do for a living?"

Him: "I remove problems in this world." It simply means that he's a hitman.

Me: "Willingly or paid?"

Him: "I pay myself, but some do pay me if they want me to remove problems for them."

Me: "I see. It must be nice."

Him: "It used to be before, but now I no longer enjoy it. My wife & I are done with being gangsters. We are approaching 40 years soon, and we need to get our priorities in order, we don't want to expose our kids to such life, they deserve a better life. And luckily for us, we don't have enemies lurking around the shadows I've long dealt with them." I nod. "This is your time young ones, enjoy it, and make the most of it."

Me: "We sure will, and thanks for the house man. It really means a lot to me."

Him: “No stress man, after what my wife told me about you & Tammy not having privacy in your own house we both saw it fit to give you the house, at least the state agents won't call us any more annoying us about selling them the house,” I nod laughing.

Me: “Thanks, once more man.” Since, I didn't go with Batista to town I guess I will have to go with bubbles seeing that both our plans got interrupted.

Mmathabo: “I tried cleaning up the blood, but we will need inyaga to cleanse the house because I don't want to have bad dreams at night, or Sabelo shouting in his sleep,” she tells us as we step inside the house. The others are not around I wonder where are they...

Hlulani: “Where's everyone?”

Her: “In their rooms. They all left when I asked them to help me clean up, they are still traumatized about what happened, they've never seen someone getting killed before.”

Hlulani: "I'm sure they think that the two of us once killed people since we are the ones who are cleaning up the mess."

Her: "Exactly. But I don't care about them, they need to understand that Tsakani is a gangster, and killings will happen every now & then especially that we now live together. Tsakani's enemies will come at any given time that's if he has any, and we must all be ready, and adapt to this lifestyle. The sooner everyone accepts this reality, the better for all of us."

Hlulani: "You need to understand that this is a total different thing to them, they are not used to this side of violence. I'm also not used to this, it was better while it was a distance thing that would've been understandable, but now that we are living it. Yoh, hhayi it's a total different story."

Her: "Different? That's bullshit. Everyone here knows Tsakani's lifestyle, and they knew very well that sooner or later we will be bound to witness it within us, especially after the war, but ke... Who am I to advocate for everyone? And unfortunately for everyone this is a house full of killers whether directly or indirectly."

Me: “You are right, but one thing I will ever do is to put you guys in danger intentionally. None of my enemies know about this place, and as far as I'm concerned I have no enemies lurking in the shadows. You are all safe.”

Her: “But that doesn't change the fact that we live with a killer in this house.”

Hlulani: “And Tammy will deal with that killer since she said she knows him/her, funny enough I don't suspect anyone. I don't think Bulelwa did it though as much as she doesn't like Nomalanga, she would never kill her.”

Me: “We will never know hey, let's just say everyone is a suspect until Tammy tell us who the killer is.”

Mmathabo: “You are right. I'm also a suspect, but I didn't kill Nomalanga. I love that woman, I can't wait for the day where Tammy exposes the real killer.”

Hlulani: “We will probably pass out when she exposes him/her.” I shake my head.

★ » ★ «

LUXOLO

I thought I was the only one whose phone doesn't have pattern/password, but it seems like I was wrong because Emma is in the same boat as me. Biggie is sitting on the edge of the bed looking at Nomalanga, and Jabu is cleaning up Annah's blood on the wall and on the floor, traumatized as she is she's doing her job. Yazi biggie may act like she doesn't care about Nomalanga, but deep down she does, a lot for that

matter. Her worried expression says it all, I know that Nomalanga did her bad and all but she, too, deserves a second chance in fact, everyone deserves a second chance, well, not entirely everyone but those who really deserve it.

I'm going through Emma's phone log and there's a number that she's been receiving calls frequently from, and the last call she received from this very same number was 30 minutes ago. Hmmm, I wonder who do they belong too, but my suspicions are already on someone, I sommar suspect her, and if it is indeed her... Hehehe, may God and her ancestors accept her soul. Messages are cleared, and she doesn't have WhatsApp.

“Found out who is it already?” Biggie asks averting her attention to me.

“I know who it is, but I just want to be sure before I act on it,” I reply walking to her.

Her: “Don't you have true caller?”

Me: “No. Let me download it.”

“No need. I have it, but you can still download it for future purposes,” Jabu tells me.

Me: “Oh, please check for me who these numbers belong too,” handing her the phone.

Biggie: “When is Nomalanga going to wake up, Jabu?”

Her: “When she wants too, but it won't be long until she's awake,” she nods. “These numbers belong to Thembeke Mvilane.” I chuckle shaking my head. Just as I suspected! Now it explains why she was chatting me up earlier on, she was actually trying to delay me from getting inside the house, if I continued chatting her up I would've been too late to save my mother. Hahaha, bloody whore. But wait, where did she get the money to pay Dr Strydom? Because I'm sure that Emma was paid a lot of money, her services charges are insane, even her consultation is someone's 3 months salary. Or maybe she does have money, after all I don't know how full her pockets are.

Biggie: "Any idea who she is smallie?" She gets off the bed.

Me: "Yeah, it's that pregnant granny. Talon's baby Mama!"

Her: "What's her problem with Nomalanga? And was she amongst you when I came inside the house?"

Me: "Yes, she was, and I don't know what her problem is with Nomalanga. We are yet to find out, but then there's only one problem."

Her: "What is it?"

Me: "We can't sort her out since she's still pregnant, we need to wait for her to give birth first then we deal with her accordingly. Her baby won't be an orphan then, Talon will take care of it once born," she clicks her tongue shaking her head.

Her: "No. We need to deal with her now smallie, and I know just a person who can help her give birth fast without hospital

equipment, and shit. She will slice her up once, and her baby will be born.”

Me: “No. Let's wait for her to give birth first Biggie, then we confront her, and she will give us all the answers we need. She will tell us why she hates Nomalanga to an extent of wanting her dead, I mean my mother is a good woman, well, not good-good but yeah.”

Her: “Guess you are right. How far long is she?”

Me: “I don't know, but she looks very much ready to pop in a month or two,” she sneers.

Her: “A month or two? We can't wait that long Tammy! She must die, I mean she was ready to get your mother, Nomalanga, killed without even giving it a second doubt, why must we be lenient with her? I just don't get it!”

Me: "I don't want to give Talon any reason to hate me if I kill his unborn baby, and I definitely don't want to rob him of the chance of being a father. The baby is innocent in all of this."

Her: "Whatever. But we need to quicken her labor pains or something, since she's on her 3rd trimester it will make things easy for us, she will give birth to a pre-term baby, and that baby will come out healthy."

Me: "Let me sleep on it, then I will reply you tomorrow. I'm sure some mind-blowing sex will get me back to my senses!"

Her: "I trust it will, you really need it." I laugh.

Me: "So, I take it that you've forgiven Nomalanga."

Her: "I haven't, but I do want justice for her. She's your mother after all, and she was all that you had until I came along. Well, and until Tsakani came along of course."

Me: "I see. Hopefully one day you will find it in your heart to forgive her, and give her a chance to be a mother to you, and make it up for all the time lost."

Her: "I don't know about that honestly. Did you ask her about who your father is?"

Me: "I was going to ask her today, and this happened I guess I will have to wait for her to recover, and ask her. Do you think we share a same father?"

Her: "No. We don't."

Me: "How do you know?"

Her: "Because I'm the only daughter he has, but the might be a possibility tha-t, argh. Never mind."

Me: "No. Tell me. The might be a possibility that?"

Her: "Forget I said anything. I'm sure your mother will tell you everything, and just to let know I hate my father too. I truly do."

Me: "Why did you even start telling me? Don't start something you can't finish, Tammy!"

Her: "Your mother will tell you everything, I'm in no position to tell you this. My mouth can be much at times, it's best you hear this from your mother herself than me."

Me: "Why don't you just tell me?"

Her: "Because I, too, don't know anything."

Me: "Mxm. Yet you call yourself my sister, fuck you. Besides, you are the one who told me, I didn't ask you!"

Her: "I know, but trust me when I say it will be better if you hear it from your mother's mouth." Nxa, yazi abantu bayadina.

Why bring up an interesting topic only for you not to go ahead with it? Ai. Ubu selfish nje lobo. Luxolo is being selfish now.

“Urh-m, I think I'm done for the day. Can I leave?” Jabu says. Yazi I've completely forgotten about her presence yazi.

Biggie: “You still here? I've completely forgotten about you.”

Her: “I've figured.”

Biggie: If we allow you to leave, what are we expected to do when she wakes up? We are clueless about these things.”

Me: “Why don't you be her stay in nurse once until she fully healed or something? I mean, we can't watch over her, and besides you are the experienced one here.”

Jabu: “But you do know that nothing is for free right?”

Me: "Of course. We will pay you just make sure that she becomes better," she nods.

Biggie: "And if you need anything do not hesitate to tell us."
Ncoahhh, she cares, how cute. At least she's trying to warm up to her. But, I still want to know what she wanted to tell me, and knowing her no matter how much I press on she will never tell me, yinja this child. I still love her anyway...

VUYO

After so many months of being here in this place I now I call home, I've finally decided to go back to my house just to check how things are going, and if the war didn't leave me homeless not that I will go back there anyway, then I will enroute to Blessing's home. I hope I will find his mother, and she will be willing to give me answers she's my only hope now, and I'm sure she's realized now that life is too short, and you can die any time. Naledi has been my peace & sanity here, and Blessing really grew fond of her these past couple of months, they are best of friends I'm always sidelined. Yes, after spending a lot of time together we decided to give us a chance to be in a relationship, and see where it leads us. So far, everything is going smoothly between the two of us no complaints.

I get to my old town and some of the houses especially those in the forefront are damaged, as I cruise further deep within the neighborhood, houses from here remained the same. I pull over on the other side of the road just across my house, and first check out if there isn't any movement taking place, none. There's none. But I'm sure Cindy is inside the house drowning

herself in wine. I step out of the car and cross the street... The gate is unlocked, she's here, mxm.

“Oh, so, you decided to come back,” those words leave her mouth immediately I step inside the kitchen. She's busy cooking. I sigh.

“I'm not here for you. I'm back to get the rest of my stuff.”

Her: “Stuff? Stuff in whose house?”

Me: “I'm not doing this with you, Cindy.” She laughs.

Her: “You left for months Vuyo and not once did you try keeping in touch. Do you know how worried sick I was thinking about what if something bad happened to you? The sleepless nights I had because of you? Do you have any idea what I've been through all because of you? You caused me nothing but heartache Vuyo, even now you don't care about me. You don't even bother asking how am I and shit!”

Me: "You see, Cindy. The very same moment you made me choose between you & Blessing the love I had for you got completely washed off my heart, I didn't know you as that person before. I mean, Blessing is just a child you had no right to treat him the way you did."

Her: "Oh, is it? Just because I didn't want that filthy ugly looking thing in my house made you leave and never glared back or tried keeping in touch with me? All in all, you chose a stranger over me. Your wife? The person who was with you through it all? 10 years of marriage meant nothing to you when you chose a stranger over me."

Me: "As I stated before; I'm not doing this with you, and besides our marriage was no longer exciting. We were forcing things, and to tell you the truth this break made me realize what matters most in my life, and that's my happiness & sanity. I was doing just fine alone these past couple of months without you nagging me or starting unnecessary fights, being away from you is mind soothing honestly. I like it that way."

Her: "What?" Chuckling. "What are you exactly saying to me Vuyo because I'm not understanding, I'm not following."

Me: "I want a divorce." She gasps.

Her: "Divorce? That's one thing you will never get Vuyo, ever! I will not grant you that nonsense of a wish, we are going to sit down and talk about this like the adults that we are!"

Me: "There's nothing to talk about Cindy. We are done, we are over and besides, our marriage was no longer the same we were just forcing it," she laughs.

Her: "Who is she huh? Who the fuck is that bitch that stole you away from me? I know that there's some bitch involved. Instead of being here with me when the war took place you decided to be a coward and left me all alone to face that fucking war while you were busy with your bitch having the time of your life!"

Me: "Their war didn't affect you because it wasn't meant for you, and for your information not that you don't know it, but I left before even the war took place. And there's no bitch involved." I'm taking all these decisions by myself," I can't tell

her about Naledi yet, who knows what she might do to her because right now I'm picking up traits of being a psycho in her, gzus, this woman.

Her: "Even so. You were supposed to be here with me until the war ended, but no you didn't, and it's fine. Now that you are here, we are going to talk about us. You will not leave until we are done fixing our marriage, no one is divorcing another one here. We are going to make it work whether you like it or not, you are not going anywhere! This is the 'till death do us apart' moment." Yuuuh Jehovah. Who is this crazy woman now? This is not the Cindy I know, foshoh the war affected her mentality somehow because kuyahlanywa manje.

I don't even understand as to why she's behaving as if she cares all of a sudden, this woman has a loose screw, a screw I didn't know about until now, and I'm afraid of what she will do to me if I prolong this conversation about giving it all up. I think it's best if I leave before things get out of hands. And I can't tell her that I'm leaving because I know that she will not allow me to leave, but...

Me: “You know what, let me make a quick call to the office then we will talk about us.”

Her: “And the sudden change of mind?” She raised her brow.

Me: “I've just realized that I wasn't being fair to you. I was selfish, and I chose a mere stranger over you. You & I have been through a lot together, and it was really not fair of me to do what I did. I'm sorry, and forget what I said about getting a divorce, guess I was going through a stage but not sure which one.”

Her: “Now we are talking. You are finally back in your senses, I like that.” She gives me a very creepy smile. “Anyway, make that call and be quick, I'll go and set up the table so long. Don't worry about the food it will be enough for the both of us, guess my guards were right when they told me to cook enough food they knew that you were coming,” I give her a smile accompanied by a nod. She returns it and disappears to the dining area. Time waits for no man, it's now or never.

I hurry out of the house plus the door wasn't closed, I sprint outside, and off to my car, I quickly get in. I roar the engine to life and drive off quickly leaving a trail of smoke behind me. Looking at the review mirror I see her standing at the gate, fuming with anger. Yasis, this woman is crazy! What the hell happened to the old Cindy that I know? Nc, nc, life. Now I wonder what she was going to do to me if I stayed any longer... She would've probably killed me or something. Next time when I come back I must come with some backup.

I hope Blessing's mother won't turn me away I don't need another drama, I've had enough drama to last me a decade.

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TSAKANI

The house is exactly how we wanted it to be from the decor to the setting even though it took us almost a whole month to decide which interior to go for. Milan really came through for us with the interior, we are thankful to her. Milan, Batista & Maxine are the only ones who know our new house, and we told them straight up not to tell the others. We will invite them when we do the housewarming don't know when though. The master's bedroom is to die for. I don't know how Batista did it, but he managed to buy us Jiyane atelier headboards, and some sofas. He said we need to support local brands, we can't always support International brands whereas we have our own people whose brands are as good as international brands, and I must agree with him though.

I gave Talon the old house, and trust me when I say he kicked everyone out of the house he's now staying with his baby mama, and to be honest with you things are not going well for the two of them. Well, Thembeke hasn't been the same ever since the confrontation day at Elite, I'm sure she's still traumatized about what took place there and annoys Talon so much because Thembeke doesn't want to go for counseling. I, too, was wondering about why the sudden change or maybe

it's hormones who knows? But she was never the same ever since that day, and Talon says that she's even struggling to sleep at night. Anyway, asikho endabeni zabantu... Milan is staying with Leon, and no they are not romantically involved or maybe they are, but they don't want to tell us, yet, well, we shall find out soon. Lee is staying with Lindiwe, and the rest of those other dwellers are staying at Talon's flat, they weren't happy about the sudden changes, but they had to be done.

To this day, I still don't know who tried killing Nomalanga, and bubbles don't want to tell me anything, but she knows the killer and my suspicions are on Babalwa because she's the one who doesn't like Nomalanga. Everyone loves that woman except her. I wonder why was she trying to kill her, sighs. She said that the culprit will be exposed soon, and we won't believe who is it. Oh, and Nomalanga is healed now, but she's under serious watch, Hlulani offered to watch over her. His divorce with Okuhle is still hasn't been finalized yet, Okuhle doesn't want to sign the papers, she's bluntly refusing. Guess she has some hope that they will make it work, and she's no longer with Babalwa she now spends most of her time with Mmathabo. My wish is for her & Hlulani to fix things but Hlulani? Shame.

“Finally, now we have our own space, and we can fuck anyhow we want, and anywhere, not forgetting having those naked dinner nights on the balcony we've been talking about!”

Bubbles say stepping inside the bedroom butt naked she just finished showering.

“You can say that again. Hopefully today I'm going to get some marshmallows on top of the roof it's been a while since I last got some,” she giggles.

Her: “I was going to say let's start now, but then you haven't bathed, so a no will do, and besides I need to start making us lunch. Tonight it will be all about us.”

Me: “You promise?”

Her: “Yes sir. So, I've been thinking.”

Me: “About?”

Her: "I need to open the club again since things are promising now for the people, and the government is doing their bits to help with building homes for the homeless."

Me: "What about those people who live there?"

Her: "I will move them, and I've already told them that they will be moved to the new homes that they are currently building once completed, and they weren't pleased about it, not even a little smattering, they didn't want to hear any of it, they said that they will strike and burn down the club into ashes," I can't help it, but laugh.

Me: "That's not nice. Sometimes helping people can be a nuisance because they now feel entitled about your property, the very same energy they want to use to burn down the club they should've used it to stop the war, but hey. People just don't want to suffer they want everything offered to them on a silver platter, and the helping hand must be the one suffering while they are sitting comfortably."

Her: "Exactly my point. I dared them to burn it down, but hey, they don't have the balls to do that."

Me: "You'll never know. Anyway, are you going to rehire the very same people who were working there?"

Her: "No. I'm going to change it, it will no longer be like how it was before. I'm going to give it a serious appearance lift, it's going to be more classy now, and it will only be strictly formal attire, I don't want these pharas who will keep on harassing my workers. No woman likes being harassed ask me, I know."

Me: "So, you want only the rich & famous ones? Not us amaphara?" She giggles.

Her: "Yes. You guys can go and support club vixen, heard that Adele is making a comeback, and they've already started with renovations at her club."

Me: "Heard too, but I haven't forgotten what she did to me. She will still play for doing me dirty like that, and for getting Spikiri killed."

Her: "Izinja zama grudge madoda," we both laugh. "Please deal with her. I also have people to deal with too," I nod.

Me: "Yazi, you still haven't told me what happened to you back in Italy."

Her: "I will now. Go and take a bath first before I tell you all about it, and knowing you. You won't believe me, but at least I have witnesses," she stands on her toes and kisses my cheek. "I'll go and prepare us something to eat so long."

Me: "I love you."

Her: "I know, and I love you more," she winks and step out of the room. She's wearing one of my T-shirts. Guess it's time I also get back in the game since everything is going back to normal. I need to call all my contacts and tell them that we are

back in the game, and I also need to find a way to get club vixen to be mine. Adele will regret messing with me.

My phone rings as I'm exiting the bedroom, eish. I wonder who is it. I turn around and take two steps toward the bed I pick it up, and it's Talon.

“Ek'se ntwana.”

“Hhe ndoda kushubile,” he speaks in a rush.

Me: “Yehlisa, bese uyang'tshela ukuthi kumashani,” (calm down, and tell me what's going on)

Him: “Thembeke. Uyamemeza la uthi uyadedela manje angazi ngitsune ini,” (she's screaming saying that she's releasing, now don't know what to do)

Me: “Hhayi ntwana. Incosi isendleni mvayise (the baby is on the way take her at Elite) I will call Dr. Mashifane so long. Mvayise manje ndoda,” (take her now)

Him: “Hhayi, angeke njayami. Ngeke ngiyitshune daai dan even le nou ngila endlini encane yenza I plan fast,” (I will not do it, even now I'm at the toilet)

Me: Laughing. “Ek'se ndoda vayisa le sgogwane sakho e Elite or else kuzomosheka. Uzodedela lapho, yenza fast sizohlangana daar,” (take your old woman to Elite, or else things will get ruined. She will give birth right there, we will meet there) I hang up before he can respond.

“And then? Where are you rushing too?” She asks immediately stepping inside the kitchen wearing my sneaker.

Me: “Going to Elite, Thembeke is in labor and Talon is a mess. Can you believe that he has locked himself in the bathroom leaving Thembeke alone?”

Her: “Oh, is it?” I nod. “Okay. You can leave.”

Me: “Aren't you coming with me?”

Her: “No. You can go alone, I will see you when you come back. I need to catch up on some series I've missed out on a lot, and possibly practice new sex styles who know,” I laugh opening the door.

Me: “I will try to be early. I love you.”

Her: “I love you too my love, and please keep me updated.”

Me: “I will.” I step out of the kitchen and head to the garage. Talon better be at Elite when I get there, I wonder what his first reaction when Thembeke started screaming, nxa, this boy. I can imagine him screaming with her, if Thembeke gives birth to a boy, he must not take after Talon because wawu, uzohlanya.

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LUXOLO

I'm catching up on money heist, and it's been a long time since I last watch it, I have more series to catch up on, and doing so for the rest of the week will satisfy me. Now that Thembeke has given birth, I think it's time we put our plan into action and do away with her once and for all. I will have to let Luxolo know about this first, we don't have any more time to waste we've given her a month already, and I know that she didn't enjoy it because she was thinking overtime. Probably another thing that triggered her labor pains.

My phone clicks notifying me that I have a low battery, gosh, how I'm lazy to get from this couch, and go and plug it in the

charger, not that I have serious people who will call me though. So, the plans I have for the club are big, and the costs are expensive, but I don't mind because I can always sell the diamonds Bella once gave me. Oh, my God, I wonder if her body has been found or what because the last time I checked, she was considered as a missing person her death was never confirmed of which makes me wonder. If she were to come back let's say maybe 5 to 10 years later and claim all that she's left with me, what will I tell her though? Haha, of course, the war. I will simply tell her that they got lost amidst the war.

My phone rings at that very same moment, and it's Milan.

“Babe.”

“Hey, Tammy. What are you doing tomorrow?”

Me: “I will know when I wake up, what's up?”

Her: “The girls & I decided to go out for some brunch just to catch up and unwind.”

Me: "Who came up with the idea?"

Her: "Lindiwe." I laugh.

Me: "I'm sure she's trying to escape Lee because she's been complaining that Lee wants sex every day, and yet she doesn't always have the energy for it," she giggles.

Her: "She's just being dramatic. I can kill for that kind of sex Tammy, like a girl! Barista and I haven't done the deeds yet, and I'm scared to initiate it first, and naye ngapha ngathi he's scared to initiate it, I don't even know what to do anymore, and seeing him naked every day tortures me!" I laugh.

Me: "Girl, wear your big girl's shoes and hlasela your mans. Wear something sexy, try dirty talks, dance for him, and if all that fails, hahaha. Finish him, finish him, girl. Mngene, zinyobele yena girl, dumisa umshini uvele uzidlele utshani."

Her: "You lost me there on that last sentence."

Me: Laughing. Wuuh, doesn't this child know that some things lose meaning when you try translating them to English. But hey ke stock sa a brunette or something. "No girl. You know what? Get drunk, and do whatever you want with him. He is yours after all."

Her: "But you though. Anyway, are you on for tomorrow?"

Me: "I will confirm tomorrow morning."

Her: "Okay, I will be waiting. Love you."

Me: "Love you too, " I hang up and laugh. Ai, life!

TSAKANI

Baby Khalasiyezulu Sbusiso Mvilane has finally meet the earth, it wasn't an easy birth but Dr. Mashifane made sure that Thembeke delivers the baby smoothly, even though Thembeke refused pushing Dr. Mashifane opted for an emergency c-section. Talon is so happy, I don't remember when last I saw him this happy.

“Yow, at least one of us has proved that he doesn't shoot blanks,” Lee says as he enters the ward followed by Batista & Leon who have balloons and teddy bears with them. We are at Dr Mashifane's practice he couldn't perform the operation at Elite due to lack of equipment. We laugh and greet each other. “Talon junior,” he heads to the baby cot. Thembeke is sleeping clearly tired. “Yoh, mumbi mfana u boy wakho he really takes after you.”

“I was about to say that too, this is the ugliest baby I've ever seen in my whole entire life. Yerrr, you produce ugly babies Talon, I'm disappointed,” he says shaking his head. “Uyadlaliseka nje lo?” We laugh again.

Talon: “Tsek majita yekelani ukunya. Ngikhipha amashambula mina hhayi I nonsense yabantwana, (I only produce beautiful babies not nonsense babies) you should be taking notes niyekele ukunya,” Batista snarls.

Him: “Yewena Satan. This baby of yours is ugly, uglier than you even.”

Me: “I know right? Mubi vele, anyway, the baby is handsome he takes after Thembeke,” Leon laughs.

Lee: “That's how you spot a fake friend,” we laugh. “What are his names?”

Me: “Khalasiyezulu Sibusiso Talent Jr.”

Leon: “Khala what? What on earth does that name even mean?”

Batista: "Simple. It means Zulu-colored," I can't help it, but laugh.

Me: "Now that you're mentioning it, you might be right. But why specifically that name?"

Talon: "Because he looks like a colored."

Lee: "But his ears and knuckles says otherwise," laughter is very much active around here.

Batista: "Uyoba mnyama njengo yihlo futhi ke nonyoko umnyama bhufe."

Talon: "Tsek mnqundu wakho, njandini sies! You are just jealous nja," we laugh once more this time so loud that Khalasi starts crying.

Me: "Pick him up he's crying."

Him: “Ek'se Tsakani. Uno nyoko uKhali akavuke amubhekelele angina dairy mina uyezwa?” (He has his own mother she must wake up and look after him, I don't have boobs) Batista chuckles.

Me: “But you can see that she's in deep sleep, pick up your son and shush him.”

Him: “Ek'se Thembeka. Awunyenze ngathi uvula amehlo ivukile lentwana yakho iyasirasela la,” (wake up, your son is awake he's making noise) he wakes Thembeka up shaking her roughly. Thembeka stirs in her sleep. “Hhayi ayivuki le way, ngenzeni manje?”

Batista: “Guga incosi Talon mfethu,” (pick up your son)

Him: “Hhayi mfethu ino nyoko le ntwana ngizoyilahla phansi maarn incane kakhulu, Thembeka vuka maarn!” (This baby has his mother, Thembeka wake up) he shakes her once more, and she opens her eyes slightly and tries sitting upright.

Me: "Help her up, Talon."

Him: "Hhayi ngeke sbali akazihlalele," (no, let her sit on her own) nc nc nc. Yah neh, bo Talon madoda. Some woman are having it hard out here, wuhhh, imagine getting pregnant for someone like Talon? Ae, some women go through the worst outside there.

Leon: "Yah neh, wazilaya Thembeke, yasis," shaking his head. Lee puts pillows for Thembeke to balance her back with, and Batista hands her the wailing Khali. She's still sleepy you can see it in her eyes, but ke she has a baby to feed.

Me: "Talon, you still have a long way to go my boy, hopefully you will get the hands of things in no time. Let us love, and leave you man."

Batista: "Yeah, man. We will come back tomorrow. Thembeke, keep well sisi and congratulations once more."

Her: "Thank you. And thank you for the gifts," she gives us a weak smile.

Leon: "Only a pleasure, Talon, second half ndoda."

Him: "Second half yani? Ngivaya nani majita, Thembeke second half. Ngizotshela uMmathabo ashaye I draai later, neh?" She nods. We step out of the ward, and Talon releases a deep sigh it's like he was sucking in some air.

Batista: "Really Talon? You're supposed to be there with Thembeke. She needs you inside there to help her."

Him: "Hhayi m'dala lomama majita uzozibona futhi ke akusi ncosi yakhe yokuqala le, ushaya ngenombolo 7." (She's an old woman, gents, she will see herself and besides she has 7 kids) we gasp.

Lee: "What? So, Khali amapondo ayi 4?" (Is baby number 8) he nods.

Batista: “Hhayi ngeke. Same fathers?”

Him: “Ang'cavi ned daar,” (I don't know about that)

Leon: “Hectic skhokho. Anyway, congratulations once more.”

Him: “Esinye phezukwenyise zinja zami, hhayi ngijabulile bafets.” (Thank you, I'm so happy)

Me: “No. You're not happy Talon. A happy new father doesn't behave the way you do. I thought that you were genuinely happy hours ago, but I was wrong. Now I think that you were only pretending, awukho happy njayami.”

Him: “Whoa, sowu Dr. Wama emotions wena saarn?” Batista chuckles.

Batista: “He's not being one Talon. He is actually telling the truth. You're not happy and your face says it all, don't pretend and don't even force yourself into doing something you don't

want. If you don't want to be in a relationship with her then it's fine, but make sure that you are there for your son.”

Leon: “True. Never ever pretend to be happy whereas you not because that will hurt you, and possibly depress you. Your happiness matters njayami, and don't you ever think for a fact that you owe anyone happiness. Do you, and love yourself first before loving anyone else, I'm not saying that you don't love yourself njayami, but all I'm saying is that forget about the people and love yourself more.”

Lee: “Word. All you got to do is to end things with this woman, but continue supporting Khalasi and love him because that's your seed.”

Him: “Haike. Naze nang'depresser ngisase yintwana bafwethu. Otherwise, danko for amagama bafana bami ngizowafaka enqondweni. My happiness matters, and that's for sho mara manje ngidinga ebanda mpo,” (thank you for the words gents I will put them inside my brain. But now I need some alcohol) we nod and walk to our different cars.

Batista: "Where to?"

Talon: "Epozini lami plus ngi stockile, is'bandisa sami sigcwele mfi," (my place, plus I've stocked enough my fridge is full)

Leon: "Hhe, God is coming back honestly. Talon, inviting us to his house to serve us beers? Hehehe, being a new father sure makes you do things you've never done before. But otherwise, thank you njayami money saved."

Him: "Tsek, dala ngikondla wena swine. E mavarini you gents deserve it, dala niwa nivuka nami it's time I return the same courtesy. Ngivumeleni nginitende ned kay' 1."

Me: "I'm game, finally, we are eating your sweat yasis," he laughs as we step inside the cars. I bring the engine to life, and drive behind Leon.

Always protect your peace & sanity. You matter, and so is your happiness remember that you're not in jail with your feelings, I don't even know what I'm saying, but yeah, that. Ok'salayo,

never fake to be happy because you are only hurting yourself
shame. Let go of what no longer makes you happy, you deserve
better.



LUXOLO

I attend the door, and I find Luxolo together with her husband and Lorna. I let them inside the house, and lead them to the lounge.

“You have a beautiful house little one, and I love your interior design,” Lorna compliments sitting down. This woman is very beautiful maarn, she's the prettiest dark skin woman I've ever seen in years.

“Thank you so much. Would you guys like anything to drink?”

Luxolo: “I'll have ice-cold water, thank you.”

Lorna: “A whiskey will do, thank you.”

Ali: “Same as Lorna,” I nod.

Me: “Make yourselves comfortable I'll be back.”

Luxolo: “And bring us some meat if it's not too much to ask.”

Me: “Not at all,” I give her a smile and saunter to the kitchen. I really did myself a huge favor by cooking enough meal earlier on, well, I was kind of bored, and I needed to keep myself busy hence I cooked up a storm.

Tsakani sent me pictures of Talon's son a few minutes ago, and what a cute little thing he is. He is a replica of Talon shame even with the big ears, well, he has his mother's eyes, and it's unfortunate that he will never get to meet his mother. How sad, and Luxolo is here to take me through the whole plan of how we are going to take Thembeke without anyone suspecting me. I wonder what her plan entails, sighs. And no second chance will be given to her none whatsoever, she made her bed, so she must lie on it even if it has thorns on it.

I dish up for them, I've cooked Pap, steak, chicken, creamy spinach and mashed potatoes. I first take the food to them, then serve them the drinks then go and fetch my food and settle down, I'm drinking tea.

Lorna: "I love the presentation already, and I hope the food tastes as nice as it looks."

Me: "Be the judge, Lorna."

Luxolo: "Lovely."

Lorna: "Is there any more food left? I need to make my husband taste this meal because it's so out of this world, amazing food it was."

Me: "Unfortunately there's none left," I shrug.

Her: "What a bummer. But I trust that you will give me the recipe right, especially the creamy spinach one?" I nod.

Luxolo: "I need to start attending cooking lessons, and you are going to be my tutor," I giggle.

Me: "Okay, right, biggie."

Her: "Perfect. Now let's get down to business," the doorbell drags my feet to the door.

"Hope I'm not too late, traffic is hectic around this time," Anthea says stepping inside the house. She's a very big woman, but you can't tell with the way she's active.

Me: "You are right on time, please follow me."

Her: "Thanks, God." We get to the lounge. "Hey sanamabhishes, bullet." Ali nods, guess he's bullet.

Lorna: "Sanamabish, you are always late."

Her: "Don't be too cute, young one here told me that I'm early," gosh, it sucks being the youngest around here. "So, how are we tackling this?"

Me: "Anything to drink?"

Her: "Heineken please, I'm so thirsty and don't tell me that you don't have any because 99% of men are drinking Heineken and the remaining 1% are gays," I chuckle.

Me: "Coming right up." I get up from the couch.

Her: "Jiyane fucking atelier, girl, you have some taste these are the most comfortable couches ever, I have them in my house too."

Me: "Very comfortable," I head to the kitchen.

Her: I hand her the can. "Thank you," I nod. Luxolo takes them through the elite security, and stuff. She even knows her room, these people are very focused and take details into small things something you yourself would never be aware of, not unless you pay attention to that particular thing. I'm impressed, very impressed. My voice is clearly not needed here because these people are having a four way discussion, but I can hear all that they are saying.

Luxolo: "And that means that you won't be coming with us small one," I huff.

Me: "But why? I want to be part of the action."

Her: "No. I don't want your man suspecting you, I mean you already made a threat in their presence regarding this disgusting person, and chances of them suspecting you will be high. You will be sleeping next to your husband, he will vouch for you that you were with him when they start questioning you."

Me: "But..."

Lorna: "No buts. You will not be part of this abducting process you will come once we've hold her hostage, and you will tell us what to do with her."

Me: "And all this is happening when?"

Her: "Tomorrow night."

Me: "So soon?"

Luxolo: "We have no time to waste. The sooner we do this the better for us all, and besides me & Ali are going on a vacation. So, we need to clean fast and leave this place for a month or three."

Anthea: "Guess we are all going to the same place, Mandla spoke about this in passing."

Ali: "Actually we are all going," he is a man of not so many words. He's chilled but dangerous chilled. "Unfortunately, we've got to meet you & Tsakani a little late because we've already planned all of this few months back, and we can't squeeze you in."

Me: "It's okay. You guys go and enjoy yourselves. Hopefully, we will join you next time."

Lorna: "Exactly. Let's finalize things before my husband calls me, I left him with the kids and he's coming down with flue."

Anthea: "Your big baby, Ludo is such a cry baby when he's sick."

Her: "And I enjoy taking care of him, if it was up to me I was going to make sure that he gets sick 27 times in a week!"
We laugh.

Luxolo: "And you will still breathe without having sex for 27 days?"

Her: "Woman, I'll die within 2 days," she fans her face.

Anthea: "Sex addict!" Lorna snorts.

Her: "I can't help it. Is Mandla going to join us tomorrow?"

Luxolo: "Yes, he will."

Her: "You are not his wife and how do you know?"

Luxolo: "He's friends with my husband wena mshishi, and you know they never hide anything from each other."

Her: "Men are acting more like women nowadays, kubi," I giggle shaking my head.

Anthea: "Been saying, but I still love him with my all."

Lorna: "And we forever will."

Luxolo: "Till kingdom comes." How cute.

Me: "Okay, bo Mrs in love."

Luxolo: "Little one, when is that oke marrying you?"

Me: "We never talk marriage, and I don't want to get married."

Them: "What?"

Anthea: "Are you being for real right now?"

Me: "No jokes."

Luxolo: "That's bullshit, and you know it."

Me: "Hahaha, funny."

I clean up the mess they left, and wash all the dishes. I look at the time, and it's half past 9, and Tsakani isn't back, yet I'm sure he's with the guys drinking some bhevs, and he will only be back late probably when I'm passed out because right now I'm going to binge on some Netflix again, and again.

“Is Lee there with you & Tsakani? Been trying to call him, but he ain't answering, and he's not at Batista's nor Leon's.” Lindiwe's text reads.

“They probably with Talon celebrating Talon's achievement of being a father.” I reply, and just then my phone rings, it's her. She likes gossip this one, she's no different from Tsakani.

Her: “Hhey, uthini wena? Talon is a what?”

Me: “A father, didn't you know?”

Her: “No. I didn't know. Lee knows about this too?”

Me: “Why wouldn't he? Phela Talon impregnated her aunt.”

Her: “You don't say! And which aunt is that?”

Me: “The gogzin.” She gasps.

Her: "That wrinkled cracked butt, Thembeke?" I laugh.

Me: "Yes, her."

Her: "No man, Talon has some audacity. I'm even shocked that he's manhood reacted to butt's cracks nakedness, sies."

Me: "A man's weakness, it's a naked woman's body." She snorts.

Her: "I'm shocked. I need to tell the girls about this."

Me: "They know."

Her: "Kanty where was I when you guys were told about this?"

Me: "Probably sucking Lee's dick."

Her: "Stop being gross. Anyway, congratulations to him."

Me: "Thanks. You too." She laughs.

Her: "You are so crazy. Did Maxine call you?"

Me: "Yeah, she did, and I will give you guys an answer tomorrow morning."

Her: "Please say yes, we really need to catch up."

Me: "Or you are trying to run away from Lee's sex addiction?"

Her: "Girl," sneers. "That too. I'm so tired of sex every day, I hardly rest."

Me: "Why don't you make the sex fun, like taking off your mask while doing it? That will really traumatize him, and he will stop being an addict," I cover my mouth preventing laughter not to escape my mouth.

Her: "Now that's not funny Tammy, at all. Please stop."

Me: "I was only trying to help. On the reals though when are you going to come clean to him?"

Her: "I don't know. Don't think I ever will. I'm not ready to lose him."

Me: "You know that nothing stays forever right?"

Her: "I know, but now please allow to enjoy the moment."

Me: "Okay, I will let it be."

Her: "Thanks. That must be Lee, see you tomorrow. I love you."

Me: "I love you too," I hang up. I hope Lindiwe will come clean to Lee one of these good days, if Lee really loves her then he

will understand and continue loving her. The face won't be the same, but the pussy will still be the same. They say true love conquers all right? If this is true love then yeah, they will pull through.

Tsakani steps inside the house looking all tipsy. He leans against the door frame in the lounge and looks at me. His locks are let loose they are dangling over her shoulders.

“I wasn't expecting you home this early,” I say to him getting up from the couch.

Him: “I know, but I've missed you. I had to come back home.”

Me: “I've missed you too,” I wrap my hands around his neck, and he wraps his around my waist, and we stare deep into each other's eyes. He brings his lips to mine, and we kiss. How I've missed his lips, and him touching me like this. Uvukile u girl, samanyobinyobi is going to take place... I got a feeling uh whu, that tonight it's going to be a goodnight.

He moves his hands to my bums and lifts me up with them making me to wrap my legs around his waist. My bums are settled right in his bulge, and he's horny.

Him: "Bedroom," he says in between the kiss.

Me: "Balcony."

Him: "Nomakuphi sweetheart," (anywhere)

My leg sprawled out on the balcony glass, bending a little just so my ass can be on display for Tsakani, even though he's kneeling and about to indulge my pussy with his tongue I still want my ass to cover his big dreaded head. Hahaha, I'm joking.

He first teases blow some air in my pussy sending some sensation over my body, he keeps doing and using the tip of his tongue to tease my pussy slit. And knowing him he likes being in control and taking his time when eating my pussy. The view is beautiful from up here seeing the neighborhood from this view it's breathtaking. There's a park nearby, a beautiful one for that matter with lots of trees and beautiful flowers, but I doubt people go and chill there. I'd love to go there one day too, I hope there are dams too.

He works his tongue up & down my slit lingering longer in the pussy opening, a soft moan escapes my lips as he works his tongue. I, on the other hand with my right hand I'm busy rubbing my hard erect nipples. Twiggling them here & there. Without any warning he dives into my pussy, fondling my pussy lips.

“Lie down,” he orders. “I can't eat you the way I want from behind,” he continues saying.

“But I was still enjoying the view,” he sneers.

Him: “And I need to enjoy yours too,” I giggle and lie on my back the tiles are rather warm considering the fact that the weather it's a bit chilly. He spreads my thighs apart with his hands. He lavishes me with long aggressive laves of his tongue, licking up and down the length of my slit like he is painting a wall and his tongue is the roller. Wide, thick, bold strokes that wet me everywhere. I wiggle and writhe underneath him, and he hasn't even touched my clit yet—just everywhere around it. I push his face deeper with the back of his head as my toes start to curl.

I'm already halfway to orgasm when he points the tip of his tongue and wedges it between my lips, finally caressing my nub, this time with the brush of an artist, his strokes now refined and detailed. The way he curves the way along my clit, eating it like it's his favorite meal.

“Ts... Tsakani,” hissing. I can't even utter any word as he continues eating my pussy working his magic tongue. My legs start to shake, but he's not having it. He laps it like a god lapping water, I loosen my grip at the back of his head and arch my body. “Ahhh...”

Him: He pulls his face off my pussy chuckling. "Hold on baby, hold on a little longer," he dives back in and picks up where he left off. This time going faster, biting my pussy lips. Moving his time down my ass crack then rests his tongue on my butthole, he teases me there and this time I shoot my eyes open, alarmed. I hope he's not going to lick me there, he better not. He comes back to my pussy inserting his, tongue once more, driving me crazy, then he has some nerves to tell me to hold on, this man is insane. I can't hold on any longer, I need to release and now.

Me: "I- I can't." A growl escapes my lips, and I Explode like a firecracker my legs shaking and trembling as I tighten them around his ears in a vise grip screaming his name releasing my juices in his mouth, he cleans me up as I continue panting.

Him: "How I missed eating your pussy, and have my mouth covered in your juices," he comes up to me & kisses me making me taste myself. God, knows how much I hate it when he does this, but yet, I always make him taste himself and he enjoys it. He starts caressing my boobs whilst kissing me. He's in between my thighs, our hips rocking together his cock sliding against my hot heat, each pass along my clit, luckily for me he doesn't hold it when he puts it in, he just goes in by himself. "I want to be

inside you now, I want your pussy to swallow all of me inside you. I want to hit it in all fours having you screaming my name, and begging me to go deeper, harder & rough,” he whispers in my ear, my breath gets caught and a deep moan escapes my lips.

Another orgasm hits me as he nibbles my ear, licking inside, wetting it with his saliva. His hands are fondling my boobs. His tip grazes my entrance and my heels run up and down his legs, finally locking them around his waist. He takes each of my hands and places them above my head, entwining our fingers. He moves out of my ear, and our foreheads touch, but we are looking at each other straight in the eyes, he starts by teasing me with his crown, wanting me to beg him to put it in.

“Please, Tsakani,” my breathing is heavy. He inserts his cock slowly inside my pussy doing some light strokes, another moan swiftly leaves my lips, and in one last light stroke, he's fully in, deep within my pussy. He starts moving inside me our fingers are still entwined, he moves in & out increasing his pace leaving me breathless. I gasp for air, trying not to scream as he ponders me. He growls breaking the entwined, he takes my thigh and put it on his shoulder as he continues fucking me. “Arhh, fuck it, Tsakani.” He slaps my thigh with his other hand, he moves his

mouth to suckle on my boob. I put my hand underneath the both of us parting space within our bodies. I get hold of his balls, and start fondling them as he fucks me, mara balls are too delicate, yuhhh, hhayini. He groans going deeper.

“Shit, bubbles! Shit, shit!” He curses as I play with his balls, I feel him grow inside me, then he growls I quickly stop playing with his balls, and retract my hand between our bodies. My free leg is bent, knee up. I dig my nails on his back, and move my right hand down his back, and into his ass line divider. I rest my middle finger there since it's the longest amongst all my fingers, I graze it there, inserting it in between the line then move it up & down. Erh, he stiffens his body, and curses. But ke I can't slide it down all the way to his anal hole.

Me: “Fuck, Tsakani. I-I'm cumming,” I drop my leg that was on top of his shoulder and wing it to his waist, I take the other one and wrap both of them around the waist pulling him deeper. My cries becoming louder and his name leaving my lips over and over again, as my legs start shaking. He growls, taking both my hands above my head again entwining them, his grip tightens and so does mine.

Him: “Shit!” He rumbles in my mouth, I arch my back as I feel an orgasm coming. I relax my legs, wait, I feel like peeing and that can only mean... I close my eyes, relaxing my body and I squirt screaming out his name making sure that his cock is covered in my pee. Yazi, I should be embarrassed and all, but no I'm not because I used to make myself squirt years ago. Now that I finally found someone who can make me squirt, I'm holding on. Men who make you squirt are very rare, yuhhh. He groans, sinking his teeth on my neck, and he cums shortly afterward dropping his head over my shoulder breathing heavily.

Me: “I love you,” he chuckles.

Him: “Because I made you squirt?” He lifts his head and faces me.

Me: “Mxm, you not the first guy to make me squirt, so...”

Him: “Ouch, fair enough.” He's disappointed, I can't help it but laugh.

Me: "I'm just pulling your leg, my love."

Him: "I knew that," I giggle. "I love you too." He snarls.

Me: "And the sex was awesome, fuck the best mafebana I've had in a long time!" He laughs shaking his head.

Him: "Crazy ass." I lick inside his earlobe, and he winces hardening inside me. And round 2 we go... Damn, I love this man.

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LUXOLO

“Good morning bubbles,” Tsakani greets hugging me from behind, and kisses my cheek.

“Good morning at 12:25 pm, really?” I ask removing the pan from the stove.

Him: “Well, it's only because I didn't see you in the morning. You were sleeping as if like you are dead,” I snort.

Me: “You & Lies. I heard you getting off the bed, when you took a shower, kissed my forehead, and exited the bedroom,” shrugging.

Him: “You criminal. Why didn't you wake up then?”

Me: “For what? I wasn't going anywhere. Wena bowuyephi vele?”

Him: "I had to go and see the gents, we need to get back in the game now seeing that everything is 75% normal."

Me: "And are they game?"

Him: "Yeah, well, except for Talon. With the new Khalasi present, he needs to focus on him, and help Thembeke where he possibly can. He needs to be a present father in Khalisi's life. Surely, he will join us once Khalasi is 6 months old."

Me: "Oh, I see. So, he & Thembeke are official now?"

Him: "I don't know, but after the talk, we had with him last night, he doesn't see himself dating her full time, but he doesn't mind co-parenting," I nod.

Me: "Good decision. I couldn't imagine him making things official with that wrinkled granny."

Him: "Your hate her for is so real, I wonder what did she ever do to you to hate her this much. You don't even know her to that extent, never chilled together, but yoh, hhayi shame umzonda manyani."

Me: "It's a good thing that everyone knows that I hate her, and I never pretend to like her, just like your mother who doesn't like my mother and always rubs it in her face."

Him: "Women & drama. All of you are just complicated, I doubt you even understand yourselves," I chuckle.

Me: "Whatever. Has anyone in the Elite seen the baby yet, or they are waiting for 10 days before they see him?"

Him: "No. They haven't yet, and besides, she's still at the hospital," I nod.

Me: "Oh, okay. Did she get the baby natural or? I mean, I've heard rumors that is very for women her age to give birth naturally, moreover fall pregnant."

Him: "She got her via c-section, she couldn't push so, Dr. Mashifane transferred her to his hospital for emergency c-section." Dammit, now how is Luxolo and her gang going to find Thembeke? I mean, there are too many Dr.Mashifane's out there who have their own practices. And now if I ask him which Dr.Mashifane it will raise suspicion, and I don't want him questioning me. I'll just have to tell them to abort the mission and find this Dr.Mashifane and where is his practice situated first, then once they find it, they will have to carry on with the mission. For now, they must just rest.

Me: "Oh, thought that she gave birth at the Elite but it's okay."

Him: "And when are we making our mini us?" I laugh.

Me: "When the time is right. For now, we need to build a legacy for our kids, and just so you know I want 7 kids," he snarls. "I'm being for real wena."

Him: "You want to be like Thembeke now?"

Me: “What? No. Phela with me it's going to be different because they are all going to have the same father,” he chuckles.

Him: “What if we break up?”

Me: “I will still ask you to father my babies, and you'd never say no even if you get married, I'd still ask you to father my kids.”

Him: “Nxa, as if we will ever break up. Wena ungowami until we leave this earth, we are going to die together even wena bubbles,” I laugh.

Me: “Insanity runs in the family,” he narrows his brows, and looks at me.

Him: “Sewuyanya manje, ngizokushaya,” I laugh.

Me: “Makunyiwe one time,” we both laugh. I finish dishing up for us. I still need to go and meet up with the girls, but here I am already eating. Argh, I'll just have water.

Him: “Still meeting up with the girls?”

Me: “Yeah, I am and I'm meeting them in 30 minutes.”

Him: “Should I accompany you?”

Me: “No. Why would you want to accompany me though my love?”

Him: “For fun,” I laugh.

Me: “How cute, but no.”

Him: “So, I'm going to be bored?” He makes a sad face looking all kinds of cute.

Me: "You've been leaving me too a lot lately my love, but you never hear me complain. Now it's my time to leave. In fact, why not call the guys over?"

Him: "But I was with them not so long ago."

Me: "Your brothers then. Or I can always ask Luxolo to ask Ali to come over."

Him: "There's no need to invite Ali over, that man is a man of fewer words and he never laughs," I laugh. "My brothers will do. Yoh, I can't wait to see their expressions when they come here, trust you me when I say one of them will die."

Me: "I bet its Sabelo, that brother of yours is weak my love, I wonder who does he take after."

Him: "I wonder too, ngihlala ngizubuza. Her wife is the strongest between the two of them, if it wasn't for her I don't

know what could've become of Sabelo. Hhayi ngeke, I think he's lowkey gay," we both laugh.

Me: "Not gay. Maybe after nine."

Him: "What's the difference?"

Me: "The difference is that after nines are straight in the afternoon, but after nine. Rha! Njenge chameleon ba changer amabalabala, hmm..."

Him: "Why do they do other men after nine though?"

Me: "Obvious. They don't want to be judged."

Him: "Too much work."

Me: "I know right. Anyway, let me get going before the girls dial me. Want to drive me?"

Him: "Yeah, let me finish up here then we leave."

Me: "I'll go and change so long," he nods, I turn on my heels and leave.

An hour later I'm with the girls at Mica's tshisanyama. It's situated e kasi, and the way people are staring at our table when they pass by it's like they're seeing celebrities, or famous models featured in magazine covers. But ke, bamangazwa o Maxine & Milan who are drinking Windhoek draft, sies.

"Why don't they just come and ask for our autographs once and for all rather than staring at us making us uncomfortable?" Maxine asks looking around.

"That's because we are celebrities, and they are shaken by our presence. They feel intimidated hence they admire from a distance, just leave them, and focus on us." Milan tells her.

Her: "I'm trying, but I'm failing. The thing is the other gender is creepily looking at us."

Lee: "Are you worried? We can always kick ass, I dare them to try us. I dare them!" She's shouting, eyyy lo sisi we mask uyaphapha yazi.

Me: "There will be no need for that."

Milan: "Exactly."

Me: "So, Milan, how are things between you and Leon? What I actually mean is; what's going on between the two of you?"

Her: "Nothing is going on between us, even if there was we wouldn't work because he's forever shagging some random whore in some brothel or hotel."

Maxine: "And you're fine with all of that?"

Her: "Of course, I am. It's not as if we are dating or something. He's free to do whatever he wants."

Me: "And wena? Do you see yourself hooking up with random niggas in bnbs and hotels?" She giggles.

Her: "Of course. I already have an appointment with some hook up I met from tinder, we are meeting up at 20:00 pm."

Lee: "You go, girl! But wait, don't you want to be in a relationship like any other woman out there?"

Her: "It wouldn't work. I'm that person who loves for real when they're dating, I give my all and what I receive in return it's shit on top of shit. I'm so over relationships, and I've long accepted that I'm no relationship material," she shrugs.

Maxine: "But not every guy is bad out there, Milan," her cheeks flush pink when she says this. "You need to give love a chance."

Lee: "You've been dating Batista for a couple of months, and you are a relationship expert all of a sudden?" She giggles.

Her: "Of course. Unlike you, I wouldn't mind Batista having his way with me anyway he wants, I'll never complain. In fact, I'll lock him up in a cage and do as I please with him," I laugh.

Me: "Hmmm, I'd like to believe that you finally tasted the stick of sin

" she looks down blushing. "Yasis, finally. How did it happen?"

Her: "Let's just say, he came home drunk and looked at me in a way I've never seen, then we kissed and one thing led to another. It was intense, I enjoyed every moment of it, I was in another dimension. Wuuhh, I felt so foreign I even cried afterward," we all laugh.

Lindiwe: "Wait until he wants it 24/7 without any rest."

Her: "I'd still give to him, even if it's 365 days I wouldn't mind."

Milan: "You are dick whipped girl, and you ain't even hiding it."

Her: "Why should I?"

Me: "Girl, I'm happy for you."

Lindiwe: "Me too, I hope Batista won't want it from you the way Lee wants it with me, he's making me hate sex. I'm no longer enjoying it."

Me: "Then why don't you sit him down and talk to him?"

Her: "I can't. What if he ends things with me?"

Me: "Then it was not meant to be. Try sitting him down, and tell him how you feel about the sex, I'm sure he will understand and try limiting it, you'll never know."

Milan: "I wouldn't mind having a fuck buddy like that who'll want sex anytime he wants. Haike, but that's impossible when you stay in another person's place, I can't do as I please."

Me: "Then move out."

Her: "I'm not ready to cough out rent money yet, I really am not. Plus at Leon's I get free food, and beer," we all laugh.

Me: "For how long are you going to stay with Leon?"

Her: "Till Jesus comes back."

Maxine: "And what will happen if he wants sex?"

Her: "I will give it to him."

Lee: "No, uysisferbe for real wena. Does your vagina still grip?"
She laughs.

Her: "Of course. Don't you ladies know that having a lot of sex actually makes the pussy tighter?"

Me: "But not with different dicks."

Her: "They all don't matter honestly, a dick is a dick."

Maxine: "You need help, yuhh. That's just not normal."

Her: "I guess I do need help, just not yet, I'm still enjoying the different kind of dicks."

Lee: "You are a certified whore. You just need your porn channel, and you are good to go." She snarls.

Her: "Now that's something. Imagine the money that will be rolling in? Yasis, I'll be rich, but I still respect myself enough not to show the whole world my nakedness."

Me: "Extreme activities," we all laugh.



TSAKANI

They just can't stop complimenting the house, they got here 3 hours ago but they are still marveling at the beauty of this house, and raving about it none stop. Hlulani loves the soccer

room just like me. I did tell them about how impressive & beautiful this house is, but they said I was lying. Bo Thomas. Now, they wish that they stayed here.

“I still can't believe that a whole of you owns this place? Your sister-in-law must be rich,” Hlulani says filling up the braai stand with charcoal, yeah, we are having a mini braai as brothers.

“He needs to hook me up with her. I know that she's married, but I wouldn't mind hitting it.” Dakalo says winking. Hlulani chuckles.

Him: “If you have a death wish then go ahead, and pursue here. We wouldn't mind burying you, and your mother will be very happy about it.”

Dakalo: “Of course. She will be happy that I died without knowing who my real father is,” he shakes his head.

Me: “What? Man, we all share the same father. Ukhuluma ngani?”

Him: “You don't know?” He chuckles shaking his head.

Me: “Know what?” I look at them, and I catch Hlulani shaking his head. “Talk gents, what's going on?”

Sabelo: “Well, it turns out that we all have different fathers.”

Me: “What?” Snarls. “What kind of a sick joke is this? In fact, where did you get that nonsense from?”

Hlulani: “Mmangwane spilled the beans when they were exchanging words back in Samoa.”

Me: “Say what? Did you confront her about it?”

Sabelo: “We did, and she didn't give us the answers we needed. She kept on saying that we must ask Mmangwane since she's the one who spewed the secret.”

Me: “And you asked her?”

Dakalo: “No. They didn't. Mmangwane doesn't know who our fathers are.”

Me: “Ler's go, and confront her then, if that's the case!”

Hlulani: “It won't work. We decided to take things into our hands, and hired some PIs, and searching in all engines. I have hope that we will find something one of these good days,” I nod. So, Bulelwa has been lying to us almost all our lives claiming that we all share the same father, and he disappeared after the birth of Kedibone, and left my mother to grow the kids alone with no source of income. And now this?

Why would Bulelwa lie like this mara? I hope The PIs come back sooner with the information. I hope that not all of us have

different fathers because if that's the case then I will be very disappointed in her, she would've failed as a mother. Life, life is unpredictable, ey. I pray that Kedibone never turns out like her, naye loyo ukuphi vele?

Sabelo: “Do you think our fathers know about our existence man?”

Me: “I don't know man.”

Dakalo: “If they did, they would've tried looking for us.”

Hlulani: “Or maybe they do know about our existence, and they just don't care about it. Put that too into consideration,” he shrugs. “Only Babalwa knows the truth.”

Me: “Indeed.” When are we going to have peace mara? It's drama after drama, ai.



CINDY

Staring at this wall won't help me with anything. What I need to do is to get up from this bed and fight for my marriage, Vuyo can't divorce me. We've been through a lot together, and 10 years is a lot of time to be wasted. My life revolved around him, and he made vows to stick with me through thick & thin, blah & blah, and boy he will live up to those vows he made in front of the pastor, families, and church members. Let me call my

mother she will know what to do, I mean she's been married to my father for over 30 years now I'm she'll tell me what to do. Hope she will help me with this, I can't lose Vuyo, not some cheap whore anyway. A bitch is involved, and I will find out who is it and deal with her the best way I know-how.

“Cindy,” my mom answers on the other end. She sounds down I wonder what's wrong with her.

“Mama, are you okay?” The concern in my voice is not to be missed.

Her: “I'm fine Cindy, just coming down with flu.”

Me: “Have you gone to a Dr.?”

Her: “Yes, I have and he gave me lots of medication. How are you?”

Me: “Not good mama,” sighs. “Vuyo. Vuyo wants to divorce me.”

Her: "What? Why would he want to divorce you? Cindy, what did you do to him?" Hehake, this woman. Why would she think that I did something to him? She's unbelievable!

Me: "What is it that you are asking me Mama? I didn't do anything to him, he disappeared for months and only came back yesterday telling me that he wants a divorce," she sighs.

Her: "Then grant him the divorce, Cindy. He's not worth it."

Me: "Hhey, hhey! Not worth it to whom mama? He's my husband to me, and he's worth it. Wena why you didn't divorce my father the minute he wanted one?" She's passing me off right now.

Her: "And I regret not giving him one when he wanted one. I'm suffering the consequences of that decision of forcing him to stay now, I regret it."

Me: "Whoa, wait. What's going on mama?"

Her: “Nothing to worry yourself about. Just grant him the divorce he wants, don't force things. If he doesn't love you anymore, then cry about it all you want, and fix yourself afterward you deserve better,” I shake my head.

Me: “No. I don't deserve better, I deserve him. Kanty what's with you? Why do you regret not divorcing my father? Actually, you know what? I don't want to know, wena just give me Mama Nandi's numbers and I will do the rest.” Mama Nandi is a very powerful well-known witch in our area, she loyas everyone and she's proud of it. Everyone is very afraid of her. That's why when some of us visit home we park our cars at the garage or rank and take taxis because yhey, that woman is very dangerous.

Her: “I will not give you her numbers. It's not worth it, Cindy. Trust me. You don't want to regret it, you know where she stays you can go there yourself, and while at it, tell her to give you something to prevent you from choking because your dad's past has come back to haunt him, and so is your husband. Goodbye.”

Me: “Wha...,” the call gets cut off. What the actual fuck? I try calling her again, but she's not picking up. What on earth is she on about? Hhe, if she can't tell me what's going on over the phone then I will go straight to her house, and she will tell me what's exactly going on because she was talking in riddles.

I slide my feet into my slippers, then pick up my car keys from the dressing table, and step out of the bedroom heading outside. I know it's late, but this needs to be done, I need answers. At least there isn't much traffic around this time, the streets are clean so it will only take me an hour 30 minutes to get home. I lock the door, and head to the garage. Vuyo is mine, and mine alone.

LUXOLO

The day finally came to an end, and I must disclose, I had a lot of fun with the girls hearing them telling me about their crappy crazy lives made my day. But now it was time for us to go back to our places, and do what we know best, but first I need to pass by the club and see how far are the builders with the renovations. I yearn to see the club up & operating in a month time, and yeah, my warriors (homeless) finally decided to leave on their “own” as the caretaker told me when I implored, but I doubt that they left on their own, Tsakani, had something to do with it. My phone rings and Luxolo's name flashes on the screen.

“Biggie,” I answer the phone is connected to the car.

“Hey, Smallie. So, I've found out where Thembeke is,” my eyes lit up.

Me: “Say what? Where is she?”

Her: "Dr.Mashifane's practice. Tsebo Mashifane practice."

Me: "That's a good thing, I guess we back in the game, I was so worried thinking that you weren't going to find where she is phela we have no time to waste. So, what time are you abducting her?" She heaves a sigh.

Her: "Well," she pauses. "We can't abduct her whilst she's still at Dr.Mashifane's practice."

Me: "What? Why?"

Her: "That place is highly secured, and Tsebo is not only a Dr. But he is a very powerful man, and not to be messed with. We can't just trespass on his practice. So, we need to go back to the drawing board and come up with a new strategy, and that will take us weeks to come up with a tangible plan. Not unless we wait for her to return back to Elite then we will go ahead with the abduction as planned."

Me: “Come on, biggie. Can't you at least bribe him or something?”

Her: “That will only mean signing our death warrant. In fact, we will be handing ourselves to him on a silver platter.” I sneer.

Me: “I thought that you guys are powerful and untouchable. What is it that you're telling me now?”

Her: “We are powerful, yes, but Tsebo is beyond powerful. He's the greatest underground gang of this game, he's not someone you mess with it and get to tell a tale. Much as we want to help, but this is beyond us. There's nothing we can do for now, and I highly suggest that you don't get involved too. I just found you and I'm not willing to lose you, but be rest assured that we will deal with the culprit when the time comes. I promise you.” I nod as if she can see me, I need to do my research about this Tsebo Mashifane character and find out who he really is. But then if I can ask Tsakani about him I'm sure he will tell me all that I need to know about him, and all that he executes. “Still there?”

Me: "Shaking my head. "Yes, I'm still here."

Her: "Heard what I said?"

Me: "Crystal."

Her: "Good, don't do anything absurd smallie."

Me: "I won't, I promise you."

Her: "Because if you do then you will leave me with no choice but to kill you once you get caught," she ain't joking that's for certain.

Me: "I believe you."

Her: "Excellent. How's Nomalanga?"

Me: "She's a whole lot better than the last time you saw her, she can do things by herself now, but she still need to be monitored."

Her: "That's a relief."

Me: "You care about her, don't you?"

Her: "No. I don't care about her," sneers. "I'm only apprehensive because she's your mother," I chuckle shaking my head, I wonder who is she trying to convince because I know for a fact that it's not me, or maybe she's trying to convince herself I don't know. However, she might not admit it, but she deeply cares about Nomalanga and I pray that they try mending things, and we be one big happy family before I tie the knot. I don't want bad blood between the two of them.

Me: "I understand."

Her: "You sound as if like you're driving. Are you?"

Me: "Yeah, I'm heading to the club to check how far the builders are with the renovations and if they aren't short of any materials."

Her: "Oh, okay. Let me not waste any more of your time."

Me: "You weren't but thank you, and I'm already here. Chat you up later, yeah?"

Her: "Of course. Love you."

Me: "Love you too, biggie" she hangs up.

I step inside the yard, and it seems as if like these builders haven't done anything yet, the scene still looks the same as I left it a day ago, sighs. I jump the bricks that are scattered carelessly on the ground and make my way inside the club and to my surprise, I find the builders drinking beer, drunk, extremely intoxicated, I'm shocked. Hhe, the nerve! Yabona abasebenzi ba local banjani? And when you hire foreign individuals to do the job they argue that you hire outsiders, and

not bother looking their way. That's black people for you. I chuckle as I saunter to where they are settling, kicking one of them with a powerful impact on his ribs, and him yelping like a little girl is what makes the others scramble on their feet looking rather alarmed by my presence.

“And then? What's blathering on here?” I ask looking around at the mess they've created.

“Ah-ah, ses'teri,” one says scraping his head.

Me: “Tsek! Don't nyeteri me, kuhambani la?”

Him: “Ah, well-” a slap lands on his face, but not the painful slap just a light one. More like patting his cheek. The others gasp.

Me: “You see if none of you is willing to tell me what's going on then I might as well kill all of you right now, but I'm a good person, I will give you guys one last chance just one. What's going on?”

Man 2: "Well, some foreign lady came here, and told us that she was sent by you- she explained that you told her to tell us not to work because you won't be able to reimburse us," I angle my head to the right and look at him confused. I don't remember sending anyone here, and I doubt it's one of the girls because we were together almost all day long. Then who might it be?

Me: "Care to explain to me how this woman looks like?"

Him: "I don't know really but she doesn't look African. Body wise she's a full-figured woman, and has a lot of tattoos covering her arms that's all I can remember," he shrugs. I don't even know who that is even the description doesn't fit any of the women I know, and certainly, this woman knows me.

Me: "And you listened to her?"

Man 3: "She was very convincing, she even showed us your chats on Whatsapp." Excuse me? What the actual fuck? This doesn't make sense because I don't even use WhatsApp. So,

basically, this person stole my picture wherever she stole it from, then created a Whatsapp account using my name and my picture. Sent herself back to back texts pretending that she's texting me, the time she has though. Hmmm, interesting.

Me: "And the bhevs? Where did you get it?"

Man 2: "She came with it and said is from you, it's an apology" I nod. I look at the time on my wristwatch and it's almost 18:30.

Me: "I see. You can knock off, I want all of you here as early as 05:00 am tomorrow morning, I'll be here too. Don't be unpunctual. Clear up your jumble and be excused," they quickly nod. I head out confused, guess I'll never find peace, sighs. I wonder who the woman is, and what is her story with me. Anyway, tomorrow I'll be here to observe things, I'm sure she will stop by unaware that I'm around, but I must be in a very secluded area and catch her off guard. No rest...



CINDY

This place is very creepy, and cold too. It makes my blood rush, but I need help so I have no choice but to step inside. I take off my shoes and look around if there aren't any people lurking

around in the silhouettes and luckily for me I see no one, sighs. It's now or never, the door opens by itself as I'm about to knock. My heart rate is pumping faster than it normally does, I swallow at my own saliva as I step inside the creepy looking rondavel. The scary noise of different animals comes to life, a part of me wishes that I can turn around and take off without even seeing Mam'Nandi. But the smoke emerging from the ground says otherwise, it lures me to where Mam'Nandi is and she's sitting comfortably in her pitch-black chair that has horns on either sides wearing all black, her face too yellow than usual days.

“Hlala phansi,” (sit) she orders, her voice is full of evil. I sit down without asking any questions. “Soyathakatha wena manje?” (Are you witch now) haibo, this woman. What nonsense is this now?

“Akufuni wena loko. Ungakhona ukusiza ngale nkinga yami?” (That doesn't concern you. Will you be able to help me with my dilemma) she laughs so loud that the rondavel shakes, and her laugh echoes all around the rondavel even though she has stopped laughing.

Her: “Wakhuluma nami ngathi ukhuluma nonyonko. Ujwayezwa yini?” (You're talking to me as if you're talking to your mother. What's getting you familiar with me) I quickly shake my head. “Angikhulumi ngedwa njalo, kumbe sowuyisimumu manje ndodakazi?” (I'm not talking alone on that note. Or are you a mime all of a sudden

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my daughter) yoh, her voice is deep now for sure a man has taken over her body.

Me: “Ch- cha.” (No)

Her: “Kahle ke phambi kokuthi siyekude. Unyoko uyazi ukuthi u la?” (Wait before we go any further. Does your mother know that you are here) I shake my head.

Me: “Cha akazi,” (she doesn't know)

Her: “Umuhambe ngaphambile noma akukhalimile. Yini? Yingoba wena ucabanga ukuthi uhlakaniphile wena njengoba ufundile? Umthetho wakho uyeyisa wena,” (So, you still came

here even though she reprimanded you not to come here. What is it? Is it because you think that you are clever seeing that you are educated? The thing with you is that you are very disrespectful) geez, this yellow moloi is wasting my time busy chattering about things that don't concern her.

Me: Sighing. "Look. I didn't come here for you to question me, ngize la ngoba ngifuna usizo lokubuyisa umyeni hhayi le nonsense that you're telling me now," she growls. "Uyang'siza noma ngindlulele phambili?" (Are you helping me or must or must I go elsewhere)

Her: "Ndlulela ndodakazi, uyeyisa wena." (You can go elsewhere you are very disrespectful)

Me: "Kube uvele washo ned so kwasekucaleni hhayi lijikajikisa bowungenzisa yona," (you should've told me that from the beginning rather than taking me in circles with your bullshit)

Her: "Hamba la njengamanje ntombazana! Phuma uphele, angeke ngidelelwe ingane mina emsamo wami, hamba!" (Leave at this instant girly. Leave and never come back, I will not allow

you to disrespect me in my private space, leave) I click my tongue getting up from the floor. Yasis, this woman.

Me: “Sala mthakathi ndini!” (Stay here you witch)

Her: “Ngiyafunga ng'yagomela ngithi ngeke ufike e freeway uzopetuka ngale moto yakho. Hamba!” (I swear to you, you will not get to the freeway you will swerve with your car and rollover. Leave) She roars. Mxm, as if I care about her weak threats, nxai. I step out of the rondavel and look up at the sky and the clouds are starting to form indicating that it will pour shortly, I need to get home before the rain begins.

I step inside the rented car and roar the engine to life, and take off. Mam'Nandi really disappointed me, but I'm not giving up. I'm sure other witches can help me with my dilemma, powerful ones for that matter. Futhi nje, where did she get the audacity to talk to me & question me the way she did? Uyaphapha lo mthakathi o yellow. I'm not even going to bother passing home because my mom will infuriate me even further, and vele we won't see eye to eye. Rihanna's Anti album is what's keeping me company as I navigate to the garage, my all-time favorite track in this album is “kiss it better” followed by “love on the

brain” and the rest follow suit. The clouds are gathering faster than I've anticipated, I'm still hoping that I get to the garage before it starts raining. I pick up the speed, I'm 10 minutes away from the garage.

I give one of the petrol attendants the car keys, and he gives me back my money. I step inside my car bringing the engine to life, and off I drive. Well, it might start pouring seeing that I'm 2 hours away from home, sighs. If it happens that it rains as I'm driving I will have to drive with vigilance because the road can be slippery, and that magogo has cast a spell on me, rubbish. Off to the freeway, I'm cruising, and the rain starts pouring but I pay no attention to it, it was not until I see a huge rock in the middle of the road that rocked out from nowhere. I try swerving my car trying not to hit the rock seeing that I'm driving straight at it, but my brakes and clutches are not working. What the actual fuck? I look on either side of the windows and I see nothing, there's too much fog surrounding my car. Dammit, I try unlocking my door but it ain't budging tears veil my eyes, I'm in the shit. I knock on the windows hoping that someone will see me, but it appears as if like I'm wrong and it's a little too late because the front of my car hits the rock making my head go forward, and I knock the steering wheel with my forehead as my car comes into a complete halt. The headache

that I suddenly have is intense, shit! I lift my face from the steering wheel, and throw it back to my seat, my eyes shutting off, I feel weak...

★«★»

TSAKANI

I've been trying to call bubbles for the past hour, but her phone is taking me straight to voicemail I wonder where she is because when I spoke to Batista 2 hours ago he told me that Maxine is home, and she's long gotten home. Plus, the rain is not having any mercy it's pouring. I hope she's unharmed wherever she is, let me just go and look for her once and for all. The door ripples open, and bubbles steps inside not looking happy, in fact, she's pissed off I wonder what got her angry.

“Good evening my love,” she kisses my cheek.

“Evening. What got you so mad?” She takes off her shoes and settles in one of the vacant stools.

Her: “Well, I know that you were worried sick about me, and that's kind of cute. Anyway, I passed by the club to see how far the guys are.”

Me: “How far are they? And yes, I was worried sick about you, I was going insane. You should've at least called me and notified me that you will be running late.”

Her: “I ran out of battery I forgot to charge my phone, sorry.”

Me: “Accepted. So, how far are they?” She chuckles shaking her head. “Babe?”

Her: “They haven't even started. I found them intoxicated,” shrugging. “They were sitting in a circle, laughing and drowning themselves with the bhev. Can you believe it?” She shakes her head, not believing that she actually found her workers having fun.

Me: “What? But how?”

Her: “Well,” (she narrates everything to me) then she snarls. “I need a beer, yeerrr.”

Me: “Ek'se, have any idea who it is?” I open the fridge and take out one can of Belgravia since I'm standing closer to it, I open it then hand it to her.

Her: “Thank you. I honestly don't know is she, all I know is that she's described to be covered in tattoos, fully figured, and she's definitely not a South African.”

Me: “Is that all?”

Her: “Yeah, that's just about it, and no one with a description like that comes in mind,” I nod. The only person who comes to my mind right now with the description that bubbles gave me, it's Adele. Now, the biggest question is, what does she want from bubbles because bubbles don't even know her? not unless she's afraid of the competition since she's busy renovating her club too. She will try by all means to bring bubbles down, and hinder her from completing the renovations ngoba it seems as if like the builders are easily influenced once they are given something. Hhe, the bravery. “Or maybe it's one of your expired goods,” I laugh.

Me: “Ah never. I don't date ratchets. I wonder who that person is, but don't worry we will get to the bottom of this, I promise you.” She nods. Well, I do suspect who that person is but I need assurance that it's really her. No man, it's really her...

Her: “I know. What are we eating?”

Me: “Pap & cow heels,” she squirms in excitement.

Her: “My favorite. You are such a husband material, I need to pay Lobola for you urgently, you deserve to be hitched!” I laugh.

Me: “Right, but let me not beat you to it first.”

Her: “Really?” She raises her brow.

Me: “Yeah. Want to bet on it?”

Her: “Urhm, let me go and freshen up then I will come back with a response,” she disembarks the chair.

Me: “Don't worry, I already know the answer,” she pouts then giggles.

Her: “Whatever, nobubi.”

Me: “Say that again?”

Her: “Nobubi, mnyamane!” She's already taking off, I laugh shaking my head, and shame I won't even run after her. I might as well dish up for her... Adele, what game are you playing? My phone rings, and it's a number I'm unfamiliar with... I answer and not say anything. The person is breathing heavily on the other end, more like they want to say something but it seems like words are stuck in their throat...

“Ts- Tsakani.” Her voice comes out as a whisper. Erh, I've completely forgotten about her existence kaze uvumbukaphi.

“Kedibone! Where the hell has you been?!”

Her: “Ni kombela uni rivalela,” (please forgive me) sniffing.

Me: “Rivalela? Forget about that. Where the hell is you maarn!”

Her: “I'm sorry-,” she hangs up. I try calling her again, and she doesn't pick up. Dammit, Kedibone. Ai, let me not stress myself about her. She's a grown woman, and very much alive. I'm just glad that she's alive, that's all that matters... Surely Bulelwa will be very delighted to know that her daughter is alive...

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{3 months later}

LUXOLO

Today, we're finally doing a grand opening of the club. "L & T Exclusive lounge" it's the name, and I'm so nervous yet, excited. I still don't believe that it's finally over and that I'm the owner together with Tsakani, yes, he bought half of the club, and he did give me the requested amount just because he's my mans that doesn't mean that I had to hand him half of the club just like that. No, this is business and in business, we don't play. Maxine, Milan & Lindiwe are going to be my waitresses until we find new waitresses who will fill up their space since they want pursue careers. Milan, wants to go into fashion design and Maxine wants to go the catering route, hehehe, Lindiwe? She just wants to be a housewife nothing more. Batista & Hlulani are going to be our bouncers until we find new ones, I've tried locating those who were working here previously to no success, well, I found only 1, and he can only be able to come here in three weeks time. Oh, and I found out who the woman is

thanks to my mans with that phone call he made without realizing that I'm listening in. Pshhh, men. Anyway, I'm yet to go and confront her, unlike Tsakani I will not go around in circles, and dispatch empty threats to her, I will deal with her accordingly. I'm not one to threaten you, I deal with you because threats are a waste of time.

Sol did warn me about club rivalry. He did tell me that there will be those who will try and bring me down etc, etc, and boy wasn't he, right? He most definitely was right. May his soul rest in peace, sighs. Oh, the strippers? That department is just so sifting for me, yazi all I'm getting are ladies who can't work the pole, and those who can't stride in heels, like iyoweh! I can't bring back abo Zama and the gang, no flipping ways am I bringing them back here bayadelela laba. Guess I will just have to venture into agencies I'm sure they will give me the best of the best, not some "strippers copyist" Yes, I too wasn't perfect when I first inaugurated into this whole stripping shandis, but I wasn't that clumsy either unlike some of the girls we've been training for two weeks they were flunking miserably, Milan, even called them "hurricanes catastrophes" that's how disastrous they were. So, we don't have strippers as of yet.

Well, my Nomalanga is fully healed now and Thembeke is back at the Elite. Now it's time for biggie and her gang to do their job, and I want them to do it tonight. It will bring me great pleasure to deal with her & Adele at the same time but unfortunately, that won't happen because Adele is attending a business function. I have my eyes & ears tailing her moves 24/7. I even know what she perpetrates at night and who she meets up with, what they converse about, and so forth, but she has no idea that she's being followed/watched.

“Well, how are you feeling?” Lindiwe asks standing next to me. I'm on the top floor peering at the ground floor, peering at people coming in looking all glamorous in their luxurious attire. I didn't expect such turn-up, but as long as they are bringing in money I'm all for it.

“I'm alright. I'm quite happy actually. The day I've been procrastinating for is finally here, it's been one hell of a pilgrimage.” I tell her.

Her: “I know and hopefully tonight you will make twice as much the money you used to renovate this place. Plus, only monied people are here, I'm talking about your politicians,

businessmen/women, ministers, shareholders of big companies. I mean, everyone who shrieks money from a distance. Good job at hosting such a target market, I'm impressed."

Me: "Well, all the prestige goes to Tsakani. He's the one who formulated it together, everyone you see here are his affiliates and friends of the affiliates. The list goes on & on," she nods. "Anyway, how far are the chefs with the sustenance?"

Her: "The last time I checked they were preparing the last batch of platters," I nod.

Me: "I don't want any hiccups. I want this night to swivel beautifully."

Her: "It will. But I have a question."

Me: "Shoot."

Her: "I understand that your target is all these rich people and whatnot. What I want to know is; what will happen if low budget living people decided to come here masqueraded as rich businessman/woman just to see who actually frequent this place?"

Me: "Well, there are private rooms for those that don't want to be discerned, and some will be given semblances it will depend on those individuals though and as time goes by the frequent customers will use pin codes to be granted access to come inside the club, and we will update the codes every week."

Her: "Damn, Tammy. You have this faultlessly planned out I'm quite impressed. The world's most sophisticated & expensive club! Tammy, we're talking notches here, notches." I laugh. She's embellishing it now.

Me: "Stop embellishing."

Her: "I'm not. Time to give attention to your guests and for you to welcome them to club L & T Exclusive club. Is your speech prepared?"

Me: "Speech? What speech? A simple 'I'd like to take this opportunity and welcome all of you to T & L Exclusive club. Thank you for gracing us with your presence, have fun' that's it."

Her: "Better than frivolity. Let me go and attend to your people before Maxine starts complaining," I nod. "Oh la la, here comes your man, looking all varieties of yummy and very much edible. The tuxedo suits him, ni blessed yong. Tinja te game." I laugh shaking my head.

Me: "Hamba la, voetsek," she chortles and walks away. "Lindiwe, woza la," I call her out as she's about to exit the mini hall. I'm yet to decide what I'm going to wield this room for.

Her: "Here is I, ufunani?"

Me: "Are your firearms within reach?"

Her: "Yes, ma'am they are. And don't worry, nothing will happen tonight, everything will glide smoothly. Alleviate," I nod. "We got you," she winks and walks away. I heave out a sigh and look at the ground floor again. My gun is positioned very well in my gun thigh holster, and luckily for me the dress it's a little loose from my thighs going down.

I don't want any risks you don't know who is here masquerading as someone else but only find that it's your competitor or adversary. Anything is possible in these streets. I gulp down the remaining content of my wine, steady myself and exit the mini hall.



TSAKANI

My feet are annihilating me I've been welcoming all these guests for the past hour making an effort to make them feel comfortable and welcomed. I know I was not hands-on with how the club is going to turn out, but I'm impressed. From the interior design to the scene, yuhhh. It's all breathtaking I'm marveled, futhi I've just realized that she certainly likes Jiyane atelier furniture, but I don't blame her though the sofas are very comfortable and the material is quite strong.

“Tsakani.” The deep ragged voice I haven't heard in ages calls out my name. I slowly turn and face him. He still looks the same nothing has changed about him.

“Mr. Mabuza.” I used to work for him, but then he fired me for reasons only known by him.

Him: “Long time son.”

Me: “Yeah, long time indeed.”

Him: “Who knew that one day you will own such an expensive club?”

Me: “God. God, knew that one day I will own this expensive club. He laid it all out for me.”

Him: “I see. I wonder how much did it cost you, and I hope you didn't take loans that will inhibit you in the future,” he giggles patting my shoulder.

Me: “Well, for your information. I don't owe anyone money. I, wait, I & my girlfriend actually paid for everything you see here using our own money.”

Him: “Hmmm, impressive. I wonder how wealthy is your girlfriend.” I shrug.

Me: “Wealthy in a way that she can buy both your restaurants combined then hire you again to manage them on her behalf.” He snarls.

Him: “Imagine that. Young money, I bet you that I'm wealthier than her, the trust fund money that she's busy misusing will run out then what will she do then? She will go broke, bankrupt, and end up relinquishing all this she has worked so hard for then you, my boy will come running to me begging for assistance, and it will be too late then.” He's so funny, very funny I must compliment.

Me: “What a mockery you are. But I understand where you're coming from groetman lami, mara wena ungazincishi umoya ngathi. We have this under control, another shot of whiskey?” He clicks his tongue. “Always the case. You will never win this time around Mr. Mazibuko, enjoy the rest of your night.” I pat his shoulder and walk away from him, I wonder what his plan was or what he exactly wanted, oh well. We wile.

The sound of a glass clicking is what attracts everyone's attention. Bubbles is standing at the mini podium looking so beautiful

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my woman is beautiful you guys, she's the most beautiful woman I've ever seen. Her eyes convene mine, and she breaks out into a smile and slightly nods.

“Greetings everyone. I'd like to take this time, and thank each and every one of you for your presence tonight and for making sure that this night becomes attainment. To my staffers, thank you for all the work you've perpetrated to make this night a night to remember, thank you. And to my mans, umTsonga wami madoda, my partner in everything. Ladies & gentlemen, please permit me to thank my mans Tsakani for making sure that all of you are present, for going all the way out to extending his invite to you. I know that some of you already had plans but instead, you decided to turn them down and grace us with your presence here at L & T Exclusive lounge. And for that, thank you. I don't have anything more to say except for welcoming you officially at L & T Exclusive lounge we can't wait to host you weekly and render you all the content you've

signed up for. Oh, and to my competitors know that you won't do anything to me because I'll be coming for you. You won't see me coming, but I will come for you, have a great night.” She gets off the podium and everyone claps hands.

What a speech that prevailed. Everyone gets back to what they were doing, and the sustenance is being served, and let me just say the culinarians have done a tremendous job.

“And I'm done for the night,” bubbles tell me standing beside me with her heels in her hand, I laugh.

Me: “But the night is only beginning.”

Her: “For you maybe, but as for me I'm done for the night. All I need is our mattress now.”

Me: “Yazi, you're behaving as if you were on your feet the whole day baby, kanty dololo you were busy at the salon marinating yourself.”

Her: "But sitting all day on a not so comfortable chair is exhausting, plus the lady who was doing my hair was so slow," she shrugs.

Me: "Shame, but she knows her job. You're beautiful my love jealous down, a job well perpetrated to her. Did you tip her?"

Her: "Of course, I did. Her hands are magic, and now I'm going to refer everyone to her."

Me: "Impressive," I fling my arm around her neck.

"Oh, so this is the girlfriend. Beautiful. You know how to snap a picture. Hello, L. I'm Mr. Mazibuko." He inaugurates himself.

Her: "Luxolo."

Him: "Lovely meeting you. You know, when I was watching you conveying that speech to the masses, I couldn't help but realize that you're resembling this other old friend of mine. Both of

you have the same features, even though you are a little lighter but you sure as hell resemble him.”

Me: “Oh, is it? And who is this man that I resemble because the last time I checked I was and still am resembling my mother.”

Him: “Oh, child. Yes, you may resemble your mother, but you still have my friend's features. His name is...,” he doesn't finish his sentence when one of his subordinates requests his presence urgently.

Her: “My love who do I resemble and who on earth is that man?”

Me: “I don't know who else you resemble apart from your mother, and Luxolo Snr. And Mr. Mazibuko was once my employer.”

Her: “Funny because he resembles you,” I laugh.

Me: “You must out of your damn mind. Did you discern him? He's very ghaſtly, and I'm flames,” ſhe laughs.

Her: “I wonder who prevaricate you. Anyway, let's go and eat I'm hungry.”

Me: “Thought you'd never announce! Let me help you with thoſe heels,” ſhe hands them to me, and we ſtart ſcrolling clapping hands.

Her: “Yazi I don't recollect you telling me how you ended up being a gangſter. And I'm ſtupified to learn that you were once working for ſomeone, it's ſo unlike you.”

Me: “We all ſtart ſomewhere bubbles, and I will tell you all about it when we get home.”

Her: “Can't wait for the bedtime anecdote,” I chuckle.

Me: “And you will end up ſleeping.”

Her: "Shame on you," we laugh as we ascend the stairs.

★»★«

NOMALANGA

Everyone is getting ready to retire to bed we had a long day. Mmathabo's kids are a real hustle during the day, I'm babysitting them since Mmathabo went back to work, and Thembeke has officially moved in with Talon. Mmangwane, has no interest none whatsoever in babysitting, and Bulelwa is forever locked in her room she only comes when we are eating. Okuhle, is forever trying to get Hlulani back, she's doing her wifely duties lately and hardly spends time with Bulelwa they are like strangers now. The noise that these kids make is sufficient to give you ear wounding, shesh. Anyway, 2 months ago I discovered that I was actually poisoned, and I still have no inkling as to who tried poisoning me and what steered them to do such because I was prudent when it came to eating food prepared by anyone around here. Oh, well, such it's life.

Luxolo Jnr, calls me every flipping hour just to ask me how I'm holding up, it irks me periodically, but I know that she only has my best interest at heart and more apprehensive about my health. She even made d an effort of getting me to come and stay with them, but I refused I just don't discern myself disseminating a house with her & Tsakani, it's just wrong, and besides I like it here at the Elite. It's so invigorating. And then there's Luxolo Snr who calls me once in a blue moon and

implore about my health then she hangs up after I notify her. Every night before I slumber I always pray to God, to give her a forgiving heart so that we can mend our mother-daughter relationship, and be the for each other. Sighs, I also need to tell Luxolo Jnr who her father is. God, knows how broadly I loathe that man, he really does. He is extremely evil in a way that you start believing that his mother gave birth to Satan's firstborn. Thinking about him makes my body shiver in uncertainty, and it's worse because he lives close by now, but he doesn't know that he has a daughter, and I'd like to keep it that way.

I switch off the lights and head to my room. I stride inside and shut the door close behind me, then lock it, but something catches my attention. The curtain, the curtain is being blown lightly by a soft wind of which makes me wonder where does it come from because I recollect shutting all the windows earlier on. My heart starts beating rapidly, someone is here I can smell Cologne, a very familiar cologne. It can't be, no, I prohibit it can't be. my phone is out of reach, dammit I can't even call for help. My first instinct tells me to run to the door, but I can't even spin around and get hold of the doorknob, fear is holding me back, and I can't even scream. Tears stream down my cheeks. The back of my hair stands as he clears his throat, I

don't dare look back, I remain in the same position and close my eyes.

“Nomalanga.” He calls out. He's coming behind me in slow strides I can tell by how slow his footsteps are, and it doesn't help that my bedroom is enormous, I have nowhere to run to. “Nomalanga,” he whispers my name as he lays his hands on my shoulders. I flinch.

I huddle my voice and heave out a sigh, I can't be weak, he can't see me weak. “Ufunani?” I implore.

Him: “My daughter. I want my daughter.”

Me: “A daughter? What daughter? You don't have any daughter with me,” he grumbles moving his right hand to the back of my neck. I swallow at my own spittle.

Him: “You know relatively well what I'm talking about. Where's my daughter, Nomalanga? I don't want to ask you again.”

Me: "I don't know what you are talking about!" I try sounding brave now.

Him: "You don't?" He starts tightening his grip around my neck. "You don't?" He growls in my ear. Knowing him, he might eradicate me, I might as well tell him. In fact, who told him that I have a daughter? "Nomalanga."

Me: "I- I do have a daughter, but you are not the father."

Him: "Oh, I do have a daughter. Now, why didn't you tell me that we have a daughter?" What the fuck! He can't be asking me this right now after what he did, he can't.

Me: "She's not a daughter."

Him: "DNA tests will tell us the truth. You can notify her about me, tell her that her father is back he is back for her. I'm allotting you 2 days to tell her about me because if not, then," he sighs. "Amagugu alelizwe ayosala emathuneni," he kisses my cheek and walks out of the door leaving me frozen. The devil

bastard is back to cause chaos in my life, but I trust that Nono will deal with him.

His presence evoked all the memories of the past that I thought I've forgotten, and buried, but I was wrong because they are now crashing my brain like a force of water accompanied by a strong wind. My body trembles as I slump on my bed holding back my voice from screaming out loud. The Beelzebub in a beautiful white tuxedo is back...

TSAKANI

“So, it all began when I was 22 years old. I was a young gullible little young man who was living off by pickpocketing people at the mall, town, and parks. Hhayi bengiyinja daar. Anyway, I ended up getting perforate because the money I was making after selling all those things was no longer satisfying me and my mom never saw it fit to buy me clothes because I was rebellious whilst growing up. I couldn't stand being shouted at by her every time I came back from ukuphanda. So, I moved in with my grandmother in the township, continued with my hustle as per usual. My grandmother knew that I was working, but no I was actually stealing from people who wake up every morning to go to work only to be paid peanuts. Shortly I recruited Lee to my hustle as he was always whining about how he can't make ends meet, Mmangwane was constantly on his neck about finishing her grocery and stuff. Plus, he owed a lot of his dealers' money, and he needed to pay them since some were threatening him, and his family. The kids weren't able to go to school as those guys he owed were lurking in the corners waiting to snatch one of them to show how serious they are.”

“This other one time, it was middle of the month and most people are broke by then we went to the mall as per usual even though we knew that we were not going to get something because others already knew us as we would randomly pickpocket them for fun. Anyway, the day was drawing to an end, hhe that's when Mr. Mazibuko decided to pop to the mall. He was wearing an expensive suit and let me not get started about the car he was driving, ai he stepped out of the car with a black briefcase in his hand, and I knew exactly what he was coming to do there, I've been observing him for months as he always comes to the mall on certain days to withdraw a lump sum of money. He had no guards. I steeled myself and told Lee about the plan, and he was all for it even though he was scared, but he knew that we needed the money. Mr. Mazibuko, stepped out of the mall as per usual, I know that he will open the car, put in his money, and get back inside the mall again to do a little shopping. Since Lee is shorter I sent him to go on the other side of the car, crouch and slightly open the back door so that even if Mazibuko locks the car, it won't lock us out. He did exactly that, and he snatched the briefcase from the backseat and took off, I walked slowly just so the security guards won't suspect me or anything since I was hanging around the mall all day.”

“When we got to the bushes and worked out the money it was half a million, Lee almost blacked out when we shared the money between the two of us. R250k was a lot of money. Anyway, when I got home that night I hid the money. Mr.Mazibuko, went to the news rewarding anyone who comes forth with information on who stole his money, and boy chancers had a field day. No one produced substantial evidence, and he decided to drop it seeing that no one saw anything, even the cameras at the mall didn't detect any foul play, believe you me, he was broken. I took some of the money and purchased weed and started selling it around the hood, let me tell you something you don't know; weed has a lot of profit, a lot of it. I sold the best weed, A-grade type of shit, and little did I know that Mazibuko was also into the drug & weed business. Anyhow, he became my subordinate since he heard that I sell one of the best weed in town. Then he proposed the idea that we venture into other countries and sell our weed there. Haike, and we did.”

The business grew rapidly within a short space of time. We now had clients all over even though I was working under Mazibuko, I pushed my own shit too on the side I didn't trust him, and he knew that very well. I guess greed got the best of him, and he wanted to sideline me out of the game and run the business

alone, I told him straight up that if I leave, I leave with my shit, no hoaxes. He tried fighting me, and sent his goons to attack me, but they didn't succeed. Anyway, I told my uncle about this, and he took me to a very powerful witch doctor, and he worked on me for a full week, and the pain I've gone through there yasis it's unexplainable, but I came out stronger than ever before. I had a new strength that I don't even know he came from, but I knew that I was no longer the old Tsakani, I was now someone else. This Inyanga told me that I'm possessed with a very covetous snake, and only it will choose the woman for me, a woman that will bear kids for me. Guess that woman is you," she raises her head and looks up at me, and narrows her eyes. "Back to my chest please I'm still talking," she nods and slips her head on my chest again.

"Will I be able to ask questions afterward?" She asks raking her fingers on my chest.

Me: "Yes. You will, but for now, cease interrupting me."

Her: "Okay. Resume."

Me: “Anyhow, I went back to the hood since people were notified that I ran away with Mazibuko's money, and stole some jewelry from a jewelry shop and the police are looking for me. I knew that Mazibuko was behind this, Lee, told me this when I notified him that I'm around. I went and handed over myself to the police, and they didn't arrest me. After all, there was no evidence that I ran away with his money or stole jewelry at that particular shop not forgetting the way they those police staggered during my presence it was so weird, yet great because it showed that they respected me or feared me maybe? Whatever the case may be. Leaving the police station I went straight to Mazibuko's office and I found him in a meeting with some of our business affiliates. He was shocked when he saw me, he didn't actually believe that I'm back together with the so-called affiliates. He smiled unsure, pretending that he is happy to see me, but I knew that he was plain lying.”

“He told his affiliates to excuse him, he requires to have a word with me, and they did just that, but were behind the door my 7th sense warned me. He asked me to sit down, and I didn't. I implored him as to why he had to lie, he said this and that not even making any sense of what he's saying. Haike, the men who were outside the door kicked it, and told me to freeze, mind you I had no gun with me, I was very much vulnerable at that

moment. Nare, Mazibuko was ready to watch me die, but without him noticing I quickly took the gun that was sprawled carelessly on top of the table, spun around and detonated at the two men randomly until the bullets ran out, and blood sprayed the wall, some seeping out of their mouth dropping to the floor. That was my first time killing, and ever since then, it became a normal thing. I'd kill and sleep better afterward, that was just about it."

"People started respecting me, businessmen respected me, some real Mafias feared me too and that made me realize that they are not really fearing me, but the snake inside me. I became the most respected man all over, even these nyaope boys respected me. My business took off again, but this time I collaborated with Italian Dom. One of the world's ruthless man I've ever come across. He sold me ammunition, diamonds, golds, firearms, and all that I wanted. Now, that's one man that I greatly respect he knows what business is, and not once did he try to take me out, I respect him, and he respects me too. Yeah, and that's how I became a notorious gangster. I recruited Batista whilst in University, then Leon & Talon in the streets trying to rob me, not forgetting Spikiri. We started hijacking cars, robbing the multimillion-rand business, robbing banks, and all that stuff robbers do. That's pretty much about my life.

It wasn't an easy journey though, I dodged bullets, and hitman's ngibuya kude bubbles," sighs.

Her: "Wow. I don't even know what to say, but that snake story, is any of it true?" I chuckle.

Me: "Yes, all of it, it's true."

Her: "Wawuza. So, I'm basically sleeping with a snake?" She lifts her head.

Me: "No." Chuckling. "You're sleeping with me, the snake chose you, and marked you."

Her: "Marked? Marked how?"

Me: "Do you page your pussy?" She nods. "Do you see the mini pimple near your pussy entrance?" She widens her eyes in panic

I laugh. "That's the mark, and if any man sleeps with you, he dies." She slightly pouts as if remembering something then she shakes her head, and lay back on my chest. "Are you okay?"

Her: "Yes, I am. I'm still processing all that you just told me, I can't believe that I've been marked. A whole entire me, marked. Unbelievable. There goes cheating," she mumbles the last part. "And the pimple was really making me uncomfortable, at some point, I even thought that I had an infection of some sort kanty no, it's a mark."

Me: "Exactly."

Her: "And it doesn't affect you anyhow?"

Him: "It didn't at first, but now that I found you there will be consequences should I sleep with any other woman besides you."

Her: "Wow."

Me: "Would you believe me if I told you that ever since I saw you at Tshisanyama that day, I've hired people to find you?"

Her: "What? Why would you do that?"

Me: "For my own selfish reasons ofcourse, but the snake in me had other thoughts without talking to me about them, first."
She laughs.

Her: "And don't I just love it?" I snarl.

Me: "Traitor."

Her: "I love the both of you anyway."

Me: "I know, and we love you too," I kiss her forehead.

Her: "Let's sleep, I'm tired."

Me: "I know what you mean." And that's my story folks.



NOMALANGA

I couldn't sleep a wink last night after that unexpected visit from that Lucifer of a man. The sun rose with me looking, and for the first time in a while, I dread leaving my room, but I must go and see Nono and tell her the truth before that Lucifer get to her first. I rise from the bed, and head to the shower. His cologne is still lingering in the air making me nausea, sighs. I step inside the shower, and open the shower tap I don't even feel like using a shower gel because argh. 10 minutes later I'm done bathing, and I'm looking for something to wear, I send Nono a message notifying her that I'm coming we need to have a serious conversation. I can't risk her coming here who knows what that man is up to? I'm convinced that he's watching my every move, sies. He's evil, but this family doesn't know that because he's their family Dr. He hides behind the white coat, counterfeit smiles, and eyeglasses whereas in actual fact he's a devil, I'm sure he kills his patients too “for fun,” nxa.

I step out of my bedroom and go to the lounge, I find everyone sitting watching TV, I greet and request for Hlulani. He's the

only man I trust right now in this place. He gets up, and follows me outside.

“Dimamzo,” he calls out.

“I'm sorry to bother you but can you please accompany me to my daughter's place?”

Him: “No problem let me go and fetch the keys real fast,” I nod looking around for any unsuspecting thing as he hurries to the house. “Let's go,” we walk to where the car is, and he opens the door for me, I get in and so does he. He roars the engine to life, and off he drives out of the yard, my eyes are still inspecting the environment. This feels so creepy having to constantly watch my back, or any cars following us only because of one man. One wasted sperm of a human being.

Wow, I didn't even know that Nono's house is this enormous, I wonder how many rooms does it contain. Hlulani, parks on the driveway and we step out of the car. I look around admiring it, people are rich out there. Hlulani rings the doorbell and Nono is the one opening it, she smiles when she sees us.

“Please, come on in,” she tells us opening the door wide enough for us to step inside. She shuts close immediately as we get in, the kitchen is also beautiful and the colors are coordinating. “Tsakini, is watching soccer Hlulani.”

“Thanks, Koti.” He leaves us.

Me: “You have a beautiful house.”

Her: “Thanks Mama. You can go to the lounge so long I'll attend you shortly.”

Me: “You want me to get lost?” She softly laughs.

Her: “No. You won't get lost, Mama.”

Me: “I'd rather wait for you, or we can always sit here I don't mind.”

Her: "Okay, if you say so. You sounded not okay over the phone, what's wrong?" I sigh shaking my head

Me: "My past is back to haunt me."

Her: "Your past?" I nod. "I don't follow."

Me: "Remember the story of me telling you that I was raped by my then-husband?" She nods. "Well, I don't want to waste your time, but that man. Your father is back."

Her: "Askies?"

Me: "Yes, he's back."

Me: "So? Manje nakabuyile thina singenaphi lapho? How does he being back involves us?"

Me: "Because he wants to know you, he knows about you."

Her: "Tough because I don't want to know him, let alone meet him."

Me: "You have no choice, Nono. You must meet with him. He's a very cruel man, please Nono."

Her: "I don't care whether he's cruel or what. I don't want to meet with him, he can go to the nearest hell for all I care!"

Me: "You don't mean that, Nono. He's your father."

Her: "Why are you pushing me to meet up with him even though I'm telling you that I don't want to meet with him?"

Me: "Because he's your father, Nono."

Her: "No. He's a rapist, and that's it. For the last time Mama. I'm not meeting with him, and you can't tell me otherwise."

Me: "If you don't meet up with him, he will kill me. He's a very cruel man, Nono. Please, do this for me. Yazi, last night he gained entrance at the Elite then straight to my sleeping room where he threatened me, telling me that if I don't tell you about him, he will eradicate me!" Tears are on a verge of falling.

Her: "Well, I'd love to see him try. I can be ruthless too you know."

Me: "Please, just hear what he has to say that's all I'm asking you."

Her: "No. What's his name?"

Me: "Tsebo. His name is Tsebo Mashifane." She giggles.

Her: "The Ngobeni's family Dr?" I nod, and she laughs. "You must be kidding me. That rapist of a Dr. is my father?"

Me: "Yes. He's your father."

Her: "So, my father is no longer a truck driver? The man who chose you amongst all the maiden in your village? The man who made your parents disown you?"

Me: "I lied. All that I said was a lie except for the rape part." I look down, and play with my fingers.

Her: "Why did you lie to me though?"

Me: "That's because he was a married man."

Her: "Let me get this straight. You had an affair with a married man?"

Me: "No. I was their helper, and he raped me. He used to rape me every chance he got, and somehow you were conceived. Both his wives couldn't bear him kids, so, I guess he saw it fit to rape me."

Her: "And you kept quiet about it?"

Me: "I had no choice. He used to threaten me, and I've witnessed how ruthless he is. I had no choice and I ended up running away, I was fearing for my life, I'm sorry that I lied."

Her: "I hear you. But still, I don't want to meet him, in fact, tell him to go and hang himself in a big tree branch because there is no way I'm meeting him. Oh, and if he has a problem with that, he better come to me and faces me if he's a real man. Mtshelenjalo."

Me: "Erh, I will." It looks like she means it. She has really changed, guess she takes after her father. Tsakani & Hlulani descend the stand in a rush.

Tsakani: "Mamazala," I nod acknowledging his greeting. "Bubbles, I'm heading to Talon's place."

Her: "Why? What happened? Is Talon okay?"

Him: "Yeah, he's fine. Thembeke has been kidnapped." I gasp.

Me: "What? But how? And the baby?"

Him: "I don't know, yet. I will update you once we've gathered the whole story. Mamazala, you can stay here until Hlulani comes back. Bubbles, keep your phone close," he says already exiting the house.

Me: "I wonder who abducted her, and I pray that the baby is fine. How can people be so evil?"

Luxolo: "Life is full of evil people, hhey. Tea?"

Me: "Yes, please. About your father?"

Her: "We are worried about Thembeke and the baby, awume ngale rapist." I nod.



LUXOLO

My phone beeps notifying me that I have a message, I pick it up from the countertop and view the message.

“Abduction successful, and the baby is at a safe house, for now, we will drop him at the Elite, later on, the mother is being taken to a secret location. I will send you directions, with lots of love. Lux.”

Hhe, you should see the smile on my face right now. This world is really full of evil people indeed, and evil people deserve to be punished. Then, there's this “father of mine” issue, yerrr. Hhe. That man has some audacity, some bloody fucking audacity. Uyanya yena shame. Where was he all these years? Nxai, nonsense. Anyway, yena I don't mind much about him, he doesn't even shake me.1 down 4 more to go...

★Insert 52★

TSAKANI

Their bedroom is upside down, you can tell that Thembeke was fighting her abductors because Khalasi's essentials are scattered on the floor, and one of the flower pot is sitting ajar, the long mirror is broken. Talon, is pacing up & down and the funny thing is that these people didn't even fiddle with the door, they didn't force their way in. It's evident that they knocked, and Thembeke attended the door then they pointed her with a gun, and she ran here, they followed her here, and fought with her... Well, that's what I think happened.

“When did this happen?” I implore looking at him, he's pissed off and his forehead veins are popping.

“Ek'seni for sho. Enhlek ang'keni.” (In the morning. In fact, I don't know)

Me: “How? Because we all left the club at the exact time.”

Leon: “He went and got himself some pussy while we went home.”

Batista: “Why would he go and look for some pussy elsewhere, whereas Thembeke is here? It doesn't make sense.”

Him: “Ek'se, Batista. Ukwenza I marshmallows nalo gogo bekuyiphutha, iphutha elikhulu kabi. Kanty mina vele akang'khihlisi sasemngcwabeni, inkinga incosi yami bafethu. Ngifa ngencosi yami hhayi lo gogo. Lee, hade ukuringa kanje ngo aunt wakho maar I vaar, ngifa ngencosi yami k'phela. Yazi ngabe bajinde lo gogo bayeka incosi yami, fuck it maarn.”
(Having sex with that grandmother was a huge mistake. And besides, I'm not worried about her, she doesn't make me shed tears, but the problem it's my son. I want my son most importantly, not her. Lee, I'm sorry for talking like this about

your aunt, but it's the truth, I only need my son. They should've just taken Thembeke and left my son)

Lee: “No stress ntwana. I'm also not worried about Thembeke, she's a grown woman. I'm also worried about Khalasi. So, you have no idea about who abducted them?”

Him: “Zero. Ang'cavi nokuthi unama kati amnyama.” (I don't even know that she has enemies)

Lee: “Me too. Of which makes wonder why did they abduct them because as far as I know, Thembeke was very friendly towards everyone.”

Me: “You weren't staying with her 24/7 Lee. Maybe she has enemies that you don't know of.”

Him: “It might be possible.”

Batista: “There are no clues, nothing. Whoever abducted them it's a professional and since none of you here knows who her

enemies are it's going to be a little bit perilous for us to find them. Not unless the abductors come forth and demand a ransom for their emancipation, until then we have no leads. Tried imploring with the neighbors?"

Him: "Abaka cavi nix, ba useless mus laba. Mara ke ema barbs bahlala basejele," (they didn't see anything, they're useless. But then in the suburbs they are forever in prisons)

Hlulani: "This is bad. I hope they didn't harm any of them, especially Khalasi seeing that everyone is worried about him, and not the mother."

Me: "Why don't we wait for their abductors to call us, and demand for the ransom then we will take it from there because with no leads we are doomed, plus we don't even know if she had enemies or what."

Lee: "Let me call Mmnangwane, maybe she might give us something to work with. I'll be back, " he excuses himself.

Batista: “Ku thafu,” shaking his head.

Leon: “Let me get us some beers so long.”

Talon: “Jinda njayami akuna thwa es'bandeni.” (Leave it, there's nothing in the fridge)

Me: “Nazo. Njani Talon?” (How)

Him: “Lo gogo ungenze kabi, uchamise yonke lento ku drain,” (this grandmother did me badly, she emptied all of my beers in the drain) I laugh.

Me: “Wamjinda?” (And you said nothing)

Him: “Yebo. Angithethisi abogogo mina angifuni amabhadi, ngisase yi ntwana blind ukuba namabhadi ek'se,” (I don't reprimand old women I don't want bad luck, I'm too young to be retaining bad luck) we all laugh.

Batista: "Ae, bewuthwele kanzima mfethu." (You had it hard)

Him: "Injalo. Enhlek; good riddance to bad rubbish, uyidodi kabi logogo. Nxa." I chuckle.

Leon: "Mara umdlile mus waze wamuthi fa fa nange ncosi."
(But you still had sex with her and gave her a baby)

Him: "Yinto engizisola ngayo leyo, mara ke angizisoli ngo Khalasi yinja yami leya, ngizoyibhodela," (That's the only thing I regret, but I don't regret Khalasi, that's my son I will die for him)

Me: "Athi ngibambe le way njenge ruler. So, wena kahle- kahle uthi uyazisola ngokulala nalo gogo but awuzisoli ngo Khalasi?"

Him: "Crystal. Or awuseva? Enhlek, ugcine nini ukuthi fafa izindlebe?" (Are you deaf now? In fact, when last did you clean your ears) Leon laughs.

Me: "1980 something."

Him: "No wonder," I chuckle.

Me: "Mara uyacava ukuthi ngabe asi le griza lakho ngabe awunaye uKhalasi wena?" (Are you aware that if it wasn't for your grandmother you wouldn't be having Khalasi)

Batista: "I waar, mara ke sizawuthini?" (True. But what can we say)

Me: "Ncono sizidlele u shut up."

"The only enemies she has are loan sharks, o shaka k'phela."
Lee, informs us stepping inside the room.

Leon: "How many are they?"

Him: "Ang'cavi." (I don't know)

Me: "So, one of them might've abducted her?"

Leon: "I doubt. Loan sharks never abduct people, this is deeper than we think. Or maybe a blast from a past that she was owing, or an old enemy came back. I actually don't know. Hhayi, abo gogo bama secrets, nxa."

Lee: "Life ke Spinach, strue."

Batista: "How is it a spinach?"

Him: "Because it's green," we laugh. "I don't know-how, I was just saying," he shrugs.

Talon: "Ngathi kuzomele ubuyele es'gila ayikho phela le." (I think you need to go back to school)

Him: "Hhayi baba, awung'nyazi kanjalo."

Talon: "Bengidlala ntwana, you are educated. I know you."

Him: “Good boy. Manje indaba ka Khalasi?”

Hlulani: “Why not go and report it at the police station? I'm sure they will help,” Talon laughs.

Him: “Ungang'tsheli ngalabo. Ngizozifunela yena uKhalasi wami and I will find him. Sisonke mus?”

Us: “As per usual.”

Leon: “Where will we start though?”

Him: “Sizobona nasesi phume nge gate, asimasheni.”

Hlulani: “I'd love to join you guys, but I need to go and fetch Nomalanga.”

Me: “We understand.”

Him: "Why don't you text Tammy, and tell her to accompany her? I'm sure she won't mind and in that way, I will tag along with you guys."

Me: "Good idea," I take out my phone from my pocket, and send her a text. I know that she won't have any problem driving her mother back to the Elite.



LUXOLO

“Well, it seems as if like I'll be taking you to the Elite,” I tell my mother picking up her plate we just finished eating.

“Oh, Hlulani is not coming?” She asks sounding disappointed.

Me: “Yeah, it seems as if they have a mission to carry.”

Her: “Okay, let's not waste any more time then, let's go,” she gets up from the couch.

Me: “Let me get the car keys then we will leave.”

Her: "Okay." I hurry to the bedroom and take the car keys then head back down.

Me: "Asambe." We step out of the house and head to the car.

Her: "Are you going to consider it?"

Me: "Consider what?" I roar the engine to life.

Her: "Meeting up with your father," I chuckle.

Me: "I ain't doing that. Anyway, do me & Luxolo senior share a father?"

Her: "No. You have different fathers."

Me: "Hmmm, I see. Now, what I'd like to know is; for how long have you been working for this Mashifane man?"

Her: "30+ years."

Me: "What? You are lying, Mama. Stop lying, um'dala for such. Can't you just tell me the truth just for once!"

Her: "I'm telling you the truth, what more do you want me to say?"

Me: "The truth. I want the truth. Tell me here, did you conceive biggie while working for the Mashifane's?"

Her: "Yes, I conceived her while working for the Mashifane's."

Me: "I'm confused, I need to wrap all this around my head, this is confusing truly speaking. My mind will explode if I think about all these lies you are feeding me."

Her: "Believe what you want ke because I said what I said, and it's the truth."

Me: "I'll gladly do so. But wait, how old is Mr. Mashifane?"

Her: "In his mid50s," I laugh.

Me: "So, this man raped you while you were in your early 20s, and he was in his late 30s, is that what you are saying?"

Her: "Yes, that's what I'm saying."

Me: "How old were you when you conceived biggie?"

Her: "20 years old, and 26 years when I conceived you."

Me: "Hence the 6 years age gap, then the moment you learned that you were pregnant with me, you gave biggie away? If yes, then why did you give her away?"

Her: "I don't want to talk about this anymore, you are causing me confusion."

Me: "No. You are causing yourself confusion, Mama, because your stories don't add up. Instead, they're getting more & more confusing. When you are ready to come clean you know where to find me, you have too many secrets, Mama."

Her: "As long as you know who your fathers are, how I conceived you don't matter anymore. And this better be the last time we have this discussion, I detest dwelling in the preceding."

Me: "Wow. Okay, and you also better not force me to meet with Tsebo because I have no interest in getting to know him."

Her: "Whatever decision you take, Nono, I'm fine with it."

Me: "Very well then," I put in some music just to dampen the mood. My mother is a serial liar, she lies too much that she

ends up choking on them, and getting confused amidst it all, sighs. "I'm not coming in, pass my greetings to everyone."

Her: "Will do," she steps out of the car. "Drive safely

" I nod, and she shuts the door to close. I wait for her to get inside the yard before I depart.

So, biggie said Tsebo is a very dangerous man I wonder how dangerous he is if biggie fears him too. But one thing I do know is that I'm not scared of him, I may not know him, but I'm not scared of him and I might take him on time. Yoh, then there's Nomalanga. Hhayi ngeke this woman is a skelem, crook kabi loMama.

I can't help it, but feel as like I'm being followed. There's this white car that has been following me ever since I left the Elite, I wonder who is following me, people have a lot of time in their hands, or maybe is this so-called Tsebo men. I need to lose them, and taking the freeway route will do because there are many cars there, or I can always slow down and see what they will do, then I will take it from there. The car slows down too, yazi if I was the old Luxolo I would be messing this car right now and go in an instant alarmed mode not knowing what to do. I

come to a complete halt and the car does to not far, just a meter or two away from me, sighs. People are draining sometimes. Hoisting the passenger's seat I come across my gun, my very first gun that I used to kill evil people. It's loaded, we are good to go, and I know that I don't miss when I aim at my target.

I open the door, and take one foot out chuckling. Yah neh, life. I cock the gun and step out of the car, and fire one shot at the windshield, and they take off passing me in full speed, I aim for the tyres now, and in one shot the tyre burst, then the car will lose composure than its game over for them and whoever sent them to follow after me, rubbish. Nxa, later on, I will have to pass by the location biggie sent me, and I told them to go and drop the child off at Talon's door phela the child is innocent in all this. And Tsakani must never find out that I'm implicated in this too because hhe, kuzonyiwa. I get back inside my car as the other car explodes, fuck it.



VUYO

I'm surprised to find so many cars parked outside my house, I decided to come back just to iron things out with Cindy, and to see that she's better than the last time I saw her. And now as I see all these cars parked here, I'm surprised, and it can't be possible that they have a family gathering, they never gather as a family on a Sunday, I wonder what's going on. I park my car

across the street and step out of it, let me wait a bit and see what exactly is going on before I make my way inside. More cars are arriving, hmmm. This is serious business.

“Hey, Vuyo.” Cynthia, her cousin greet me. She's wearing a skirt & a doek.

“Hi. What's going on there?” She looks at me flabbergasted.

Her: “Don't you know?” I shake my head. “That's strange. I thought you knew. Anyway, Cindy has passed away last night.”

Me: “What? What happened to her? I had no inkling.”

Her: “She just stopped talking & walking out of the blue, then she passed on in her sleep.”

Me: “That's sad, I'm sorry to hear that. May her soul rest in peace.”

Her: "Just like that? Aren't you worried? Heartbroken? Sad?"

Me: "Neither of any of that. I was going to be if we were still a happily married couple, but we weren't, so, I'm not hurt in any way. Thank you for letting me know. When is the funeral?" She gasps.

Her: "Are you being for real right now, Vuyo? That's your wife that's passed on."

Me: "Ex-wife to be factual. So, when is the funeral?"

Her: "They are still arranging it."

Me: "Oh, I will need her death certificate so that I can go and claim insurance money."

Her: "You are one evil man, Vuyo. I don't know you like this, what happened to you?"

Me: "Life happened. So, you will let me know how everything goes right?"

Her: "Do I have a choice?"

Me: "No. You don't have any choice."

Her: "I will let you know then, let me go and help out inside the house. You better leave now before Nonhlanhla comes here you know how much she hates you. She might even cause a scene, and we don't want that."

Me: "You are right, I will hear from you then. Condolences to the family."

Her: "Appreciated."

Me: "Farewell," I step inside my car and laugh. Hhe, God is good. His ways are extraordinary. I still wonder what made her deaf and crippled her, shesh. Life is really a misery. I roar my engine to life and take off, I still have to go and see Blessing's

mother, hopefully, I will find her today and she will eventually give me all the answers I need, I need closure. And I will have to go to Adele, and implore about the girl's whereabouts and if she's opened for business. This time around I'm willing to rescue my daughter even if it means risking with my life, I will just have to.

The house is empty as per usual, and this time around weeds are covering half of it, you can only see the windows and the washed-up wall. Guess she no longer lives here, I wonder where is she. Or maybe she died during the war? I don't know, but if she is alive and well then may God give me the strength to locate her, and save my daughter too.



TSAKANI

The sun is setting, and still no sign of finding Khalasi or the abductors calling us requesting a ransom. We don't know what to do now other than reporting them to the radio stations and make out flyers, posters, and post on all social media networks. Haike, even the sun wasn't having any justice on us. Talon is really broken, he's drained and most definitely not losing hope. He reminds me of the time when bubbles went missing, I couldn't take anything or think straight, food was even the last thing on my mind. So, I kind of understand what he's going through, it's one dreadful experience to go through... Not knowing where the most important person in your life is at. You even feel like a failer at some point.

“We will continue the search tomorrow, or we can always do a crossover at night. Right now all I need is to eat, and have a cold one,” Leon tells us.

“Hambani no resta magenge ngizoyishova ngiyi 1 le nombolo,” (go and rest gents, I will carry on with this mission alone) Talon tells us.

Me: “Awunyi wena? Ungazos'jwayela amasimba. Asambeni sobamba 2 nyana nenyama bese sachubeka ke ngale nombolo.”

Him: “Angeke kungene ukudla bafethu.”

Lee: “Then you will watch us eat, no problem.”

Me: “Ngiyacava ukuthi u feela njani ntwana yami, I've been there too. Remember the bubbles issue?”

Batista: “Yeses! You were behaving like a gay during that time, yerr. Bewunyayisa yeva, rha!” The others laugh.

Me: “Mxm. Uyanya kanti.”

Talon: “Uringa I waar u, Batista yazi. Bewungikwatisa blind wena swine, yeerrr. Mabanga daar beng'fun ukum'cisha same time,” (you're telling the truth, he used to make me angry during that time. Those days I wanted to kill him same time) I chuckle.

Me: “Niyanya nina, tsek zinja. Masibambeni igawulo.”

Lee: “Who's paying?”

Me: “The one who said who's hungry first.”

Leon: “I don't mind paying for the food. So, who's going to pay for the alcohol?”

Me: "Batista. End of discussion."

Him: "Nxa, sies."

Talon: "Gents ngiyazifela ngani."

Me: "Whoa, brika net daar njayami. Ufa ngabobani?"

Him: "Ngani magenge. Nina izinja ze game, o gabhadiya, o uncle ba Khalasi. Ngiyafa ngani magenge blind."

Batista: "Hhayi mfets, ngine medi mina. Not in a bad way though njayami."

Him: "Lentombi yakho iyazi ukuthi uvuka iziphayiphayi nawushaye ama 2?" We all laugh.

Batista: "Dlala kahle ntwana yami, awuhlekisi."

Me: “Wabanjwa Satan,” laughing. My phone rings and its bubbles. “Excuse me, gents, I need to take this call,” they nod. “bubbles, miss me?” She giggles.

Her: “No, I'm not missing you. I was just calling to inform you that Khalasi has been found.”

Me: “Wait, what? Where and how?” I look at the gents and all their eyes are pinned on me.

Her: “Mrs. Davison, called me a few minutes ago and informed me that someone dropped a baby cot in front of Talon's gate. When she went to check she found Khalasi in the cot, unharmed, she said there was a note also guess it's a message of some sort.” I close my eyes. Mrs. Davison, was my noisy neighbor, but she loved bubbles and still do.

Me: “Thank you, God. I'm so relieved, let me tell Talon, and the gents. I'll be home now.”

Her: “Okay. I love you.”

Me: "I love you too."

Her: "And please come with something to eat I don't feel like cooking tonight."

Me: "I will. Keep safe."

Her: "Will do, and you too," hanging up. I walk up to the gents.

Me: "Ntwana ungakhokha umoya manje, Khalasi is safe and unharmed."

Him: "Yeh? Serious njayami?" He asks not believing it.

Me: "Yeah, bubbles just told me. Mrs. Davison called her, and informed her."

Him: "Yoh, dankie ntwana yami," he hugs me.

Leon: "Now what are we waiting for? Let's go and fetch our son, gents."

Lee: "Take-away it is I guess."

Me: "Yeah, add more meat. Bubbles said I must come with something to eat."

Him: "Sure."

Talon: "Une sure ndoda?" I nod. "Mele ngimubone ntwana yami, dinga ukumbona."

Me: "You will njayami." Well, at least the abductors have some heart.

LUXOLO

I shake Tsakini roughly, and he doesn't wake up. I slap him, and he still doesn't wake up. Guess the pills are working, and they will knock him off for a long time, hopefully by the time I come back he'd still be sleeping. I disembark the bed, and throw in my black tracksuit and look for his sneakers, zona zinkulu but I love them. I take the car keys, and my phone then steps out of the room, I grab some cold water, and exit the house. Luxolo said that I will find them at the warehouse, I will just have to activate the GPS and it will take me there.

2 hours later I'm parked outside this vast warehouse, and it is heavily protected the guards are all over the place with enormous machines, and they look scary. I've been scanned, and questioned then I was granted access. I don't want to lie to you, their questions were infuriating, but then again they were following procedures, it had to be attained. The door slides open, and I step inside, this place is heaven mus even though I don't know how heaven looks like. The walls are filled with their pictures, by the look of things these people have been at it

since like forever, they've grown, and in some of these pictures, they look young. Dala babotsotsi mus laba.

“Welcome to our torturing place, little one.” Anthea, says taking my hand into hers. “Would you like a tour?”

“Maybe after I've seen Thembeke. How is she?” I implore as we walk towards this other dimmed room...

Her: “She's okay, I guess.”

Me: “Why you guess?”

Her: “I haven't seen her either, I also got here not long ago.” I nod. She leads us to this other room, and opens the door for me. There on the chair naked is Thembeke, her head is hanging low. Biggie, comes out of another room wheeling something I wonder what's inside there.

“Hey, smallie.”

Me: "Hey, big. What's in there?"

Her: "Raze, my friend." Anthea laughs.

Me: "Then why is he in a cage?"

Her: "Because he's very dangerous, and isn't so friendly."

Anthea: "He burps too, after being fed."

Me: "Is it a snake?" Raising my brow.

Her: "An abnormal python, it is."

Me: "Creepy. Has she said anything, yet?"

Biggie: "No. I haven't asked her, I was waiting for you. Shall we?" I nod.

Anthea: "I'll be watching from this side."

Me: "She's sleeping?"

Her: "Yeah, but don't worry we are going to wake her up, bring me that bucket." I pick up the bucket from the floor full of water and hand it to her. She pours Thembeke with the water, and she wakes up gasping for air looking around still disoriented. "Wake up sunshine." She coughs.

Thembeke: "Where's my son?"

Her: "Dead. I killed him, and fed him to the Pitbulls."

Thembeke: "What?" She wiggles from the chair trying to free herself.

Me: "Forget it, that shit won't work. Anyway, I'm not here you to have fun, but I'm here regarding a serious matter."

Her: "Matter? What matters?" She's still brave, I stan.

Me: "Why did you poison my mother?"

Her: "What?" She scurries her eyes all over the room.

Me: "Don't what me. You know exactly what I'm talking about. Why did you poison my mother? And don't try to lie to me because I have receipts."

Her: "I didn't poison Nomalanga. I'm telling you the truth," I chuckle.

Me: "Funny because, the day that I called Dr. Strydom, she was already on her way here at the pleasantry of your call of course. What was she coming to do there?"

Her: "How do you know that I'm the one who called her?"

Me: "Truecaller. Never heard of it?"

Her: "I called her because I wanted her to come and check me up, I wasn't feeling well, and my baby wasn't kicking for 8 hours straight. Since she was a family Dr. I had to call her."

Biggie: "Bullshit! That's a lot of bullshit, and you fucking know it. Tell us the truth or I will feed you to Raze, don't push me."

Her: "I'm telling the truth. Why would I want to kill Nomalanga? Such a humble woman?"

Me: "That's what we want to know."

Her: "I had no intention of killing your mother, I'd never."

Biggie: "I'm not one to go around in circles, and prolong things. No. That's not my style, now I'm forced to make you squirt the truth out." She walks to this other toolbox and comes back with a hammer, Thembeke, widens her eyes in horror.

Her: "Wha- what are you doing?"

Biggie: "I'm making you talk," she shrugs then squats and haul the hammer, then bring it down to Thembeke's toes, and she screams as the hammer meets her toes. "I told you that I'm not one to prolong things, talk dammit, or else I'll chop of your tongue!"

Her: "I didn't do it, I swear," she's crying. Biggie hits her toes furthermore, and blood sprays out. Hhayi, how much blood does she have?

Biggie: "Okay, let's do it this way. Anthea, bring the child and feed her to Raze maybe that will get her to talk!"

Her: "No, not my son please."

Biggie: "Too late. I gave you a chance, and you failed to talk, now you leave me with no choice but to make you watch your son being eaten by Raze. Plus, it's been long since she last ate

some human flesh. Raze is no ordinary snake, he's creepy and scary too. See, I always inject him with Morsadine and that gives it powers. Now, watch.” She nods at Anthea who pretends to be carrying a baby in her hands, she saunters to where the enclosure is located, and removes the cloth off the enclosure, and a very big, scary-looking snake comes into view.

Me: “Gzus! What on earth is this?!”

Her: “Meet my friend, Raze!”

Thembeke: “Pl- please, not my son, please,” she begs. “I wanted to kill her because of what she did to me in the past.”

Me: “In the past? What did she do to you? This ought to be interesting.”

Her: “Back in the days we were best of friends, not entirely best but yeah, that. I was married, and she was a prostitute. We both were, but luckily for me, I found a man who loved me, and he decided to take me and make me his wife, I was very happy.

I told Nomalanga, and she was happy for me, or so I thought. Years down the line, Nomalanga came to me crying, saying that she can't do it anymore, she can't be a prostitute I must help her with a job. She can even be my maid

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she doesn't mind, kanty Satan wanted my husband. I found her in bed with my husband, and she showed no remorse for it afterward, then it came to a point where my husband wanted a divorce, and they eventually got married, I was kicked out of the house. I decided to go back home because I was not chased away, I vowed that I will make Nomalanga pay. She was living her best life at the expense of my tears, she betrayed me.” She takes a deep breath and looks at where Anthea is standing.

“Later on I learned that she was pregnant with you, ” she points at biggie using her head. And during that year, her husband impregnated another woman that very same year. The other woman gave birth to a son the very same day you were born. It was supposed to be me that gave birth to a child, but your mother had to be evil and snatched my husband from me. I've been following her all these years, watching her every move, I know that my ex-husband divorced her because she was whoring around with another man, and fell pregnant, but aborted the child because Tsebo didn't want a child with her,

she was a mistress after all. She went back to prostitution, dumped Luxolo snr at her friend's house, and never looked back. Once again, she found herself in bed with Tsebo, and Tsebo's wife caught her. She ran to Mpumalanga in hopes of not being found and she changed her identity, and started a new life. She met a man there, only to find that he was her sister's fiancé, Bhebetsi. But she still dated him, and moved in with him, Bhebetsi was chased out of the house, and your mother occupied it. She actually used muti to tame him, to cut the long story short. Your mother ruined a lot of women's lives, she was a homewrecker and was proud of it. I was only trying to revenge myself, but I didn't succeed.”

Wow, Nomalanga. Just wow. This is just too much to take in. How nasty of her? That's if she's telling the truth, but wait...

Me: “How do you know all this and how come she didn't recognize you?”

Her: “Because I had people following her, and I forgot to mention that she poured me with acid, I had to buy a new face. You can go ahead and kill me now, Talon, will raise the baby with the help of his friends and the elite family.”

Biggie: "I need to breathe, I really need to catch an alleviation because this is too much to take in, I'll decide what I will do with you when I come back. Excuse me," she steps out of the room.

Me: "I need one too," I also step out of the room. Now, it all makes sense as to why she was changing stories. A smoke or two will do for now.

Anthea: "Wow. Your mom was a badass, she's the real MVP, a professional home wrecker. She deserves an award of a lifetime."

Me: "This is sickening!" So, basically, Bhebetsi, was Muzi's wife before my mother did her dirty? Damn, how sick twisted is she? I don't even know how to feel about these revelations, tsii.

Biggie: "What are we going to do with Thembeke, now?"

Me: "Let's leave her, let's just free her. She's a scorned woman, after all, she was only reacting because of hurt."

Her: "Guess you are right, let's free her."

Anthea: "Best decision, but she almost killed your mother."

Me: "She survived didn't she?"

Her: "Yeah, she did. She was supposed to die."

Biggie: "I've gotta agree with you, she was supposed to die."

Me: "Let me just go home to my mans, wuhhh. What a waste."

Her: "I'm leaving too."

Anthea: "Should I free her?"

Me: “Yes, she must take a bath too and give her food also. Bye guys,” I wave walking away. I'm defeated, it's like I lost a very important battle. Nomalanga, yah neh.



NOMALANGA

I can't sleep. I've been tossing & turning. A lot of things are occupying my mind currently, and one of them being; how to tell Tsebo that Nono doesn't want to meet with him, I know that he will try forcing me into setting up a meeting for the two of them without telling Nono. I know how he works, sighs. I get up from the bed, and sit upright as more thoughts keep on invading my mind, I'm stressed. Nono, is also not giving me a break. She asks too much, and that's annoying me. My preceding is not that wow, ai. My phone rings and it's Nono. What does she want so late? Hope everyone is fine.

“Nono.”

“Is it true?”

Me: “What is?”

Her: “That you were a homewrecker?”

Me: Chuckling. "What? Where did you get that?"

Her: "From an old friend of yours."

Me: "I told you that I never had friends in my whole entire life, Nono. What friend are you talking about?"

Her: "I'm not a fool, Mama. I know everything about you, everything. We have your files. How can you be so evil, Mama?"

Me: "What are you talking about?"

Her: "Everything. Your history. You have a very unpleasant past."

Me: "Nono, what past are you talking about?"

Her: “Your preceding involving married men. Basically you, being a homewrecker.” I gasp. “Wh- how? How does she know all this? Who was she talking to? I swallow my own saliva as my throat gets instantly dry. “Still there?” I steel my voice.

Me: “Yes, yes, I'm still here. I'm just quiet because I don't know what you are talking about.”

Her: “You know very well what I'm talking about. How can you be so cruel, Mama? How do you even sleep at night knowing very well that you once made women shed tears? Made them feel less of a woman, like they are failers? Ever thought of how drenched their pillows would be like because of you? The sleepless nights, questioning their worth? Do have an idea how broken those women are to this date?” I blink away the tears that are veiling my eyes, she knows too much. I wonder who was feeding her the information, it's too much.

Me: “How do you... Know all that?”

Her: “Nothing hides forever, no matter how many years it takes the secrets will emerge, just like yours. You were portraying to

be a very loving, and good mother to me knowing very well that you are evil, that you've caused a lot of woman heartache." I can't listen to this any further, she knows. She knows everything about my preceding life? But how? Who has she been speaking to? I hang up and switch off my phone instantly. I lie back down and face up, my secrets are out. But then again, I was a jealous woman, I was greedy, I wanted everything for myself. I hated seeing other women happy, I was a miserable person back then, but I've changed a lot. Yet, my past finally catches up with me. All the terrible things I did, and now I regret making those choices back then. Bad influencer I was, sighs. Guess she also knows that Tsebo didn't actually rape me, we were seeing each other. I was his mistress. Now, the big question is; what is she going to do with the information? Sighs.

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LUxOLO

{MONTHS LATER}

The club is doing very well, the turn-up is always on point the club makes 5x more than how much it was making when Sol was still the owner, a lot of things have really changed. Our club is nothing like these other ordinary clubs, it's one of a kind. We even have chefs now, and we've managed to find professional strippers both male & female some of them are world-renowned strippers, and so are our escorts (sex workers). We needed to balance things, we even have female bouncers and bartenders. Zama & her squad once came to the club to beg for their job back they looked so washed up bo nyaope in the making, and boy did I not laugh in their faces at their despondency? They even had tears, but their tears didn't move me shame, and besides, they are not the target market now. It's in with the new, and out with the old. Rumors are that they are now working for Adele, and they are getting paid peanuts, their wish is to come back here. The worst of it all is that

Mapule is pregnant! If I did hire them how was she going to work? Well, Adele hired her, hmmm. Oh, speaking of Adele? I haven't forgotten about her, I'm still coming for him, then I will go for Nikolai. That one won't even discern me coming, I will surprise visit him. I'm sure he thinks that I'm dead or something, hahaha. Funny.

Maxine is the one who runs the club on my behalf, I'm looking into buying another club to merge it with the one we have now, but that one will be a normal club for normal people.

Zubenathi's book "I am not my past" inspired me, especially when it comes to business ethics. That woman is a hard worker and most definitely knows how to make money, furthermore, I liked the fact that he included his husband in everything and their love story is beautiful to read. The husband was just a normal guy, with a normal life, and driving an average car.

He wanted to buy a certain restaurant, but he didn't have the money that was needed, he exhausted all of his savings, and tried pleading with the owner to sell it to him with the half money he has raised so far, and he will pay the remaining amount once he has made enough money, but the owner didn't want to hear any of it, he wanted it cash. That's when Zubenathi came along, she was very rich, she was actually

bathing in money, but never flaunt it around. Anyway, she wanted to purchase the whole restaurant, but the owner told her that there's someone whose desperate to purchase the restaurant, but he doesn't have the money. Moghel was such a nice person, she bought 60% of the shares and her husband (Bayanda) was given the 40%. Zubenathi, was a silent partner in the restaurant until things started going South at the restaurant when it started losing money, she stepped up and fixed the mess, and that's how their relationship started. Baby girl never judged her husband because he was average, living in a four-room house and driving an i10 whereas she was driving a Jaguar and living in a mansion, love won after all. And ever since then, they've been busy buying & building companies, they have a construction company now. Yhey, but they went through a lot in their relationship, yet, they survived the storm. That's what I wish for me & Tsakani, well, at least we do grasp some inspiration from somewhere.

My relationship with my mother is no longer the same, she's still mad at the fact that I don't want to meet up with Tsebo, and that all of her disgusting secrets are out in the open. Everyone at the Elite knows what she did, she told them freely without being asked. Yhey, that woman is dangerous maarn, I don't even know what her reasons for doing all the disgusting

things she did are. She was wrong for doing her fellow females the way she did. Thembeke left for New York, she left her son with Talon, and she's never coming back, that's what she wrote in that note, and that Talon mustn't bother looking for her. I've never seen Talon that cheerful, he was very cheerful and even made a small braai to celebrate being free from "Satan's claw" as he always called her, shame guess he was just tolerating her, and now that she's gone. He got his freedom back, and his fridge is full of alcohol.

"Bubbles. What are we doing today?" Tsakani implores standing behind me, wrapping his arms around my waist. Bakuthi, with each day passing my love for this man, grows rapidly, and sometimes it scares me, but I love it. I thought that Sanele was the one, but I was wrong, very wrong. I should've met Tsakani first, instead of wasting my time with Sanele, that small disrespectful boy.

"What do you want us to do?"

Him: "How about we go and have a mini picnic at the park? Then later on we will go to Batista's, he has invited us for a chilling night."

Me: "I'd like that, plus the park is quiet we can listen to nature in peace."

Him: "Coming to think of it, I've never seen anyone in that park," I giggle. "Don't laugh. What if ghosts stay there?"

Me: "Ghosts? Are you scared of them?" I raise my hand and look at him.

Him: "What? No, I'm not. I'm just saying. Maybe white people dislike parks, yabazi abo tsotsi mus."

Me: "I've seen a few though, and it mostly couples, but I like it. I mean, one can even have sex there and the neighbors won't even mind us." He laughs.

Him: "How sure are you? Maybe they are chilling in their balcony sipping on some red wine & eating oysters and prawns."

Me: "Oysters & prawns, yuck. Those two are part of the seafood that I hate, including sushi. Sies."

Him: "You don't know anything babe, I should take you to one of the seafood restaurants, and trust me. You will lick your fingers once you taste their prawns."

Me: "Don't bother. I won't even order anything, I wouldn't even trust their water. Talking about prawns, and all. Why do spur call wings "buffalo wings? Does a buffalo have wings?" He laughs.

Him: "It beats me, but hey people love them."

Me: "Least of my favorite, they lack something. I don't know what, but they lack something."

Him: "I've never eaten them, I wouldn't know." Silence befalls us.

Me: "You should try them, they taste better than your so-called prawns," he chuckles and silence befalls us, but I want to ask him something I don't know he will take it though, at least I would know where I stand. Let me just shoot my shot. "My love."

Him: "Yes?"

Me: "Would you appreciate having kids in the future?"

Him: "Are you seriously asking me that?" He furrows his brow.

Me: "Of course, I am."

Him: "I'd love to have kids, 5 kids to be exact. Want us to start now?" I laugh.

Me: "We are starting with two?"

Him: "That too," I giggle.

Me: "But first we need to get our lives in order, remove all the things that will hinder us, eliminate some enemies, then we start making our South African squad. Let's build them a legacy, something they will be proud of, and know that they won't have to work to make ends meet. Let's work hard for them now, then we rest, and they will take care of us once we are grown."

Him: "I agree with you. Let's get our shit together."

Me: "So, about that picnic. Do you have snacks and all?"

Him: "Yeah. We will take the ones we have here in the house, I will replace them."

Me: "Uyajabula."

Him: "Blame it on you," we laugh. "Let's go and get ready."

Me: "I wonder who's going to cook at Maxine's."

Him: "Oh, about cooking. Maxine, suggested that each and every couple must bring something be it pap, chakalaka, salads, or snacks. Bhev & meat will be served by them."

Me: "Tell him we are bringing snacks, carrots are expensive."

Him: Laughing. "Thought you were going to say baked beans, we can always get carrots from the garden." Yeah, we have a vegetable garden here in this very mansion.

Me: "Carrots will do, snacks are coming to the picnic with us."

Him: "Thought as much," we laugh with him leading the way upstairs. "Did I tell you that I love you today?"

Me: "No, you didn't."

Him: "You're lying, I did say in the morning. Anyway, I love you."

Me: "I don't remember," shrugging. "But I love you too." He kisses my cheek...

Him: "Imagine if you were to break up with me. What would you do?"

Me: "I will stop imagining, simple." He laughs.

Him: "That was unexpected."

Me: "Yeah, I surprise myself too sometimes."

Him: "Crazy ass." Whatever.



VUYO

The insurance paid out, I sold the house, and now we are staying in a new house, back in the burbs where I belong with my newly found family. Blessing love his new home, it has everything he's ever wanted, the old houses we left them like that. Dineo, suggested that we make rooms and rent them out, it's a good idea after all. Today, I'm going to Adele's place to inquire about my daughter, Nandi

but I need to be back here before Dineo & Blessing come back, Dineo went to her monthly antenatal check-ups and usually comes back around 16:00 pm, and now it's only noon. I still can't believe that I'm going to be a father for the second time. Anyway, I never attended Cindy's funeral, but I heard that it went well.

An hour later I'm parked outside club Vixen, I step out of my car, locking it, I hardly lock my car, but today I have no choice

because this place is infested with amaphara, even the prostitutes are dirty and look like they take drugs. Damn, this is a whole new club Vixen to me or maybe Adele, sold the place to some rebellious person because this place is dirty, very dirty. I make my way inside the entrance dodging the girls who are trying to touch me, some of them even smell armpits. Hhe, if people here outside smell like rotten eggs. What about those who are inside the building? Thinking about it njer makes me nauseous. I push the door open, and release a breath that I was holding in when I notice how clean inside is, and it's less packed.

“Vuyo, long time no see,” Adele says when she sees me, she's busy wiping her countertop.

“Yes, I was very busy the past few months, I didn't have time,” she nods. “How are you?”

Her: “Not good. The business is withering.”

Me: “What do you mean?”

Her: "I mean that the club is not generating enough money, we are losing money daily, and I've lost some of my important customers," she sighs in defeat. You can feel the pain carried in her voice, I wonder what's going on.

Me: "Why is that?"

Her: "The usual?" I nod. She prepares for me a shot of vodka, once done she pushes the glass before me. "There's a new club that was opened months ago, well, it's not really new. It belonged to Sol, and Sol sold it to that nonsense of a woman. I was gunning for it, but Sol never gave me the chance. And now it's owned by that whore. She turned it into some exclusive lounge, I've never been there, but I saw the pictures in a newspaper. All my wealthy customers relocated to her club, now I'm left with people who are busy crediting beer and never come back to pay. It's a catastrophe." She pushes back tears.

Me: "And you are allowing her to snatch bread out of your mouth? You need to fight, Adele. Fight for your club, you can always do alcohol special."

Her: "You think I haven't tried all that? I tried everything, and it never helped, but I lost a lot of money instead, fucked up shit."

Me: "Damn, that's horrible, Adele."

Her: "And if this keeps going on I'll be forced to shut down the club that it took me years to build, all the relationships I made with my customers, all of it, it's going to go down the drain. People will lose their jobs, and I'll be forced to return home or start another business."

Me: "Why don't you copy her work ethic? Find out how they serve their customers, and how's the service like."

Her: "If only it was that easy, one needs a pin to get inside the club, without one you are doomed."

Me: "What? That's one high profiled club, I'm sure even the ministers go there."

Her: "Obvious."

Me: “Or better yet, why don't you take her out? You are Adele, the best female mafia to have ever lived, I'm sure it won't be hard for you to kill her, you've been doing it for years, and most men fear you, including me,” Shrugging.

Her: “That's one thing I will not do, kill her. She will wipe my whole family without even flinching, I don't want to lie to you, Vuyo. Plus, she has a lot of back if I were to poke her unprovoked, her gang will paint the town with crimson paint, my blood to be exact. That woman scares the shit out of me, just one glance from her, you will shudder even if you did nothing, that's how powerful she is. I thought that Tsakani, was scary, but his girlfriend takes the cup, she's a badass and for my own peace, I prefer to distance myself from attacking her. I will just have to find an inside man to fish information for me, you just gave me an idea.” If you can't beat them, you can always join them.

Me: “That's my girl. Now that this topic is out of the way, and I've cheered you up a bit. Where's Nandi?”

Her: "She's only coming back tomorrow, most of the girls didn't come back with us, they opted to stay behind until they are ready to come back home. Why ask? You seem to be fond of her."

Me: "She just reminds me of someone that's all."

Her: "If I didn't know you, I'd say that she's your daughter, but then I remembered that you have no kids of your own," I shrug. If only she knew, but hey. "Tell you what; I will call you first thing tomorrow once they land, okay?"

Me: "I'd appreciate that," she nods and disappear out of sight. I will have to make and go and check out this new club, it was like fun. Hmm...



TSAKANI

Earned it x The Weeknd it's what keeping us company as we drive to Batista's house, our picnic was the best we really enjoyed ourselves. I think from now going forward this is going to be our new ritual, a picnic at the park every Saturday. The smell of something funny and very much familiar it's what erases my daydreaming.

“Hhayi Bubbles, wenzani manje? Why uziphatha so?” I implore rolling down the windows. Her farts are always smelly, I don't know how many times I told her to clean her stomach.

Nakunguye yena she farts any time, she always says “why date if you can't fart freely in the presence of the one you love?”

Yazi, she doesn't get it. I fart too in her presence, but not always like she does.

“Askies. I tried holding it in, but it didn't want to be caged in. I had to release, I'm sorry my love,” she covers her mouth.

Me: “Why didn't you tell me to stop the car?” I'm driving inside Batista's yard, a lot of changes took place here, you can tell that there's a woman living here. The others are already here, guess we are late.

Her: “I wanted to, but seeing that we were approaching Batista's house I saw no need to tell you to stop, but askies.”

Me: “Nxa, tsek.”

Her: "Love you too," a smile plasters my face. Bubbles is one crazy character.

Me: "Love you too," I shake my head as we step out of the car. Maxine is waiting for us at the door, she gained some weight. "Erh, babe. Maxine has gained a lot of weight hey."

Her: "That's what happens when you are loved right, you can even see that my butt gets bigger & bigger daily."

Me: "Your whole body actually, you are getting fat too. Have you looked at yourself in the mirror lately?" I look at her straight in the eyes.

Her: "No. You are the one getting thinner, I saw your friends even think that I don't even feed you. Lindy, once asked me what's making you so thin, and I said I don't know."

Me: "Excuse me? This has been my body ever since I was. You & your Lindy are crazy, insane. Tsekani futhi," she laughs when I walk away leaving her leaning against the car. Nxa. "Maxine," I

greet making my way inside and not waiting for her response. I find the gents watching soccer, oh, and I passed the ladies busy in the kitchen.

“Manje wafufutheka?” (Why are you angry) Talon implores.

“Nxa, uBubbles ek'se.”

Him: “Kumasheni?” (What's wrong)

Me: “Uthi ngiyafa ndoda,” (she says I'm dying, man)

Him: “Ek'se? Yini uyagula?” (Are you sick)

Batista: “She said you are dying when?” These guys are stupid.

Me: “Hhayi maarn, naba slow. She said I lost weight,” they burst into laughter.

Lee: "Hawu ndoda, I drama engaka because of weight?" He laughs. "You haven't lost any weight ntwana, she's just gaining weight."

Talon: "So, awubhodi?" (You are not dying) I chuckle.

Leon: "Nex ndoda, he ain't dying anytime soon."

Him: "Eish, okay."

Lee: "Is she expecting?"

Me: "No, she's not."

Him: "How do you know?"

Me: "Because she has an implant, and it will expire in two years."

Leon: "I think I need one too."

Batista: "For what?"

Him: "Saftey sake," we all laugh. These gents are crazy.

Batista: "To work is to see, anyway, I called you because we have a mission to carry."

Talon: "Nazoke. Mayelana?"

Him: "Car heist, it has been long since we pulled one."

Lee: "Take us through the plan."

"I'll brief the ladies about the second one," Maxine announces as she brings more beers. Second one?

Leon: "And which is the second one?"

Her: "A dangerous one, one that you gents can't pull. Kidding, but this one is for strictly females."

Talon: "The havoc team, makunyiwe," I wonder what the second plan is, but I don't worry much because bubbles will tell me, and her lying on my chest does all the trick.

Batista: "So, here's the plan..."

55

It's a bit long..

NOMALANGA

I'm at the restaurant where Tsebo said we will meet, and he ain't here yet, but why am I even surprised? He's never been punctual when it comes to time, and he knows how much I detest people who can't keep time, it's frustrating. This is my 3rd cup of Mocha coffee. People come & go, and I'm still here, I can't even leave because that will only anger him, and when it does; he will put me in line. Or not because this ain't 20something years back Era. I check the time on my phone, and his 30 minutes late, sighs, I might as well leave. I get up from my chair after settling the bill and someone pushes me back to the chair, Jesus, before I can even look who it is, Tsebo is sitting opposite me, hands clasp before him.

“When am I meeting my daughter?” That's the first thing he asks. No greeting and no apology. Well, it's not as if like he

owes me any of the two, but a little humanity wouldn't hurt anyone.

“I don't know. She still doesn't want to meet you.”

Him: “Why is that? Did you feed her ears with poison regarding me?” He clenches his teeth.

Me: “What? No. She just doesn't want to meet with you, I had nothing to do with that.”

Him: “I don't trust you. I know how manipulative and two-timing bitch you are, I wouldn't be surprised if you fed her lies about me.”

Me: “Believe what you want, Tsebo. In fact, why don't you try reaching out to her yourself? You want to meet your daughter right? Then, do some research and find her yourself. I'm tired of being a middle man between the two of you. Both of you are adults, if you really want to meet her, see to it that you make use of your resources.”

Him: “You know what, you are right. I need to reach out to her, and I know where she lives and where she works.”

Me: “Good then. You should've reached out to her the moment you learned about her whereabouts instead of wasting my time, excuse me, I need to go.”

Him: “Go where? I'm the one who called you here,” he hisses.

Me: “I know, and I'm telling you that I'm leaving. I've been here for a long time, I even missed my appointment. When you finally go, and see your daughter please greet her for me,” I get up from my chair and start walking away.

He knows where his daughter is, now all he needs to do is to find her and try mending their relationship, not that it was broken or something anyway. I hope Nono will finally agree to meet up with him, and fix things with him. Tsebo did nothing, after all, I'm the one that needs to be blamed. Like heck, he didn't even know he had a daughter. Speaking of Nono, I know that she's still mad at me for lying and keeping all kinds of

secrets from her, but I miss her, a lot. I miss talking to her, and her telling me that she loves me towards the end of our conversation, but I can't bring myself to answer her calls. She calls me 5x a day, but still, I feel like I've shamed her, hopefully, one she will find it in her heart to forgive me, and I will regain the courage to answer her calls. And now that everything is out in the open and people know about my deplorable past I feel lighter, guess the secrets were the ones weighing me down. Besides, we all have our flaws and not perfect. We all made some decisions we are not proud of at some point, but we learn, try to do better next time, and move on. That's just about it. First things first; I must forgive myself before forgiving others, I must work towards myself to be a better person.



LUXOLO

“What are they showing?” Lindiwe, implores leaning against the door frame biting her nails.

“I'm clear,” I tell her throwing the tests in the bin. She releases a sigh that she has sucked in.

Her: “Thank God. I was so scared thinking we will be down with two girls,” I laugh shaking my head. “Don't laugh, Tammy. I'm being serious here. In fact, I think you & Tsakani must use condoms now.”

Me: “Why should we? It's not as if like I will fall pregnant anytime soon, I have an implant.” So, these ladies of mine decided to buy me 5x pregnancy test because the gents thought that I was pregnant only because I've put on some weight. Like, who assumes such? Guess this means that one

won't put in some weight until they are pregnant. Some of us put in weight because we are dearly loved, and stress-free.

Her: "I don't trust the implants or any prevention for that matter," she sighs.

Me: "Do you & Lee use a condom?" She gasps. "Do you?"

Her: "No, no we don't. We use the withdrawal method," I laugh, sarcastically that is.

Me: "Honestly? You trust the withdrawal method more than prevention pills & injection? What a joke, what a Lmao."

Her: "It's been working for me so far," shrugging.

Me: "Good for you."

Her: "What are we having for lunch?"

Me: "What do you feel like having?"

Her: "Steak & chips with a green salad."

Me: "If you aren't lazy to cook you can prepare for the both of us, it's okay."

Her: "I don't feel like cooking. Let's go to Zweli's. They serve some mean stake there, one that will have you drooling."

Me: "You don't say. Okay, let me get my car keys."

Her: "I think Lee should buy me a car too, I'm tired of using Uber."

Me: "Tell him to organize one for you, plus they have a car heist planned."

Her: "How I love to be part of it, but ke."

Me: "Why would you wish to be part of it whereas we have a better one?"

Her: "Robbing a bank is not my speciality, Tammy. I need to be on the streets, firing shots, and driving one of those sports cars leaving a trail of thick smoke behind me."

Me: "Then tell the guys to squeeze you in, you can always act like a damsel in distress."

Her: "That's a good idea, I will talk to Lee when I get home." I nod as we step outside the house. "Can I drive us?"

Me: "Yeah, sure," I throw her the keys and settle on the passenger's seat, I buckle my seatbelt for safety sake. Lindiwe is such a reckless driver, I must say. She drives like she's the only person on the road, argh.

Her: "Ready?"

Me: "Yes, Frank. I'm ready."

Her: "What? Frank the transporter? That fucker doesn't have anything on me, I'm the female Schumacher." I laugh, ae. Lindiwe is full of jokes yazi.

An hour later we are being served our food. I opted for quarter chicken & chips while she, Lindiwe, settles for the steak she was yearning for, and it looks appetizing, but I'm in a mood for grilled chicken. I might buy it for Tsakani to eat later on.

Lindiwe: "So, have you spoken with your mother recently?"

Me: "No. She's not taking my calls."

Her: "Why don't you go and see her at the Elite?"

Me: "For what?"

Her: "To find out how she's doing and all."

Me: "No."

Her: "Oh, okay." We eat our food in silence, great food, I think this is going to be my new joint going forward. "Urh, Tammy."

Me: Lifting my head. "Sup?"

Her: "I've been thinking..." she takes a breath then looks at me. I wiggle my brow, she chuckles. "Urh, I think it's time I reveal my real identity to Lee." I drop my fork and scan her.

Me: "Really?" Tilting my head.

Her: "Yes, since we are thinking of taking our relationship to the next level I think it's time I come clean to him, and step into the new level with no secrets, and all that."

Me: "So, how do you think he's going to take it?"

Her: Sighing. "I don't know, honestly. Listen, even if our relationship ends after my revelation to him, it will all be well, at least I would've told him the truth."

Me: "It won't end. Yes, he will be shocked in the beginning, but he will be fine in the long run, and he will be grateful that you told him the truth before taking your relationship to the next level. Better than starting a new journey with a secret."

Her: "Exactly. Thank you for listening to me."

Me: "No problem, cuz." She giggles. "What? Oh, almost forgot. You ain't my real cousin, but you are still my cousin. Wait, in fact, my sister. We've been through hell together."

Her: "Tell me about it."

Me: "So, when are you telling him?"

Her: "Tomorrow. Tonight we all have missions to carry."

Me: "Tonight?" She nods. "Milan, managed to tamper with the cameras?"

Her: "Yes, and the back door too. We are going to do a clean job, no one will know that the bank was robbed until they open their money safes."

Me: "At least we won't be shedding any blood. And we can always join the boys afterward, more like surprising them."

Her: "Sounds like a plan, but Maxine must be taken home we don't want her losing the baby."

Me: "I think she must not join us at all, she needs to stay at home."

Her: "Erh, don't you dare tell her that. She will lose all of her marbles, saw how dramatic she was because Milan, took a

piece of meat on the tray as she was dishing up.” I laugh, shit was hell as funny.

Milan, didn't hear the end of it, Maxine kept on reminding her about it every chance she got... “you are a meat stealer now? Is that how you were taught while growing up? Meat thief, can't believe I even took you like my sister?” Milan was beyond pissed, she ended up leaving because she couldn't take any more of Maxine's tantrums. Batista couldn't even control her, she was out of order. She then cried afterward, hmmm, drama. If being pregnant comes with such hormones then it can miss me shame, andizi.

Me: “Milan, really wanted to rough her up, but she held herself. Such bravery.”

Her: “I would've slapped the hormones out of her, bekatonya lakimi.”

Me: “I trust you.” We laugh, and get done eating. The boys are doing the heist in 3 hours from now, and we are robbing the

bank in 2 hours time. Sighs, hopefully, we will make it to the heist before they even begin with it.

Her: “Let me dash to the ladies, I'll be back now- now, you can order some beverages for us so long,” I nod. I ain't ordering shit.

“Ya wena Luxolo, mnqundu,” the voice alone irks me. He comes into view, he still looks handsome I'm sure he came with some random whore, that's what he specializes in mus.

“Sanele. What can I do for you?” I hold his gaze, waiting for an answer.

Him: “Nothing. You look fresh and glowing too. Le snai sakho sikuphathe grand neh?” I chuckle. Snai? He calls me a snai, it's his insolence for me.

Me: “Snai? You are calling my boyfriend a snai?”

Him: “Grand sharp. Flopo?” (Problem)

Me: “Firstly, my boyfriend is not a snai, and secondly, he is 20x a man than what you ever was. He's what we call a real man, not some guy with low hanging balls changing girls thinking that he's the ish. Listen here, wena mnqundu wenja. Don't you ever, and I mean ever call my boyfriend a snai or else I will rough you up.” He laughs and scans me from head to toe. I'm trying so hard not to lose my cool, not in a public place like this where people are busy with their phones, I have a reputation to keep.

Him: “You? Roughing me up? What a washed-up joke. I'm still saying it again, your boyfriend is a snai, he still eats snorts. A weakling nig...,” I don't wait for him to finish talking. My hands are already on his T-shirt, his face leveled up with me. The shock on his face, priceless.

Me: “Don't dare me, boy. I'm not the old Luxolo you know. I'm Tammy Guns now, and I aim my at my targets perfectly

I never miss. Next time when you think of calling my boyfriend a snai, Google me or him, then come back and call him a snai. Masingajwayelani kabi, I'm not your friend. Crystal?” He quickly nods. I let go of him, and he fixes his T-shirt and walks away in a hurry stumbling, I chuckle shaking my head, coward.

“Time to go, Lux,” Lindiwe informs me, I nod getting up from my chair. When I scan my eyes around I see no sign of Sanele, bitch must've run away. Who does he think he is? Hhe, seyikhombene klaar.

★ » ★ «

TSAKANI

I'm getting impatient now. Batista said that he was on his way here any hour ago, and he still ain't here. Everyone is here except him. I ring him up again and his phone rings unanswered. He's the one who came up with this plan, and now he's ditching us. He better have not planned a set-up for us, but nah, he'll never do us like that. Wait, he might. Spikiri, did it too. He betrayed us and broke the gang code, we are only left with an hour to navigate to the location of where the heist is supposed to take place. Talon, is busy pacing up & down. Leon, busy with his laptop. Lee, is busy making himself comfortable in my fridge, and Spike is sitting on the kitchen counter playing with his okapi, and whistling. Now, this man is what we call igintsa, he wears chuck Taylors, brand wood pants, necklaces around his neck, rings filling his fingers, scotched/striped long shirt and a worn-out dirty looking bucket hat folded on one side, topping it with a match stick in his mouth, and a roll of joint behind his ear. Spike only joins us when we do heists, he ain't a full member of the squad, and he never wishes to be one. He has his own group that they do petty crimes with.

“Masivayeni ayikho le way,” Talon informs us.

“Sure. Let's get our things and leave, Batista will find us along the way,” Leon says.

Lee: “I'm sure Maxine is scolding him because he forgot to refill the ice,” we laugh.

Talon: “Mxm, utshuna iMovie u lovey, uyazihlanyisa. Thembeke azanke anye kanje thana apethe lentwana yami, lo yena unya straight. Tsek, wenza ngamabomu u njandina.” (She's making a movie, she's making herself crazy. Thembeke was never like this when she was pregnant with my son, this one is shitting on us straight. She's doing it deliberately)

Leon: “Don't forget that Thembeke was a granny and gave birth 8 times. Maybe she was also behaving like Maxine when she was pregnant with her first child or second. For sho she was worse than her.”

Him: “Argh, kuyafana maarn, tsek.” I shake my head as we step out of the house, before taking off I check if all our stuff is still there, and it is. We will be using Leon's van. We all embark into it, he roars the engine to life, and takes off.

Lee: "He still ain't picking up, let me try calling Maxine, maybe she will pick up."

Leon: "Isn't she doing the bank heist with the ladies?"

Him: "Flip. I completely forgot about that one."

Me: "I wonder if they are succeeding."

Leon: "They are, that's for sho. I trust that fearless squad," I nod.

Minutes later we are at Dimitri forest hiding behind the bushes waiting for the trucks to approach, Batista is still unreachable. There's something off about all this setup, but I can't actually put my hand on it, but this is not good I hope the gents sense it too, I can't be the only one.

Leon: "How many minutes left for them to pass by?"

Lee: "25 minutes, let's prepare ourselves."

Me: "Gents, are you sensing something unusual about all this heist?" They all look at each other, then back at me. Guess I'm the only one.

Talon: "Ngiphakimisa inombolo, igazi la gijima manje." (I agree with you)

Leon: "Do you think this is some kind of a setup?" He narrows his brows. My hand tightens around my gun in my waist holster, the animal in me is sensing a thud of footsteps coming both sides, we are set up! Batista sold us, fuck it! How could he do us like this? Was he promised a lot of money?"

Lee: "Now that you are mentioning it, it makes sense. But, why would Batista sell us out? After all that we've done for him?"

Leon, hits the steering wheel in frustration.

Spikes: “Igwebu phansi, izindlelebe phezelu. Batista azanke anenzele phansi inincwanya blind lebhari, mina ngithi esami isibonwa lo omkhuthulele ngale kgentisi wuye om'bhayizisile. Enhlek, bamenzele samagundwanwe watheleka phezu kwaso, niyang'bamba?” (Calm down, and listen to me. Batista didn't do you guys bad, that guy loves you too much, my point of view about all this is that; the one who told Batista about the cars being transported is the one who dribbled him. They set a trap for him, and he fell right into it. Do you understand me) it makes sense now that he's putting it this way, Batista was set up.

Leon: “It all makes sense. Fuck. Let's leave, we came here for nothing.”

Me: “We can't leave,” shaking my head.

Lee: “Why?”

Me: “We are trapped. We have nowhere to go, both sides are covered.”

Leon: "Now what?"

Talon: "Mazilime ziyetsheni."

Him: "What if we are surrounded? What if there's more of them?"

Me: "It's either we cower and find our way around the bush, or we face them heads on. Which one is it going to be?" I look at all of them, and none of them is willing to cower.

Spikes: "Phambili." (Forward) from a distance I can see luminous lights, guess that's one of the trucks because the escorting cars don't have the lone light. Leon snarls, and chuckles roaring the engine to life. I know what his plan is, I pray we come out of here alive.

The truck is nearing and nearing, but Leon is not going to take it, he will take the escort car. Plus, we changed the Avanza and took one of the tanks. The mini lights come to view, that's the escort car. Leon starts moving the car, taking us out of our

hiding habitat. Once into view, the escort car comes into complete view, and at an increased speed Leon, propels straight to it and the crash it making the truck to halt abruptly, the driver almost losing control. The car rolls over, and our tank remains standing in the middle of the street blocking the truck from crossing over. Another set of luminous lights comes into view on the right following 5 cars. Leon rolls down the window as they slow down, or maybe he's taking out the smoke of whatever Spikes is smoking that's making us dizzy, I don't know.

Talon: "Babhaya maarn," (they're too many) he doesn't even sound bothered.

Me: "Ngiyacava." (I know)

Him: "Ek'se."

"Step out of your car you are surrounded, you have nowhere to go," one of them notifies us using a voice speaker. We all look at each other, and smile. "I said step out of your car, we have your friend with us here. If you don't step out of that car, we will kill him."

Talon: “Arh manje tsek ngabo, siyaya?” Leon, is already stepping out of the car, I shrug and the three of us join him, two on each side.

Spikes: “Yithi laba ngenyama nithi aqinisiwe yini amasende?” (Here we are in a flesh, what seems to be the problem) one-man appears behind the man who was calling us over a speaker he has Batista with him, and he looks roughed up, blood streaming down from his forehead, T-shirt torn and bloody, and he looks weak too. He can't even stand on his own. You can see that they've roughed him up real bad using all sorts of weapons. The guy drops him on the street, and he coughs, his hands are in his stomach. Anger surges up from deep within me, my breathing becomes heavy, my hand finds its way in my gun holster, and I grip it, tightly.

Leon: Whistling. “Niyasukelana yeva, nigcwele ubudede kahle kahle,” (you like provoking people who did nothing to you, you are basically full of shit)

Man 1: "Boss!" A man in a wheelchair comes into view with a big grin plastered on his face, I chuckle. Mr. Big. He's still alive, Armor shows up next to him.

Him: "And we meet boys but this time around under different circumstances. Look at how roughed up your boy is. Do you know how long we were looking for you? We've been looking for you for years without any luck, you stole my cars for years untraceable, but now we've finally found you, and we are going to kill you and bury you in these bushes. No one messes with me, and gets away with it. Guards, tie them down!" His men hurry to us, my gun is already on my hand firing the ones coming my way, and in no time shots ring out and bullets fly around.

Armor: "There's more of us young men, within 5 minutes you will all be dead including your friend here!" Talon groans next to me, fuck, he has been shot. I watch him slide down with his back using the tank, hand on his chest. Shit! Armor bellows in the speaker.

Me: "Hold on njayami." Leon groans, he too has been shot. Damn, it's only the two of us now, we are dead, but we will die

fighting. That's until... Shrieks of men ring out behind us, cars exploding behind the others.

Armor: "What the hell!" I turn around and it's the ladies. The rattling of leaves diverts my eyes to the bushes, which can only mean that Ludo, is here, but how did they... Argh, never mind. A new strength overcomes me... I look at Talon, and he has stopped moving. I crouch next to him, and feel his pulse, it's shallow, no, no, Talon can't do me like this. He can't.

"What's going on?" Bubbles voice comes over, she looks at Talon, and widens her eyes. "Let's put him inside the tank, help him up." We pick him up, and put him inside the car. "Shield me, I need to get Batista too." I nod, and cover her, the bullets don't even get me, I pick Batista up and take him to the car too.

Me: "And now? What the fu...," Dr. Mashifane is inside the tank busy cleaning Talon's wound.

Him: "I've managed to take out the bullet, if he doesn't get the right help at the hospital within 20 minutes we will lose him."

Bubbles: "Then what are you waiting for? Just drive them there already, and stop talking! We can't afford to lose them." He nods.

Me: "They will be fine, don't worry."

Her: "Are you okay though?"

Me: "Yes, you?"

Her: "Me too."

Dr.Mashifane: "Are you guys coming?"

Her: "Yes, we are. The others will take care of the rest," we get inside the tank and Leon is the one driving, he only got shot in the arm. Talon & Batista better survive, they better fucking survive!

LUXOLO

The mood is too depressing in this garden right now as we are gathered around it, each lost in their own thoughts even the flowers don't even look beautiful right now, eyes bloodshot red from all the crying we've been doing for the past hour. It's so unbelievable, it all feels surreal. I wish someone can pinch us and tell us that it's a dream, or we are being pranked, but no. No, no, it's reality, a bitter taste of reality that one never wants to go through, yet it had to happen, Talon didn't make it. He exempted his remaining of his soul on our way to the hospital, he died in Tsakani's hands. Watching him taking his last breath was one painful thing to witness, he gasped so painfully and blood seeped from his mouth, and that was it, he stopped moving. Tsakani tried waking him up, but he was gone. Tsakani bawled out inside the tank. Guess the bullet really find Talon's heart. I couldn't continue with the journey I asked them to drop me off out of nowhere, I needed to process all that happened. It's so fucked up, really messed up. Khalasi will never know his father or get to experience his craziness. He was such a lively person, he will be daily missed. Things won't be the same without him, sighs. Batista on the other side, it's not promising

honestly. He has deep wounds in his body, lost a lot of blood. I pray that he wakes up, he has a baby on the way.

“Hi. Can you talk?” Tsebo says. I don't even know what he was doing at that scene and who called him because I don't remember anyone calling him, or maybe Tsakani did since he's their family Dr. When we left the hospital he decided to tag along with us and I don't know for what.

“No, not now. I'm mourning,” he nods. Well, he does have my nose, eyes & ears and as for the rest I take after my mother.

Him: “Understandable. We will talk when you're free then.”

Me: Sighs. “What do you want to talk about?”

Him: “Why did you kill my men?”

Me: “Your men? What men?” I look at him, confusion covering my face.

Him: "Those you killed that fateful day by bursting their tyres, they were just following you. They were not going to harm you in any way." I laugh, this man is surely not normal. Was I supposed to prophesy that those men were just following me and had no intention of hurting me? What rubbish is this?

Me: "Was I supposed to prophesy that those men were only following me and not trying to harm me? Do I look like a sangoma or a prophet to you?"

Him: "Neither of the two."

Me: "Anyway, who follows someone without finding information about them? I mean, if they did their research and tried finding out who I was I don't think you would've asked them to follow me. You killed them, their blood is in your hands."

Him: "Fine. I'll take that, I didn't research about you the first time I only did when you, no, when I killed them, but we are not there. Why are you refusing to meet up with me?"

Me: "Because I don't want to meet up with you, we have nothing to talk about."

Him: "We actually do. We have a lot to talk about, and we will once everything is settled, and your friend buried." It wouldn't take away anything from me to hear his side of the story right? I'm sure he didn't even know that Nomalanga is pregnant with his child, shrugs.

Me: "Okay. We will talk."

Him: "This is my card. Call me when you get time," he hands me his business card and I nod.

Me: "I will. Anyway, is Batista going to pull through?" He sighs and looks up at the sky, shaking his head. He puffs out some air, and looks at me. "Will he?" I can't read his expression right now.

Him: "I don't want to lie to you, he won't. His wounds are extreme, they stabbed him 10x times and of which was shocking because he still managed to hold on, and for what I don't know. But, if he has something to live for he will try to hold, to fight, but it will still be meaningless because he lost too much blood at some point." I close my eyes, I inhale & exhale, I didn't realize that his stabbing wounds were that horrible.

I don't know what will become of Maxine if Batista doesn't make it, yoh, she will go on a total psycho mode. Gzus, Batista better pull through he has a baby on the way, and I'm sure he wouldn't want his child to grow up without a father. Phewww.

Him: "Prayer is the only option, but it doesn't guarantee anything. Be ready to receive any news, this is bad." He clasps my shoulder. "Be strong, let me go back to the hospital and see how he's holding up. I'll be in touch," I nod, and he walks away leaving me with my thoughts. Ek'se, losing one member is enough, heartbreaking as it is it's enough we can't afford to lose another member, that will shatter us greatly, I don't think we can take losing another person. My phone rings in my hand, I look at the screen and its biggie.

Me: "Biggie."

Her: "How are you holding up?"

Me: "I don't know," looking up the sky. "I really don't know, and there's a high possibility that we will lose Batista too. Tsebo says he's not looking good, he might kick the bucket anytime soon, it's only a matter of time before we receive a call from the hospital."

Her: "Shit. That's fucked up, be strong little one. So, we have Mr. Wheelchair here, his right-hand man, and few of their men. Want to join the party?"

Me: "Warehouse?"

Her: "Yeah."

Me: "I'll be there in a few, keep them alive."

Her: "Sure, we've put a mini show for them, and I don't know how many times they've peed on themselves, it's so entertaining," she laughs. I can hear some roaring in the background. She hangs up. I put my phone back in my pocket and head to the kitchen.

I open the fridge and grab a bottle of water, I'm thirsty. I gulp them all at once and crush the bottle with my hand, and throw it in the trash can. Fuck, fuck it. I get my car keys, and head to the garage.

"Bubbles," Tsakani calls out to me, I stop in my tracks and turn to look at him. His eyes are still red, I don't want to imagine how much more red will they be if Batista decides to let go, that fucker but pull through if he knows what's good for him.

"Hey, my love."

Him: "Where are you rushing off to?"

Me: “The grillers warehouse, she has Mr. Big & his right-hand man with them.”

Him: “Give me the car keys, get in the passenger seat,” I throw him the keys and do as he instructs me. He roars the engine to life and drives us out. “You know where the place is?”

Me: “I do.” He nods. Right now he's really driving like Lindiwe, a maniac in the making I doubt he will even stop at the traffic lights, shesh.

★»★«

NOMALANGA

It's sad learning about Talon's passing, now it makes sense as to why Khalasi was so restless & fussy a few hours ago, he sensed that his father is no more because right now he has calm down and is falling asleep. I wonder how Nono, everyone actually is holding up. Life is too short, that's why one must live it to the fullest, and enjoy every single one of it. Thembeke is yet to be notified no one has mastered the courage to inform her, except me of course, but then we have a very bad history, so I can't actually pass the news to her. Learning who Thembeke really was shocked me, I couldn't believe it until she showed me the mark that I gave once upon a time, damn.

“I'm going over to Tsakani's to see how they are holding up because everyone is there,” Hlulani informs us already heading to the door.

“Please update us,” I call out after her.

Him: “I will,” and just like that he's out of the door.

Mmathabo: “It's still unbelievable. Talon? Out of all the people he had to die?”

Okuhle: “And who exactly was supposed to die if not him?”

Her: “Anyone but him. Talon was such a good boy, he was full of jokes and full of life.”

Okuhle: “Just because he was a clown he was not supposed to die? Hhey, even celebrities die. What's so special about him?”
She tilts her head reminding me of Nono, sighs.

Her: “Oh, almost forgot. His son is barely a year old, he's still young. He will never get the chance to meet his father. Life's so unfair.”

Okuhle: "It never is, Mmathabo. Nothing new there. Talon is gone, and he's never coming back, the sooner we all accept that the better for us all."

Mmnangwane: "Isn't there anything else we can talk about besides Talon's passing? It's draining."

Mmathabo: "There's nothing to talk about. We are mourning."

Bulelwa: "Or we can always talk about Nomalanga's not so pleasant past, maybe she can teach us more about how to become a professional man snatcher, she's a pro in that depart," she sneers.

Me: "Or we can always talk about a way forward on finding the fathers of your sons, now that's useful. So, where do we start?" She gawks at me, fuming. "Exactly my point. Let's just mind our own businesses and keep it moving. Excuse me, I need to lay Khalasi down." I stride out of the lounge and head straight to my room. Bulelwa is such an arse, but I don't care, not even one bit. My preceding is not pleasant, yes, but I'm a changed person

now and grown too. I now know better than all those many moons ago.

I plop Khalasi on the bed, and look at him. Oh, sweet child, at least her mother is still alive. I hope Nono realizes how short life is, she better fix things with her father because one never plans their deaths, it comes the least you expect it. Sighs. I step out of my bedroom and walk back to the lounge...



TSAKANI

I'm shattered, broken, hurt, sad, disappointed enhlek I'm an all-in-one right now, my mind is too occupied. How could Talon do us like this? How could he leave us so sudden? He should've just held on a little bitter longer, why did he give in? What about Khalalasi? Talon mfethu how could you do us like this? How are we going to live without you? Tell us how! Who will crack jokes for us even in serious matters? We have no other person who speaks taal like you, njayami. My mind replays all the memories we've shared, his humorous joke fills up my head, the many times he saved my ass... Tears blur my vision, I know they say men don't cry but this? This hurts. It cuts so deep

it's like someone has lodged a knife deep in my heart and let it linger there for a long time, then twisted it again making sure

that it gets deeper & deeper, I'm weak, too weak to do anything.

I clench both my hands on the steering wheel and increase the speed. Bubbles is looking at me attentively I can see her from the corner of my eye. She wants to say something but don't know what to say, she's strong on my behalf.

“Let me take over,” she tells me. I shoot her a stare, and she just looks at me. “You are too emotional to drive you will cause an accident, let me just drive and don't fight it, don't make me drag you out of that seat,” she continues to say. I nod and pull over, we exchange seats. “Buckle up, it's going to be a ride.”

Moments later we are parked outside this warehouse, we are waiting for one of the guards to come and do a security check. I've never seen a warehouse this vast, erh. While waiting for the guard my phone rings, and it's Lee, flip we didn't tell them that we are leaving we just left abruptly.

“Lee.”

“TK.” His voice comes out as a whisper.

Me: “What's up man?”

Him: “Where are you?”

Me: “Somewhere, I needed to be out of there the mood was just too depressing,” he sucks in some breathe then release. “Yini? What is it, Lee?”

Him: “Hade ntwana yami, hade skhokho, Batista didn't make...,” the phone slips out from my shaky hand. “Tsakani? TK ndoda, are you still there?” His voice sounds like he's underground now, I shake my head vigorously.

“No! Batista ndoda, why mara?” Tears roll down my cheeks, I'm shaking, I'm a mess. Mara amajita why ayenza so? Why are they doing us like that? Why are they so selfish? Banjani kanti? Don't they care about us? Why would they give in too soon? Why? Batista has a baby on the way, he has a flipping baby on the way. Or maybe they planned it, he & Talon planned this

whole thing. I don't know how, but they did. How could they be so selfish? I lie my head back on my seat, defeated is me right now.



LUXOLO

Batista is so selfish, fucking bloody selfish if you ask me. I drive the car in and bring it to an abrupt halt once, inside the premises, Tsakani is too weak. And as for me? I'm fine, I'm okay, but I'm simmering inside, my heart is beating abnormal. I need to slaughter someone, someone must die in this very warehouse tonight.

“Are you coming?” He gives me a slight nod. I step out of the car, and he follows suit. I place my hand on the sensor and the door unlocks, we step inside and I find the gang chatting & laughing.

“Greetings.”

“Hello.” I walk straight to the room where Mr. Big & Armor are. I chuckle as I watch them, they are out of it, guess they've been pumping the drugs.

“Need anything?” Luxolo implores leaning against the door frame.

Me: "Bring me a wired wheel grinder," she shoots her eyes open.

Her: "What?"

Me: "Just bring me the fucking wheel grinder and stop questioning me!"

Her: "Geez, chill out. I'll bring it," she steps out of the room. I need a close upon them, and take two steps closer to them, I kick Mr. Big on his chest, and he falls over facing up, I chuckle.

Me: "Get up you bitch! Get the fuck up!" He half opens his eyes, trying to familiarize himself with his surroundings. "Oh, wait. Almost forgot that you can't stand up on your own, you will need some help. Okay, let me help you up," I yank him up and level him with me, I need to look at him in the eyes. "So, tell me here, what must I do with you? You've killed two of my friends, two fucking of them! Tell me what is that I must do to you?" He shakes his head pissing me off even further.

Me: "Don't you dare shake your head on me, tell me what do with you?" Since we are standing near the wall I pin him there, my hand finds his way to his neck, I squeeze it slowly, well, I'm not going to kill him this easy I need to hear him scream, see blood seeping out from him, him begging for forgiveness. I want to watch him take his last breath just like Tsakani watched Talon taking his, he messed with the wrong one.

Luxolo: "Here's the grinder you've asked for," she hands it to me. I plunge Mr. Big on the ground.

Me: "Thanks." I look up the ceiling and there's a hook there. "Do you have cuffs?"

Her: "Sure. Here they are," she hurls them at me.

Me: "Let's get him up and tie him in one of the hooks," she nods. We yank him up, and I cuff his hand on the hook, set. No, wait. I take off my belt and tie his legs. "Perfect. Now, let's get down to business. I plug in the grinder and I watch him writhing, fear very much visible in his face, eyes open wide in

shock. “Spew,” I inform him, and he just shakes his head. “Strip him naked for me please biggie.”

Her: “Sure case,” she does as instructed.

Me: “You are well hung, well, but all that hungness is going to waste, what a shame.” I squat and look at his feet, I'm going to chop him half by half, from the feet going up, I doubt he will still be standing once I'm halfway through.

Him: “Pl- please let me explain,” he chokes on his word.

Me: “Too late,” the grinder is already on his right foot. “Too flipping late,” and with one quick swap his blood sprays the room as he screams in again, I do the same with his other foot, hearing him screaming excites me, it gives me adrenaline. Fuck, this is good. “Stop screaming like a woman, shut the fuck up!” The blood is starting to cover the ground, bloody room it is.

Biggie: “Should I quiet him?”

Me: "Not yet. Next stop, legs. You have fit legs, awesome," I put the grinder in his knee and look at him, a grin plastered on my face. In one swap again, his knee is chopped off, blood sprays off... The thighs, that include your dick. Waist, and one swap chopped off, he screams, but his scream is lower now accompanied by crying, I chuckle. His eyes are shutting close, drenched in sweat, shame. "Rest in pieces. See you in hell," I take out my gun from my waist holster and shoot him straight in his heart, he gasps once and hangs his head low, dead is he.

By the time I'm done with him, I turn to look at Armor, watching the whole scenario in horror. Drenched in sweat, and I think he peed on himself from what just happened.

Me: "Horrible, I know. Anyway, enjoyed the show?" He's even scared to nod or shake his head. "Thought I asked you a question or didn't you hear me?" He nods. "Okay, I will ask again; did you enjoy the show?" He quickly nods and I laugh. "I'm glad, do you have a family?" He just stares at me. "Of course you do, I think they will be happy to receive your body in a body bag on their doorstep."

Biggie: "Wow."

Me: "My reaction too," I look at her and smile. "He's yours, deal with him and see if that his family gets his body, I'm out." I hug her, and step out of the room that's full of blood.

I get to Tsakani, and he pulls me into a tight hug. He seems much better now.

Him: "Thank you."

Me: "For what?"

Him: "Taking care of this mess for me, I don't think I would've handled it the way I did. I was probably going to shoot them," I chuckle. "I'm serious. You really got my back."

Me: "Anytime. See my love; when you love someone, their grief becomes

your grief. Their strife becomes your strife. Love means you are one half of a

whole. Everything you go through, you go through together.
You celebrate not

only the wins together, you suffer the losses too. And in this case, it's we are in this together, me killing that man means that you killed him too.”

Him: Chuckling. “I love you.”

Me: “I love you even better,” he kisses my head. “Let's go,” I turn to everyone. “See you soon.”

Anthea: “Thanks for the show,” I nod, and we walk out of the building hand in hand.

Tsakani: “I feel better now.”

Me: “I'm glad.” My phone beeps in my pocket, and it's a message from Milan, I view it, read it, and my stomach clenches instantly. Fuck, fuck it. It's not true.

Tsakani: “Bubbles, what's wrong?” I hand him my phone. “God, no. Not another death, it's too soon. Too fucking soon!” I zone out... Three deaths in one day, great.

TSAKANI

So, Milan saw it fit too to take her own life just because Batista is no more, it's not as if like she wasn't going to survive or find love again, but she, too, just like Batista & Talon is selfish. She shot herself inside their pool. Milan, is the one who found her, water filled with crimson and unfortunately the baby didn't make it too. The week has been such a drag luckily for us we had no funerals to arrangements to make they're all going to be cremated this evening and their ashes will be thrown in the river in the early hours of the morning. It was Talon's & Batista's wish to be cremated and not buried, and since we don't know any family members of Maxine, we've agreed to cremate her too, only close family members are allowed. Thembeke is not coming, she said she doesn't want anything to do with Talon or Khalasi. They don't exist in her life, poor Khalasi, but Nomalanga is willing to raise him as her own, well, she is raising him after all. Khalasi will grow knowing that she's his mother. Once he's old enough he will be told the truth.

“What time are we departing to the burning deport?” Dakalo, implores looking at the time on his wrist.

“Around 18:00 pm.”

Him: “At least I have 2 more hours, I'll be back before you know it,” I nod, and he dashes off.

“Hey, TK. Has Tammy eaten, yet?” Lindiwe implores.

Me: “I don't think so. She's refusing to open for me,” she sighs.
“You too?”

Her: “Yes. She actually blames herself for Maxine's death, she says that if she didn't come with Maxine here, she would still be alive.”

Me: “I told her that is not her fault that Maxine couldn't handle the grief, and she decided to cut things short and take her own life without even thinking twice, inflicting more pain on our already shattered hearts. Nxa. Selfish human being.”

Her: "I know right? Guess she didn't care about how we are going to feel about her death, or maybe she saw it fit to die the very same day as Batista & Talon did so that we can mourn all of them same time, and move on move on with our lives. Guess she didn't want to shatter our hearts as days moved forward and halfway through our healing journey."

Me: "I guess, but still..., "

"She was selfish," Lindiwe finishes the sentence for me coming behind us. "She was definitely selfish, how could she? Argh, anyway, it's all said & done now."

Milan: "But we haven't cremated them though, so it's not 'said & done' just yet, or maybe to you, it is I don't know."

Her: "Yeah, you're right. Okay, let's say I will behave until we've cremated them, then we move away from this heartache. My heart is too heavy, this week was such a drag and emotional too. I don't know about you guys, but I'm ready to move on from all this, I'm so over this week."

Milan: "Same here." Easy for them to say because they didn't grow up together, done a lot of things together, and created plenty of memories that will last for a lifetime with them.

Batista & Talon were my brothers, they may not have been by blood but I was much closer to them than my brothers we ever were. We've shared a lot together, so it will take me some time to move on from their death.

Me: "Easy for you to say. Let me go and check on bubbles, I'm sure she will grant me access now to get inside the room and give her- her food." They nod as I walk away.

The door yanks open after countless times of knocking, I was on a verge of kicking it down.

"I'm sorry, please get in." She tells me. I step in and observe her, she looks like a mess. You can tell that she has been crying.

Me: "I've brought you food."

Her: "Thank you. Let me go and cleanse my face," she disappears to the bathroom connecting to our bedroom. I put her plate on top of the dressing table, and wait for her to come back. "I'm back," she sits down next to me.

Me: "How are you holding up?"

Her: "Fine, now that I've cried it out, and stopped blaming myself for her death."

Me: "That's good. You had me apprehensive there."

Her: "I couldn't keep the strong facade for too long, one way or the other I was going to break down."

Me: "It's good to cry it out than bottling it, I cried too."

Her: "Yeah, I guess. Have you eaten?"

Me: "No. I can't stomach anything."

Her: "Well, we can always eat together the food is too much for me, you know I'm on a diet."

Me: "Diet?" Chuckling. "You on a diet?" She growls. "Okay, I believe you. Let's eat."

Her: "The food was good. Who cooked?" The plate is cleaned out, I think I need some more.

Me: "Mmamgwane with the help of Okuhle."

Her: "They did a great job, but I'm not full, " she pouts.

Me: "Same here, let me go and ask for a refill."

Her: "Bring some beer with," I nod getting up from the bed. "Add more meat."

Me: "What happened to your diet?" I narrow my brows and she laughs. It's good seeing her smiling.

Her: "I'm mourning, allow please."

Me: "Fine." I mumble stepping out of the room.

Mmangwane: "The plate is clean, that's good. Want some more?"

Me: "Please, and don't forget to put more meat. Bubbles orders," she laughs nodding.

Her: "You look much better now."

Me: "Yeah, bubbles is fine, so I'm also fine. Her being miserable affects me too."

Her: “Young love. I wish you guys all the best, and I'm choosing myself to be your maid of honor no discussion,” I laugh. “I'm serious njalo Tsakani.”

Me: “I know. I have a lot planned for our future, she's the one for me, and there's no turning back.”

Her: “That's what I want to hear. Who would've thought that one day you will finally settle down?”

Me: Smiling. “No one, well, except God & my ancestors of course.”

Her: “Impressive. Go and eat now, I'll ask one of the girls to come and fetch the plate when you're done,” she hands me the food once done dishing up.

Me: “Thank you.” I take the plate. “But I prefer not being disturbed I will bring it back once done

” she nods and I walk back to the bedroom.

Her: “Le ska dira matlakala mowe!” She calls out after me, I laugh. Hhayi lo Mama. We can't disrespect them like that.



LUXOLO

Everyone has departed to the burning deport and I decided to remain behind. Oh, and my mother remained with me together with the pregnant Okuhle. We are sitting in complete silence in the lounge, Khalasi is sleeping on my mother's lap he loves sleeping this one.

“I need to go and lie down a bit, can I please be excused?”
Okuhle informs us.

“You are excused,” I respond.

Her: “Thank you.” She starts walking away leaving me with my mother. It's so sheepish being around her after months of not conversing, sighs.

Mom: “So, how have you been?”

Me: “Fine, I guess. And you?”

Her: "Been surviving, but Bulelwa is just impossible to live with. She always reminds me of my preceding as if I have learned from it. I've made terrible choices that's for sure, but I know better now."

Me: "Just let her be. She needs to get a life or a boyfriend, or something." She laughs. "I'm serious, she's so stuck up and it's annoying."

Her: "Tell me about it, but we no longer take notice of her anymore."

Me: "That's good. So, I spoke to Tsebo the other day."

Her: "Oh, what did he say?"

Me: "He said that he wanted us to talk. I agreed. So, I've scheduled a brunch meeting with him for next week Tuesday."

Her: "That's good. I pray that everything goes well, and possibly build a father-daughter relationship."

Me: "I hope so too. Can I please ask?"

Her: "Go right ahead."

Me: "Who's Luxolo's father because I'm quite sure that we don't share a father."

Her: "It's Mr. Mazibuko. He used to be Tsebo's friend."

Me: "Whoa, so you slept with Tsebo knowing that he's friends with this Mr. Mazibuko character?"

Her: "No. I slept with Mr. Mazibuko years back before I met Tsebo."

Me: "Hmmm, so you were dating married men?" She sighed and shakes her head. "I didn't mean it in a bad way."

Her: "No, it's okay, Nono. I was not dating married men I was a prostitute," I gasp then cover my mouth with my hand, not that I'm surprised or anything because I already know that, but I'm sure that she thinks that Thembeke didn't tell me everything about her past. "A high profiled prostitute that is, but I got carried away in the process, if I had sensations for that certain client I'd make sure that I seduced him to a point where I finally find myself living with them, but it never ended well."

Me: "Wow. You have a very interesting past."

Her: "I know and I'm not proud of it."

Me: "At least you've changed."

Her: "Yeah, I have."

Me: "Dating?"

Her: "I'm done with relationships. Been there, done that. I'm just waiting for your wedding now, then grandchildren and I'm

a happy woman,” we both laugh. “I'm being for real, relationships are a no go area for me.”

Me: “You'll never know.”

Her: “Know what?”

Me: “I was just saying.”

Her: “Hmmm. Anyway, I need to find all the women I've wronged and apologize to them for wrecking their marriages.”

Me: “Ask God for forgiveness, mention those people you've hurt to him, and he will do the rest. Don't worry.”

Her: “I've never seen a gangster believing in God.”

Me: “Huh? I'm not a gangster. And gangsters do believe in God, Mama.”

Her: “Keep fooling yourself, pshhh. You take after your father. Just so you know, I don't like these gangster things of yours, but I'll just accept it because you are one,” I laugh shaking my head. “Anyway, let me go and put Khalasi down then I will start preparing lunch.”

Me: “I'll get started with it so long,” I'm already on my feet heading to the kitchen. Sandwiches and chicken will do these people have finished my grocery. My mom joins me shortly...

Her: “I miss moments like these Nono.”

Me: “I miss them too.” She smiles at me and I return it, and we continue preparing lunch. I need my space these people must leave my house, it's enough now.



VUYO

My palms are sweaty as I'm sitting in this room waiting for Nomonde. Adele, called me an hour ago saying that they will be arriving soon, and now here I am waiting for her, nervous. I'm going to come clean to her this evening and maybe I will take her home with me if she agrees I've already spoken to Adele, and told her the truth. She didn't believe me at first but after showing her proof she believed and said that I can leave with

her once she comes back. And I haven't told Blessing, but I did tell Dineo, she didn't have a problem with the issue.

The door flies open and Nomonde steps inside with some girl and they are busy laughing not noticing my presence.

Nomonde's friend is the first one to me as I get up from the bed, she nudges Nomonde and points me, she turns and when she sees me she opens her eyes in shock, and a confused expression will follow shortly that's for sure.

“Hello, Nomonde. Sisi.”

Hi, urhm, girl, I will check up on you later,” the girl tells her and exits the room.

Her: “Ho- what are you doing here? I just got back, I'm not in the mood to entertain you, I need to rest,” she throws her suitcase on the bed.

Me: “I know and that's not why I'm here.”

Her: "Then why are you here?"

Me: "We need to talk."

Her: "Talk? Talk about what? I don't know you that well to talk to you."

Me: "You will."

Her: "Listen Vuyo, I'm not allowed to communicate with my customers Adele hates it."

Me: "That's funny because she's the one who told me to wait for you here in your room."

Her: "Really?" I nod. "Let's sit then," we both sit down.

Me: "I don't know how to put this to you, but I'm your father." I get straight to the point no time for games. She chuckles not believing me.

Her: "Hhe. What did you just say?"

Me: "I'm your father." Yoh, she starts fanning herself, then difficult breathing follows, shit Asthma. "Where's your pump?" She points at her suitcase... I unzip it, and throw her clothes all over as I'm searching for her pump. Finally, I find it, I give it to her, and watch her attentively as she breaths in & out using it, dammnit.

5 minutes later...

Her: "Please leave my room I need to think, process this and understand it."

Me: "Fair enough. But here are my numbers just in case you change your mind and this envelope that you see there contains all the information, I'll be waiting for your call," I give her a slight nod and step out of her room. Well, that was unexpected. But I do pray that she calls me soon, the sooner the better.

I get to the front and Adele is not around, I wonder where did she go to. I'm not even in the mood for a beer let me just leave. Should Nomonde call me and agree on hearing what I say I'll tell her about Blessing, she loves that little champ a lot. I step inside my car, roar the engine to life and take off, I'll drive around here just t in case she decides to call.

VUYO

It has been 3 weeks and a couple of days since I went to the club to fetch my daughter, and Nandi/Nomonde still hasn't called me yet, I guess she doesn't want anything to do with me, even after she's seen the results in black & white or maybe she didn't even get time to view them. I should've just dragged her out of there while she kicked and screamed, thinking about all those men she's been sleeping with it's pissing me off, it fucking pisses me off! Dammit.

“Whoa, Van Damme. What did the fridge do to you for it to get such a hard kick?” Dineo implores stepping inside the kitchen.

“I'm sorry, I'm just stressed.”

Her: “About Nandi?” I nod. “Give her some time, I'm sure she's still trying to process the orbits you've thrown at her.

Remember that she grew up knowing that Blessing's mother is her mother, and now you show up telling her that you are her father and that confuses her more, and a lot of questions

running in her mind. All this feels surreal to her, she will come around that's for sure.”

Me: “Yeah, guess time is all that she needs. But my worry is the fact that what if she continues sleeping with those men on a daily basis, honey. That's what worries me more.”

Her: “You might find that she's not even sleeping with them, but too stressed & confused about certain things and asking herself questions with no answers as I've told you before, and I'm sure she's even ashamed that she almost slept with her father unknowingly. Hhe, if it wasn't for the birthmark, we would be talking a whole different story right now,” I nod. She's right, but I still hope that she will call me today at least asking me to come and fetch her, I'm sure she'd also be happy to see Blessing.

Me: “You are right. Anyway, how are you feeling? You are almost due.”

Her: "Exhausted is an understatement, I'm drained that's all I can tell you, and to think that I have 2 more weeks left before I give birth makes me want to cry."

Me: "You are almost there darling, I can't wait to meet my little one," brushing her tummy.

Her: "Same here, and I pray that he/she doesn't look like you."

Me: "Huh? Why?" I raise my brow.

Her: "You are too charming, I sometimes ask myself as to how did I even end up being your girlfriend. I'm so blessed to have you, Vuyo. Thank you for loving me."

Me: "I'm the lucky one here, or let's just say we are both lucky then." She chuckles. "Yes?"

Her: "I guess we can say that."

“And the both of you love me too, right?” Blessing implores stepping inside the kitchen standing in between me & Dineo, he was watching TV in the lounge or maybe he was just eavesdropping.

Me: “Yes, boy. We love you too.”

Him: “And I love you extra,” we all laugh as we group hug.

Dineo: “Almost forgot, I have something to show you. Blessing, please go and fetch for me that treasure box we found at the old house while we were moving things it's on top of the washing machine, hurry up.” Blessing waits for no further instructions and he takes off, I wonder what is it that she wants to show me.

“Here mommy,” Blessing hands her the treasure box.

Her: “Thank you, son.” She opens the box, and comes out with a stack of letters, pictures, and other random stuff. “Take a look at this,” she hands me 5 letters and 3 pictures.

In the pictures stands my father with me when I was at least 2-3 years old on his arm, and on the other hand, another toddler, a girl to be exact I wonder who is she. I put the pictures on the side and open one of the letters. What? I read it till I'm done and I read the other ones. But how? When? And why was she never mentioned? I don't remember my parents talking about having a daughter out there, yet, there are letters written to her. Well, not unless my father cheated on my mother back then, and this sister of mine is the same age as me. Shit! So, I have a half-sister out there in these streets? Wow, who would've thought? I wonder where is she and if she knows that she has a brother out there. I need to find her, I must find her. Unfortunately, my parents are not here to answer all the questions I have for them, and I can't go to that Zithobebe village for reasons known by me of course. Guess I have another task at hand now, sighs. Where do I even begin?

“You had no idea?” Dineo's voice brings me back to reality as she implores.

Me: “None, at all. I wonder why didn't my parents mention this to me.”

Her: "Maybe they had valid reasons as to why they never told you."

Me: "I guess," just then my phone vibrates in my pocket, I take it out and I don't recognize the numbers I answer anyway, maybe it's Nandi.

"Hello, it's me." She speaks out after a couple of silence into the call. Thank you. Relief overcomes me when I hear her voice.

Me: "Thank God. Thought you'd never call. How are you?"

Her: "Good. Confused, I honestly don't know. Are you busy?"

Me: "No. Why?"

Her: "I have a lot of questions to ask you, can you come and fetch me?"

Me: "Are your bags ready?"

Her: "All ready. What time can I expect you?"

Me: "Give me 2 hours and I'll be there."

Her: "Okay, see you then," she hangs up leaving me with a smile on my face.

Dineo: "Well, guess I should start preparing the guestroom and cook enough for everyone."

Me: "That won't be substantial, we can always grab some food on our way here, just prepare the guestroom and don't tell Blessing anything, okay?"

Her: "My lips are sealed you better leave now so that you don't come back late."

Me: "I'll be having all my favorite people in one house," I kiss her forehead, then her tummy and she giggles throwing her head back.

I step out of the house, and straight to my car. My heart is filled with contentment, things are finally coming together for me. But, I still have one more task to carry then all is well with my soul.



LUXOLO

I scan my eyes around Z&B restaurant looking for Tsebo, and he's nowhere on-site, if only he knew how much I detest waiting for someone he wouldn't have made scan for him for more than a minute. I hiss under my breath when I don't see him, I'm about to leave when he propels me back inside the restaurant as I bump into him at the entrance.

“Sorry I'm late, I had things to do,” he says as we settle down.

“I detest people who can't keep time. You should've sent me a text or something.”

Him: “I'll remember that next time, my apologies once more.” I nod acknowledging his apology.

“Good day, my name is Ase and I'm at your service. Here are the menus, you can browse through them, and once ready to order feel free to call me. Any refreshments so long?” Ase, our waitress informs us.

What a waitress, she has some manners, I like. Zubenathi must be very strict when it comes to her employees this restaurant has been running for years. Oh, and Tsebo is the one who suggested this place, I'm sold.

Me: “Soda water will do for now.”

Tsebo: “Coffee for me, thank you.”

Her: “Coming right up,” she saunters away.

Me: “What a bubbly and respectful waitress.”

Him: “That's why I love this place, the service here is exceptional.”

Me: "I can tell. You know, it will complete my day if I were to see the face behind this successful restaurant."

Him: "I will introduce you to her once she comes back, she's currently on a vacation with her family, but once she comes back I'll introduce you to her, and maybe you might learn a thing or 2 about business from here."

Me: "I'd really appreciate that, thank you."

Him: "So, I did my little research about you, and I must say that I'm very impressed with my findings, but once again I'm not proud of the route you took." He better not start lecturing me because I'm not in the mood for lectures.

Me: "Well, I'm proud of it, and so is Nomalanga," he huffs at the mention of my mother's name. Oh, well.

Him: "Why did you choose the gangster route? Or should I say the mafias route?"

Me: "Mafia? I'm not at that level yet and don't think I will be any time soon. And, this route chose me, I didn't choose it."

Him: "How so? Because we all have a choice."

Me: "I've gone through a lot of shit the past year, I was forced into this, I was created by those fuckers to be what I am today. Tortured me as if I'm not someone's daughter and someone's girlfriend."

Him: "Tell me everything don't leave a single thing out. I know that I haven't been part of your life for the past 29 years or should I say 30 years?"

Me: "I have 3 months left before I turn 30, so I'm still 29. So, here's what happened...," his mouth is left hanging after all that I told him, not believing that I went through all that shit and still survived. I don't even know why I'm telling him this but it feels right.

Him: "And they are still alive?"

Me: "Only the boss left, oh, and few of his men."

Him: "Why did you let him live?"

Me: "As they say; 'save the last for the best' or whatever the saying goes," he shakes his head. "I will visit him the least he expects it, I'm sure he's even forgotten about me."

Him: "When you go and deal with him, do not hesitate to call me

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I'll be there to feed him his own heart."

Me: "And your wife won't have a problem with me calling you anyhow?"

Him: "I'm a divorcee. So, you can hit me up any time."

Me: "Oh, any kids apart from me?"

Him: "I have 4 sons and another girl which makes up to 6 of you and out of all the 6 you are the 5th born, born from out of wedlock. All 5 of my kids are from my wife." Wow, giving a man 5 kids than divorce at the end, it can never be me. Wuuhhh, by fire by force I will fight for my marriage there will be no divorce, only death will do us apart until then we are going to make our marriage work.

Me: "So, you are not seeing anyone at the moment?"

Him: "No. And I'm definitely not looking, my work is keeping me busy. Women are very stressful, I don't think you even understand yourself at times," I giggle. So, he and my mother are both not looking for any spouses, and even if I were to hook them up it will be a complete waste of time because they did not part on good terms, and Tsebo seems like the abusive and controlling type. Ey, let me not judge a person without knowing their full story.

Me: "So, if a chance springs out from out of nowhere for you & Nomalanga to make up for the lost time, will you take it?"

Him: "No. I will kick that fucken chance straight to Saturn." I laugh, wow. He really hates my mother, yuhhh. No hope for them. "And don't even think about hooking us up, Luxolo."

Me: Giggling. "Not even."

Him: "Good. We need to go out more and as time goes by I will introduce you to your other siblings."

Me: "Siblings? No, thank you."

Him: "I was not asking you, I was telling you. And when is that boy with 10 dreadlocks marrying you?" Wow, 10 dreadlocks. This man, a joker he is.

Me: "His dreads are full, clean, and well plaited. He washes them twice a week. And when the time is right he will definitely

put a ring on it, we still have a lot of time together. He's my soulmate that one.”

Him: “Young love, but don't worry I will have a talk with him, you know, I watched that boy growing in front of me, I practically raised him.”

Me: “Have any idea who his father is?”

Him: “Yes, I do. And unfortunately, he disappeared when Tsakani was 8 years old, that was the last time we saw of him,” I nod. “We wish to know what really happened to him, and if he's dead; where is he buried? We need closure, he was a very good friend of mine.”

Me: “Hmmm, hectic, but there's another thing. The time we launched our club there was a man whom Tsakani introduced to me as Mr. Mazibuko who looked like him, but not that too much lookalike. Tsakani, told me that he once worked for him, and Mr. Mazibuko even said that I look like his old friend, guess he was referring to you.”

Him: "This is interesting. How does he look like?"

Me: "Stop by the club later on and I will show you footage of the launch, maybe it's him."

Him: "I will do so. And if that was him, couldn't he see that he resembles Tsakani?"

Me: "I don't know," shrugging.

Him: "Hmmm." What if Mr. Mazibuko is Tsakani's father? Yohh, imagine Tsakani finding out that the man he was working for all those years and almost killed is his father? Ehhh, koshuba mus...



TSAKANI

Days are never the same without Batista and Talon around, we are incomplete. We miss Talon's jokes & Batista putting him in order, their little quarrels were funny because, at the end of the day, they would've longed ironed things out. It's just the 3 of us and it's really hard for us to move on from this honestly, but hopefully one of these good days we will smile again, and be whole once more. Batista's death hit Leon hard because they were very close, they did almost everything together and as for me, I'm really grateful for having bubbles by my side, she's the only thing that's keeping me sane if it wasn't for her I don't know where I would be, I'd probably be drowning myself in alcohol. Coming to think of it, I and the two guys are only

sane because of the women in our lives, if it wasn't for them we'd be talking a different story.

“I've brought you food, gentlemen.” Milan, informs us placing the food on top of the coffee table, we are at Leon's house.

“Thank you,” I say.

Her: “I'll come back to fetch the empty plates once you are done, or you can take them to the kitchen but if they are cleaned out, I'll be upstairs if you need me,” she informs us and saunter away. One thing I know with the guys is that we never say no to food no matter how much shit we go through especially when there's plenty of well-cooked meat in the dish.

Lee, leads us into a small prayer, and we start eating, no words exchange as it has been like for the past 3 hours we've spent here, and we are fine like this. Silence is also unspoken words, our thoughts are the ones doing all the talking. Replaying old memories, thinking of all the good times we shared together individually. Shit, death is the mother of all bitches. Fuck! It hurts the most if it's someone closer to you.



VUYO

Music is keeping us company as we are driving back home, Nandi is sitting at the back leaning her head on the window, looking outside. I'm just glad that Adele didn't give me any hassles, in fact, she was relieved that finally someone has come for Nandi, plus she was the youngest out of all the girls working there. Blessing is going to be so happy once he sees Nandi, I hope Nandi will be at ease once she sees Blessing, she loves him after all there's no doubt about that. She was worried when we went to her old home and found no one there, she didn't ask the neighbors about her mother, she only asked about Blessing and the pain in her eyes when they told her that they haven't seen him in months stung my heart. I wish I could've told her right there & then just to ease her agonizing heart, but I was going to spoil the surprise.

We park on the driveway and the sun is already setting which means that Blessing has already bathed, Dineo is very strict when it comes to Blessing, she wants him to do things accordingly. Nandi steps out of the car, I do too, and help her with her luggage then head toward the door. Before I can even knock the door is yanked open and Blessing is already hugging Nandi's knees.

“Sisi.” He says excitedly, I look at the Nandi and her face beams with excitement the worry her eyes had minutes ago is now replaced with tears, tears of happiness I guess. She hauls him and pulls him into a tight hug.

“Don't just stand there, get inside remember that we have noisy neighbors,” Dineo tells us. I get in first leaving brother & sister to catch up. “I've never witness Blessing this happy, the sight is just heart-melting.” She continues to say.

Me: “Beautiful sight indeed, I hope Nandi will feel comfortable now that she has reunited with her brother. They may not be biological siblings, but the bond between the two of them runs deep.”

Her: “Yeah, at least now I will have someone who will be helping me around the house, and helping Blessing with his homework.” Speaking of homework, Nandi will have to go back to school.

Me: “Exactly. Aren't you tired?”

Her: "I am, but let me finish making my tea then I will go and take a nap."

"I'll take it from here, you can go rest," Nandi says behind us. I turn to look at her, and she has her arm around Blessing's shoulders.

Her: "Oh, thank you. Just put one teaspoon of sugar, and 3 teaspoons of powder milk I've already put rooibos in my cup. You can make yourself some too if you want."

Blessing: "I'll come and massage your feet, Yezwe is making your feet swell," yeap, he gave him that name.

Her: Laughing. "No, not today, spend some time with your sister the big baby will massage my feet today, take it as your day-off," he giggles.

Me: "Urh, urh, okay, just for today and that's it."

Her: "Yes sir." From the corner of my eye, I can see Nandi smiling. The ice has melted, time to dilute the water with juice. Hope she will allow me, I'm willing to make it all work.

TSAKANI

I look at the time and it's just afternoon, I've asked for a meeting with my mother & brothers. I've booked for spa day for Nomalanga, Mmangwane, and the ladies together with the kids for the whole day, they will only be back later. For now, it's just me & my family we have something to iron out. Kedibone, is the only one missing that one doesn't care about her family that's for sure, she hardly calls us, and when I try calling her, her number goes through voicemail. Argh, no wonder everyone has given up on her, she's stubborn.

“You sounded urgent over the phone, what's up?” Hlulani implores taking a sip of his protein shake. I sigh, and glare at everyone present, but at my mother mostly. The one I need answers from. She has gotten away with so much and has secrets that she thought she was going to take to the grave, but she's wrong. Very wrong, and today is the day for her to tell us where exactly our fathers are, for her to tell us nothing but the truth we've had it with her bullshit, and her dodging us.

Bubbles & I did some research on our own after the meeting with her father. The shock on my face when she told me that Tsebo, our family Dr. Is her father, was nothing compared to all the other shocks I've ever had in my whole life, I was really taken aback by the revelation. But then again, I never paid

much attention to such, and it never crossed my mind that Tsebo is bubbles father even though there's some resemblance that I spotted recently between the two of them it just never strikes me that they are father & daughter, guess I never really paid to much attention to his features, but then. Who pays attention to another man's face? That so wrong, and comes off gay too. Anyway, the findings regarding our fathers were shocking, and unfortunately for me, my father & Hlulani is no more he passed on 6 years ago due to heart complications so says the first report, but when we dig deeper regarding his death we found out that he was actually killed whilst at the hospital. It's quite clear that someone suffocated him with a pillow because there were no signs of drugs/poison in his blood. And he had 2 more kids younger than Hlulani & I, and they are a successful bunch and his wife is still alive, but they reside abroad.

“Speak up man, we don't have the whole day,” Sabelo notifies me.

Me: “Ma. Where are our fathers?” I don't shift my gaze at her.

Her: “You called this meeting just to ask me nonsense?” She half yells, rolling her eyes at me.

Me: “Asking about our fathers is not nonsense, we just want to know where they are then we will take it from there.”

Hlulani: “Yeah, mom. Where are our fathers?”

Her: “After all that I've done for you, you come here and ask me shit? I've raised all of you single handily without your fathers. That should tell you that I don't know where your fathers are, and once again that should tell you that they actually don't want anything to do with you because they never bothered to reach out to you!” An unintentional chuckle leaves my mouth.

Sabelo: “Mama, and we are very grateful that you raised us to be the men that we are today, but then again it won't hurt you or take anything from you by telling us where our fathers are.”

Her: “Why want to know them now, old as you are? You are grown men with beards and have kids, yet, here you are asking me about your deadbeat fathers! Seniyahlanya nina?”

Me: “Stop going around in circles, just give us their names and we'll take it from there.”

Her: “No. I won't tell you anything, because there's nothing to say to you boys, and this better be the last time you bring this topic up!”

Me: “I knew that you'd become all defensive and not tell us anything, well, I did research of my own and my findings were quite interesting.”

Her: “What did you find?”

Me: “Well, I found out that Hlulani & I are sons of Mr. Chauke, former tycoon, baseball coach, motivational speaker, and ran a few community projects working side to side with Tsebo, of course. He passed away 6 years ago due to heart complications, and before he died he tried reaching out to you about us, and you turned him away by lying to him that we were dead.”

Hlulani: “What? You killed us whilst we are still alive? You have some audacity Mama! How can you do such?”

Her: Gasps. “You are lying Tsakani! You do...”

Me: “Shut the hell up I'm still talking!” She gasps again, and my brothers glare at me in shock, I ignore their expression. “As I was saying; “You even showed him fake death certificates of me & Hlulani, and the poor man believed that. He mourned for us, and maybe that's another reason why he had heart complications. It's because of you and your evil ways,” she looks down when I tell her that and she doesn't even try disputing that because I have evidence in my hand.

Hlulani: “How dare you Mama! How dare you rob us of a chance of knowing our father? You are one evil woman, I detest you! You robbed us the chance of having a father, how could you be so heartless!” He bangs the table causing Babalwa to jump. “You are dead to me, from now onward you are no longer my mother I don't want anything to do with you!” He

abruptly rises from the couch and leaves our presence, he's pissed off, but he will come around that's for sure.

Me: “Hlulani just needs to breathe & calm down he will be fine, I mean it's not nice finding out that you were once declared as a dead person while alive, outrageous. Moving right along, Sabelo, your father is still alive, but very sick he has stage 3 cancer, and he might vaya anytime soon. He doesn't know about your existence because he broke things off with Mama not knowing that she's pregnant with you, and Mama didn't even see it fit to let him know since he was now a married man, and had a child on the way. Piece of shit. Then Dakalo & Kedibone's father is alive, and what's funny is that I once worked for their father, shit life it is I tell you. I can't believe that I was actually slaving for your father Dakalo. The very same man that wanted to kill me for business, for the fact that I was quickly climbing the ladder and growing my own wings, pffft. What a joke.”

Dakalo: “And who is that man?” I grimace and glare at Babalwa who's face is hanging down.”

Me: “Mr.Mazibuko. Lawrence the fucking Mazibuko is your father.” He laughs, like seriously laughing as if I just cracked a joke or something.

Him: “You must be kidding me! Mr. Mazibuko? The one and only Mr. Mazibuko is my father?” I nod. “Mama, is it true? And

please don't lie to me.” She lifts her head and looks at her, tears veiling her eyes. Then, she nods. “Wow! Why did you never tell us this, Mama? How can you be so evil? No wonder you have anger issues, uyanyayisa old as you are. Excuse me, he rises from his seat too, and leaves our presence. Sabelo is the only one remaining digesting all this.

Me: “Well, it is up to you Sabelo, and the guys to go and look for your fathers and take it from there. And as for me, I have a plane to catch. See you around,” I wink and turn around making my way to the door whistling.

Once out of the house, I find Dakalo & Hlulani sitting in one of the benches apart from each other, lost in their own thoughts. They will be fine. Hlulani & I must make a day and go visit our father's grave. If it wasn't for bubbles I wouldn't have known who my father is, and Tsebo really came through for me with half of the information he has given me. He was a great help indeed. But now, bubbles and I must go to Italy, apparently, she has business to take of and she'd really appreciate it if I leave with her. She doesn't want her father meddling in her business.

I step inside my car and bring the engine to life, then take off. I'm heading straight to the airport, that's where bubbles is waiting for me. Hope the trip is going to be worth it, even though I don't really know what we are going to do there, but she needs me there.



VUYO

My relationship with Nandi is the best. We are attending therapy together and I've taken her back to school, she only has a grade 9 report with her, so she opted to go to Tvet college instead of going back to school, and I did just that, she's doing levels thereby college and she's such a smart kid. Blessing is one happy soul, and I'm glad to say that Dineo has given birth a week ago and it's a boy. His name is Yezwe Justine Maraba. Unfortunately, we couldn't get hold of Dineo's relatives it's like they've all got swallowed by the ground or died during the war I don't know. I wanted to do right by her and my son. Oh well, guess it's part of life...

My search of finding my sister is not going well because I don't even know where to begin, and my Uncle is refusing to tell me where to find her, he knows about her existence, but then again he said it's best if I don't know her because she's bad news. But I'm not going to give up on finding her

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at least I got her first name and her mother's name, I will work around them. Hopefully, I'll find her before the week ends. My phone rings, I look at the screen and it's a number I'm familiar with, we may have dated years back, but I still know her numbers by the head. I don't know what she wants from me. I watch it ring until my phone stops ringing. Blocking her numbers will do just fine.

“Baba, aunty Dinny is requesting your presence immediately,” Nandi notifies me.

“Is there anything wrong?” I implore following her to our room.

Her: “No. There's nothing wrong she's just requesting your presence, maybe she misses you,” I laugh. “I'm serious, she really loves you that I can tell you. I may not know her for long, but the little time I spent with her is enough for me to conclude that she's the one for you, I like her a lot,” she gives me an assuring smile, and I return it back. We step inside the room

and Yezwe is in Blessing's hands, he's playing with him. Their bond is too much, and I'm here for it.

Me: "You called for me," she nods sitting upright. "What is it?" I crawl into bed, and settle next to her.

Her: "I just wanted to see your ugly face, I missed it." I laugh, funny is she.

Me: "What do you want?" I raise my brow at her. I know her tricks very well.

Her: "Psssh. I don't want anything from you, darling. I just wanted to see you."

Me: "I know you, Dee. You are my woman. Now, tell me what is it that you want?" She giggles shaking her head, then looks at Nandi. Guess Nandi is the one who wants something and she asked Dee to ask me for that particular thing on her behalf. "Ufunani sisi?"

Nandi: "I-, " she stops talking and purse her lips together. I gesture for her to continue talking using my hand. "Urhmm, I was wondering if I could get a new phone my old phone is giving me problems especially the screen."

Me: "Now, was it hard to ask me that yourself?"

Her: "Yeah, it's just that I'm not used to asking for things."

Me: “Child. You can ask anything from me, I'm your father Nandi. And you are my responsibility. Don't ever think that you are troubling me when you ask for things, okay?” She nods.

Blessing: “You should be like me, Nandi. I always ask what I want, but the only problem is that I have work for those things.” He sulks, and we all laugh.

Her: “I will remember that next time little champ.”

Me: “I will get you a new phone, don't worry, Nandi.”

Her: “Thank you, Baba. So, what will be my duties in order for me to get my phone?”

Me: “Just make me a proud father and ace your grades, that's all I'm asking from you.”

Her: “I promise you. Let me go and start cooking,” she steps out of the room leaving me and my three¹ Musketeers.

Dineo: “I love her, she's such a lovely child. It's a good thing that you guys attended therapy. You are such a great father, Vuyo. Don't ever doubt that,” she squeezes my hand.

Me: “I know sweetie, I know.” I lie my head on her chest, listening to her heartbeat. With Dineo I feel content unlike I was with Cindy, and I get to be myself without her judging me or pointing my flaws. She corrects me when I'm wrong, and she's a very good financial advisor I'm very lucky to have a

woman like her in my life. God, brought her into my life at a perfect time. I'm grateful.



LUXOLO

Touchdown Italy, and we will be staying in townhouse galleria in Milan, located inside Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. Tsakani, is really impressed by it, I am too, I only saw it when I passed by I didn't know that inside was this beautiful. The money is very steep though, but hey, we can afford it so why not? And this will be a good thing for Tsakani, hopefully by him being here will stop him from thinking about his friends every now & then, and that he will finally have a peaceful sleep, he deserves it.

“Wow, bubbles. This place is beautiful. I'm in love with it,” he compliments as we get inside our room. He puts our luggage on

top of the bed. The room is extremely beautiful, the bedding is crisp white, and so is the carpet, in fact, this whole room is white. Everything here is white. I just don't get it, why do all these hotels & BnBs have white bedding, towels, walk-in closets, etc? I'd really like to see a different set up with bright colors, dark colors, or mixed colors and all. Or maybe I'm just weird.

“Very beautiful indeed. Look, you can even see the view from here and we can even watch the sky whilst in bed.”

Him: “Hmmm, so, there are no witches here?” I laugh. “I'm serious my love, I don't like the fact that we can see the sky while in bed, no.”

Me: “No problem. We can always use the remote to close the window, the binds will just fall down shutting the window altogether.”

Him: “Now, we are talking. So, why are we here?”

Me: “I'm here to settle a score with someone.”

Him: “Nikolai?” I nod. “How are we going to get there since you said that the place is too secured and the walls are high?”

Me: “Underground. There's a passage leading there, and it will take us out in this other room filled with golds & diamonds, and from there we will climb the ladder and it will take us to the dead room, yuck the smell is very unpleasant in that room, sies.

Then, we will wait in the dead room for one of the guards to come and dispose of a fresh corpse, we attack the guard and you will wear his clothes posing as one of them, and I will check the coast, if we are clear then I will give you a room number, that's where Nikolai sleeps, then I will show you his office. And we will take it from there. Ung'bambile?"

Him: "Yeap, go the plan loud & clear. So, how much gold & diamond is there?"

Me: "Do you see how big this room is?" He nods. "It fills this entire room, there are even monuments crafted in gold. Let me tell not tell you, you will see it when we get there tomorrow. For now, let's sleep I'm tired."

Him: "Let me get my sleeping tablets then."

Me: "You don't need them, let's snuggle, you will sleep peacefully and the sound of the wind is mind soothing together with the angry waves that we can hear all the way from here. Relax your mind, body, and soul. Think of something positive or you can always think of me naked," he grins. I wiggle my brows and he chuckles.

Him: "That can work, that's the first useful thing you've said so far since we got here," I punch him on his shoulder lightly laughing.

Me: "I can be clever too at times."

Him: "And that's why I love you so much," he lies with his tummy then brings his arms together making some sort of a pillow with them, then rests his head on them, and I get on top of him, I do the same with my hands on his back and close my eyes.

Nikolai is in for a big surprise, plus I heard that there's some black-tie event that will be taking place tomorrow night, and it's strictly invitation. Shame, if only he knew that some of us don't even need invitations to make ourselves present in these events of theirs., I'll be doing this for Maxine, and all the girls that died at the hands of Nikolai. All the girls that are there will be free from all that torturing that Nikolai puts them through every day.

Then, You are next in line, sunshine, that I can assure you. I tap my fingers in Tsakani's back in my mind, I'm already planning on how I'm going to kill her. I face out the window and watch the night sky and it's a very beautiful sight to witness.

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{It's a bit long}

LUXOLO

I step out of the shower when I hear the doorbell ringing, I'm sure Tsakani is in deep sleep. I'm happy that for the first time in like forever he finally managed to get some peaceful sleep. No moaning, or waking up in the middle of the night drenched in sweat, this place is indeed mind calming. I grab one of the robes that were sprawled on top of the couch, I tighten it as I open the door, and it's room service.

“Thank you. I will dial you once done eating,” she slightly nods and pivots around, I close the door and wake Tsakani up, it's almost 09:15 am. He growls and covers himself with the sheet as I'm jumping on top of the bed waking him up.

“Wake up sleepy head. Breakfast is ready, and remember, we are going sightseeing today, get up toe.”

“Fuck, bubbles! I'm still sleeping, I don't remember when was the last time I had some peaceful sleep,” he says sitting upright rubbing his face, and throwing his dreadlocks behind him. The beard needs to be trimmed it looks unruly. “What are we having for breakfast?”

Me: “How about you go and brush your teeth first, then we will find out what they've prepared. I told them not to prepare us fancy weird food, but normal food.”

Him: “What's their normal food here?” He balances his elbows in his thighs, and put both his hands in his cheeks then pouts a little, looking all gay, a muscular gay that is. I chuckle. “What? What is it?”

Me: “Nothing,” I close my eyes and pinch the bridge of my nose. “Just go and brush your teeth before the food gets cold.”

Him: "Right." He gets off the bed and saunter to the shower. I make the bed so long then I will look for something to wear for both of us, the weather it's a little bit chilly on this side, and it looks like it might rain later on. Even if it rains, Nikolai will still die plus vele bathi rain is a blessing, and in this case, it means that his death has been blessed already.

In no time we are out of the hotel in our matching outfit he actually insisted that we wear the same clothes, and paint Milan black with a touch of blue. Our first stop is at The Grand Canal in Venice. The largest and most famous of these waterways, cutting a wide S-shaped route through the city. The is grandest of palaces once owned by the wealthiest and most powerful families of the Venetian Republic, the buildings are extremely ancient though, but beautiful. The boat is a little uncomfortable for me, I'd rather be in a car or airplane than here, plus I'm not a fan of vast waters.

"Beautiful. I think we should move down here," Tsakani notifies me.

"Huh? With whom?" I look at him.

Him: "Us. And possibly with our kids in the future."

Me: "What? I ain't leaving South Africa. That country is lit, imagine missing out on all the fun there and the jokes they formulate in serious situations? Like, my love, it can never be me shame."

Him: "So, you don't want us to start a new life in a different world?"

Me: "Nope. They don't even sell kotas or bunny chows here, and they don't have chesanyamas and heck! They don't even know what pineapple is." He laughs. "You know I'm right though," he continues laughing and I just ignore him, and watch the view.

Him: "Now that you've mentioned it, I wouldn't trade South Africa for anything. We've even fought for that country, and that will be a good history for our kids in the future."

Her: "Exactly. We can always come here for holidays."

Him: "Great. Who would've thought that one day I'll find myself here in Italy?"

Me: "No one."

Him: "After all it's said & done I think we need to tour the world. What do you think?"

Me: "That was forever on top of my bucket list," he nods.

Once done cruising The Grand canal, we found ourselves on the Amalfi Coast. A breathtaking site, Hillside towns are built precariously along the steep mountainsides that cascade down to the sea. The main towns along here are Positano and Amalfi, with their colorful domed cathedral. At least here we are touring the coast by using an Uber, our tour guide is the best shame. The walking paths stretch all along the coast, the most breathtaking scenery for us is the Sentiero Degli Dei, Footpath of the Gods, at the western end from Positano.

Vatican City the place with most of the world's priceless arts and poignant works of Pieta was next. The Uffizi Gallery, a building that contains an art museum followed afterward. Roman Forum, Cinque Terre tarrail, hiking in Gola Su Gorropu all visited. And our last stop after all the sightseeing we did is at Trattoria Trippa a famous Italian restaurant, and the reviews were promising, and now we are here to feed our curiosity taste buds.

The waiter gives us our menus, and the names of the food are so foreign as I browse the menu. The only thing I can say I'm familiar with is the chocolate cake, as for bo fried tripes and the others ku dark.

“Fried tripes?” I laugh nodding as Tsakani questions. “Tripe as in Umgodu godu?” He sounds taken aback by that, and so am I.

“And look at how nasty your prawns look, sies.”

Him: "Are you sure that we are in the right restaurant?" I laugh out loud not caring about the people around us. "I think we should leave, bubbles. There's no way I'm eating here."

Me: "No. We are not leaving. We will just order Risotto with Tostitos, this one tastes better I once tasted it."

Him: "Hope I won't regret this."

Me: "You won't trust me." I wave my hand at the waiter to attend us. "And for dessert, we can have Tiramisu."

Him: "We should've just looked for a pizza place or something, and besides we are not dressed for the part. See how elegant everyone is looking?" I scan my eyes around, and people are wearing suits & dresses. But then again, if they didn't want us here they wouldn't have let us in right? Yeah, that's just about it. Clearly, everyone is welcomed here. "You see?"

Me: "I do, and the owner doesn't seem to have a problem with us eating here. We are different from all these people here,

they may look at us weirdly but the curiosity lingers in their eyes, they want to know the story behind us.”

Him: “So, we are basically celebrities around here?”

Me: “More like aliens,” he snickers, and I tilt my head giving him a one-shoulder shrug.

Him: “Hmmm,” our food arrives, and we dig in. “It doesn't taste that bad, I'm actually enjoying it.”

Me: “I told you.”

Him: “But it's such a small portion.”

Me: “I know. We will grab burgers in some burger joint that Milan told me about, she said the burgers there are the best!”

Him: “Now you are talking,” we continue eating over a light conversation.

The black-tie event starts at 19:00, and it's only 15:00, we still have some time, but not much because we still need to go and fetch our attire for the night in the nearest boutique. I have no doubts that the girls will be locked in that stuffy commune, I must also find a way to free them, and they better fucking go bizarre in that event. All those rich fuckers must suffer, and feel the wrath of these girls, and the building must be shut down after that and never to be used again. Or possibly being changed into some sort of youth rehabilitation center or something that will benefit the community too. We are still going to use the underground route, and we also need to deactivate the cameras once we get there.



VUYO

I don't know why, or what I did, but God is coming through for me in just a short period of time. He is proving to me continuously about how great he is, and his promises are always yes & amen. Last night as I was preparing to retire to bed when I received a call from my uncle's wife, Brenda. She told me where I can find my sister, but in order for me to meet with her, I will have to book an appointment to see her, according to my aunt this sister of mine is a very busy woman, and detest being distracted by random people, and she's not quite a people's person. I wonder what is her line of work, and

if she works with people; how does she deal with them?
Anyway, Brenda promised that she will send me her numbers once she's spoken to her, and asked for her permission and if she's okay meeting up with me. Hmm, I don't know, but I'm kind of nervous I don't even know why because she didn't even agree to meet with me yet. What if she refused to meet up with me? Sighs. Let me not think much about it, but rather practice what I'm going to say to her.

“Kwanyiwa,” Dineo, says stepping inside the kitchen startling me. She laughs. “Sorry for scaring you, but I'm here for Yezwe's bottle I've been waiting for it for over 20 minutes now,” she stares at me, arms in front of her.

“Sorry, I was lost in thoughts,” I hand her the bottle.

Her: “Thinking about your sister?” I nod sitting down. “I thought I told to not stop worrying, everything will go just fine.

Sometimes you worry about nothing, and if she refuses to meet up with you, it'd still be okay because you would've tried your best to meet up with her, and tried making things right. It will all be on her, and not you. Relax, and allow God to work on your behalf.”

Me: “Thank you. I don't know what I would've done if it wasn't for you, thank you.”

Her: “You don't have to thank me. It is my duty to make sure that you are always in good spirits, that's what I'm here for. Let me go and feed Yezwe before he starts wailing, and don't worry, your aunt will come back with good news.” She kisses my forehead, and saunters away.

I look at my phone, and still nothing from Brenda. Guess I will just have to be patient, and be positive as my fiancé said. The kids are both at school, so I have nothing to do really, and Dineo will sleep once done feeding Yezwe. Soccer it is then...



TSAKANI

Our attire is all set in our suit covers, and we are ready to hit the road. I trimmed my beard as bubbles suggested and plaited my locks. Bubbles got a new style plus the makeup artist did a wonderful job with her face. She looks really beautiful. I'm in love, well, I'm always in love with her over and over again. I pick our suit covers while she picks up the backpack containing our clothes that we are going to wear once out of here, we can't leave this hotel looking suspicious they might call the police on us. And the backpack also contains some weapons.

“Let's cruise,” she throws the backpack on her back and steps out of the room, I follow her shortly. Once outside her phone rings. “South African number, I wonder who is it. Hello?” She answers putting the phone on the loudspeaker.

“Hey, Tammy. It's me.” That's Lindiwe's voice and she sounds down.

“Hey, me. What's up?”

Her: “I told him, Tammy.”

Bubbles: “What? And what did he say?”

Her: “He just left without saying anything to me. I don't even know where he went to, I'm stressed Tammy. What if he breaks up with me?”

Bubbles: "Calm down Lindiwe. He's still in shock, he will come around. Lee, he loves you Lindiwe and I don't think he will break up with you just give him some time he will come around. At least the truth is finally out you will no longer have to hide anymore."

Her: "I guess you are right, and to tell you the truth I'm relieved that I finally told him the truth, and I can be myself again without having to worry. Urh...m, there's only one hiccup though."

Bubbles: "What is it?"

Her: "The guys & Milan, don't know about them finding out about this I don't even want to see how they are going to react once they learn the truth. I wish I can get swallowed by the ground, or disappear into thin air," bubbles laugh. "Especially TK's expression," bubbles look at me.

Bubbles: "Don't worry about him, I will fill him in."

Her: "He better not faint. Guess I'll have to tell Milan because I'm sure that Leon knows by now, anyway, let me not keep you. I will dial you later."

Bubbles: "Cool, and don't worry about Lee, he will come back to his senses."

Her: "Hopefully, bye and pass my greetings to TK."

Bubbles: "I will, love you."

Her: "Love you too." She hangs up, and bubbles turn to look at me.

Me: "And?"

Her: "I will tell you everything once we are done with this mission that we are embarking on."

Me: "I'll remind you." She nods. I wonder what's the reveal.

The passage is dark, but not too dark since our torches are providing light for us, and lanterns are surrounding the walls even though their brightness is not that bright, it's dim. Bubbles open something like a lid just above her head after we've climbed the ladder. The first thing my eyes lands on is the piece of gold that's near the secret door or something. My mouth hangs open as I take in the sight before me after bubbles switched on the light, gold is covering this place, there are no windows here, just golds covering the whole wall. Damn, if I can get my hands on these I'll be a fucking billionaire! Wait, there's also no door here, geez. This person really hid his treasures well.

Me: “Bubbles, are all these real?” I touch some of them.

Her: “Yes. And here we have diamonds,” she gestures to the long cabinet, there's actually 2 of them. She yanks the door open and my mouth once again drops to the floor as I see millions of diamonds glimmering. “We will be back for them later on, wear your mask I don't want you throwing up.”

Me: “Throwing up? I'm a big boy bubbles, nothing makes me squeamish,” she chuckles then shrugs her shoulders. “I'm for real.”

Her: “If you say so.” She puts on her mask, and nods for me to follow after her. She climbs the ladder after switching off the lights. Nausea bubbles from up from my stomach, to my throat, out of my mouth, and onto the pile of rotten bodies on the floor as the smell hit my nose. I can hear bubbles chuckling as I spew everything that I've eaten. Yaxis, the smell is very terrible! I search for my mask in my pocket and put it on, the sight alone is nauseating I've never seen a lot of bodies before. “Yah clever,” she giggles.

Me: “Nx.”

Her: “Shhh, they are bringing a fresh corpse steady yourself,” I nod. The door clicks as the one behind it unlocks it, the door opens and the guard steps in dragging a body. “Psss,” the guard turns to look in the direction that voice came from, but he was a little bit late because I was already behind him in one quick motion covering his mouth, the okapi in my hand makes its way

to his neck, I push it in, and he bellows I let go of her as he slumps to the floor. “Good job.”

Me: “Let's just get out of here.”

Her: “Scared that you might throw up again?” She chuckles.

Me: “Shut the hell up!” We step out of the dead body room, I'm not coming back here. The guard's uniform is my perfect fit, great. We walk the passage as cars keep coming in after they've done some security check. Bubbles, knows this place like the back of her hand. We weave passages, and in no time we are inside this enormous building we can hear muffled noise from here.

Her: “Go and check his room, and I will check his office,” I nod, then we part ways I still remember the directions she told me to take once we got here. I pass some of the food servers, couples stepping inside heading to that other room, guards milling around clearly not expecting anything to happen tonight.

I find the room, turn down the handle, step inside and search for him, but nothing. He's not here, guess he's in his office. Let me go, I don't want to miss the show that bubbles is going to put for Nikolai.



LUXOLO

I can hear voices inside his office, he's with someone, a woman to be exact I'm sure it's one of the girls that they torture here, he wants to release before the event starts. I place my hand on the doorknob, and pull it down then push it open, silent gun in my right hand. He doesn't see me, the girl grinding him is obstructing his view. He is still a piece of shit. I clear my throat, and the girl leaps up from him and scurry to the corner, her body is underweight. Nikolai, narrows his eyes trying to make out who am I, upon realizing who am I his eyes go wide in shock as if he just saw a ghost or something.

“T- guns?” I flash him a smile nodding. “What the hell are you doing here?” I discern him as he puts his hand under the table.

“Don't even think about it.” I shoot him on his shoulder and he groans.

Him: “What the fuck? Are you crazy!”

Me: "That's my middle name. How do you like me now?"

Him: "Ho- how did gain entrance here? All the gates are secured, and you don't look like someone who got an invitation." He's annoyed.

Me: "I know. I saw it as a good thing to invite myself since I didn't get my invitation, but not to worry I'm here now."

Him: "Why are you here? Thought you died in that fucking war!"

Me: "Well, I survived." I shoot him on his other shoulder, and he groans again, the girl yelps. I turn to the girl. "Can you shut up for a few seconds? You are annoying me," she quickly nods. "Good."

Him: "What the fuck are you doing here?"

Me: "To visit you."

Him: "You better leave right now before my guards come here, you know how quickly they react when they don't see me for more than 10 minutes."

"You mean those fuckers out there? Don't worry yourself about them, they are too occupied, and by the look of things they will be for quite some time." Nikolai tilts his head, and stare at him. "Oh, my bad. I'm TK, bubbles boyfriend." He looks at me, then at Tsakani, and back at me.

Him: "I don't care who the hell you are! What the fuck do you mean by 'they are too occupied?'"

Tsakani: "The girls are going wild out there on them, it's like a jungle."

Him: "What?" He attempts to get up, but the pain in his shoulders is humbling him. "What the fuck did you do you son of a bitch!" He bangs the table freaking out the little girl.

Tk: "I'm sure you were not planning to keep them on that stuffy room while there's some event taking place right? I mean, that would be very heartless of you to shut them out. To tell you the truth, they seem very happy to be out there, and after keeping your boys busy they are going to the hall, imagine how traumatized those guests of yours are going to be."

Him: "Fuck you, man! Do you have any idea what you've done? Do you!" I laugh, now I understand why he's mad, some of the girls' parents are here they are part of the guests, I'm all for his insolence because wow!

Me: "Ahh, now I understand why you are indignant. You are scared that those guests of yours will see their bruised, underweight, broken, ruined daughters who suffered in your hands. You are very cruel. Furthermore, you invited all these rich people to this event of yours, the very same people whom you have their daughters captured & tortured. Killing you is going to be easy, so, why don't I just let the very same girls you've tortured kill you themselves. Oh, and I'll be taking all those golds & diamonds because you will no longer need them."

Him: "Fuck you!"

Me: "It takes two," I throw my gun on top of the table where he can't reach it, but I'm very confident that the girl will use it on him, I saw how she eyed it. "We are going to use your private jet to transport all the gold & diamonds you are keeping here then I'll notify the police afterward, stay well, but before we leave just allow us to change into our outfits that correspond with the event."

It doesn't take us long to change into our formal outfit. We dispose of our clothes in the trash bin, and Tsakani sets them alight.

Me: "May your soul rest in fucking pieces!" I spit on the marble floor.

Tsakani: "And no one will miss you," he takes my hand into his and as we step out of his office, the girl arises from the floor abruptly and head to the table where the gun is placed.

The girls still haven't invaded the hall yet as people are still mingling and beverages being served. Tsakani takes two cocktails from the waiter that was passing by.

Him: "It's only a matter of time before they grace us with their presence," I nod as we continue walking in further getting lost in the crowd heading to the emergency exit without being seen. The door on the other side pushes open immediately as we descend the stairs, and lots of screaming follows after... Done & Dusted.

EPILOGUE

TSAKANI

We are back in South Africa after spending some time in Italy for a couple of days, we didn't leave right away after giving Nikolai a visit, but we stayed some more. The gold & the diamonds are in our position, we didn't take all the gold though, but we sure did took all the diamonds. The police were notified, some of the girls went back home with their parents, some refused, and some decided to start a female gang just to terrorize the male species only because of what they've gone through, plus the guards were sexually abusing them too, so imagine the animosity they harbor in their hearts. I pity for all those innocent men who will feel their wrath.

The unexpected vacation really helped me a lot, I can now sleep peacefully without waking up in the middle of the night and stare in space, I guess I needed it. Leon & Lee might take one too. I'm no longer that hurt about Talon & Batista's death, I can feel that I'm coming back to my old self, and I'm content. Bubbles is really one in a million, speaking of her, she's out taking care of something, I wonder what that something is because she refused to tell me. Oh, well, talk about “we don't

hide anything from each other.” Lee, finally accepted Lindiwe or should I say Nandi for whom she really is after she explained to him how she came about using someone else's identity, after all the “pussy is still real.” His words, not mine. So nothing has really changed except that he must now familiarize himself with her new revelation, and so far he's doing an amazing job. And to tell you the truth, her true self is beautiful more than Lindiwe, but she still has nothing on my bubbles. Anyway, it all seemed real, the mask was not even noticeable. I was taken aback when I saw her because she looked really familiar, it was then that I realize that she's Grace's daughter, a former businesswoman/taxi queen/ mama gangster who was brutally killed after becoming homeless. Unlike bubbles and the others, she always sent people to do the job for her.

Sabelo, finally decided to go and see his father at the hospital, they spoke and forgave each other, unfortunately, his father passed away after seeing him, guess he knew that he will come very soon, and he decided to hold on. Now that he met him, it eased his heart because he knew that he will die peacefully and with a clear conscience even though they didn't get to spend some time together. Dakalo, refuses to meet up with his father after Hlulani contacted him, and told him about his existence. Mr. Mazibuko was shocked to find out that he actually has a

son and a daughter, a daughter who deserted her family to become a sex worker and getting free booze as if we can't afford to buy her booze, plus she could've gotten herself a boyfriend rather than having sex with multiple men every fucking day for money that she never gets, sies. Babalwa was really determined to raise all of her kids as a single parent, and she raised us well after all.

“All the material is here?” Lee, implores standing beside me. We are in a very secluded area, I'm here to build a house for all the gold & diamonds that we have in the house. Bubbles has some diamonds that she was given by her friend to keep for her, and unfortunately, that friend was caught and possibly got killed since she's nowhere to be found.

“Yeah, we just need to get the construction guys to start working immediately.”

Him: “I can ask them to start tomorrow morning.”

Me: “Very good. The sooner get done with this, the better for us all. So, they didn't ask questions?”

Him: “Nope. These ones do their job, you pay them, and you never see or hear from them again they are very professional and besides not everyone knows about them and their line of work. They do a lot more other than building,” I nod.

Me: “I'll take your word for it. Tell them to start building immediately.”

Him: “Right on it. Want to grab some beer?”

Me: “Sure. I can do with a bottle or two,” he clasped my shoulder, and we start walking away. Leon was supposed to tag along with us, but he had other commitments to tend to. So, he might meet us later on for some soccer match.



VUYO

My phone rings waking me up from the nap that I took unexpectedly as I was catching with work since I was behind

with the schedule. I pick up it from the computer table, and answer it rubbing my eyes I don't bother checking the number.

“Hello.” I yawn afterward.

“Hi. Is this Mr. Maraba?”

Me: “Yes, and you are?”

Her: “Who I am doesn't matter. Someone called me and told me that you wanted to meet up with me.”

Me: “Meet up with you?”

Her: “Yeah, they further claim that you say I'm your long-lost sister?” I sit upright when she says that, alarmed.

Me: “I don't claim. I saw some letters written for you and some pictures containing pictures of you and our father.”

Her: "Pictures? Maybe you are mistaking me for someone else I don't remember taking pictures with him either. My father, no wait, let me just say Ronald told me stra..."

Me: Cutting her short. "Ronald? That's my father's name. His full names are Ronald Jafta Maraba." I hear her gasp on the other end then some shuffling as if she's shifting or something.

Her: "S- so, you are... Urhm, where are you?"

Me: "Zamani. Zamani location."

Her: "Can we meet at Deli's in 30 minutes?"

Me: "Yes, yes, let's meet there," she hangs up before I can even ask her what she's wearing so that I will not look like a lost puppy when I get to Deli's.

I quickly empty the table, and hurry to my room I need to inform Dineo.

Me: "My love, guess what."

Her: "You've won a lotto?"

Me: "Much better than that. My sister called, and she wants us to meet at Deli's in 30 minutes," she squirms in excitement and I chuckle.

Her: "God is great. Now, what are you waiting for?"

Me: "I'm nervous. She sounds like a straight talker."

Her: "Just leave already, and don't be nervous I don't think she bites," she chuckles.

Me: "Yeah, right. Will you be okay by yourself?"

Her: "Yeah, besides, Nandi is on her way. Don't worry about me."

Me: "Okay." I kiss her forehead and step out of the room. I'm really nervous about this meetup, I don't know why because I was anticipating for it to come. But now, I feel like backing out. Sighs, let me just go and meet her, and see how it goes.

25 minutes later I'm at Deli's sitting alone so that she can spot me when she comes, there others are in groups while some are just couples. My palms are sweating and rubbing them on my jeans is not helping, and the shaking of my knee underneath the table doesn't help either, I'm a mess. I don't remember when was the last time I was this nervous. I keep glancing at the gate and people are coming in and going out, still no sign of her. Well, it's not as if like I know her of something.

"Good day sir. Would I like to order?"

"No. I'm okay, thank you." He nods, and about to leave when another voice comes behind him.

“2 soda water, you are excused.” Rude. She's standing before me and I didn't even notice when she stepped inside the yard, yet, I was looking at the gate all this while. She's nothing like what I was expecting her to be. Yoh, she has tattoos covering her arms, neck, ear piercings, and dark sunglasses she screams gangster even her outfit is confirming that. “Vuyo, right?” She settles down. I quickly nod.

Me: “And you must be Luxolo.” I thought that my voice was going to fail me, but to my surprise, it didn't. Yet, I'm still nervous.

Her: “Correct. Can you relax and stop being giddy. Don't tell me that you are nervous. A grown man like you nervous? Funny, but not.” I swallow at absolutely nothing. “Anyway, can you show me the letters and pictures?” Straight to the point.

Me: “Hold on a sec.” I take them out from my pocket, and place them on top of the table.

Her: "Let's see," she firstly starts by checking the pictures.
"Well, I looked cute here, no, I still am cute. Don't you think?"

Me: "Yeah, you are cute."

Her: "You are not bad yourself. I also had a picture like this, but I lost it when Nomalanga took me to her friend, or she stole it, I don't know. Anyway, where were you when I came to see your father once upon a time, and he turned me away making it clear that he doesn't want anything to do with me, and I must stop bothering them?" Wow, that doesn't sound like my father at all this is new to me.

Me: "I was in my house, and no one told me that you came to visit."

Her: "That's because they didn't find it important to tell you."

Me: "That's bad."

Her: "It matters not anymore. I've moved past that, at least I will get to know about him through you. You know, firstly I was reintroduced to my mother whom I last saw years ago, and I also got to learn that I have a little badass kicking sister who was named after me. Then, now, I'm getting introduced to you, it's like God is trying to tell me something, it's creepy. See, I grew up taking my husband, and my kids as a family. They were there only people I had and known, oh, and some of the girls I met along the way, they became part of my family."

Me: "God works mysteriously. Well, my story goes like..." she's stunned after telling her about my life, and I told her about Nandi.

We've been talking for hours now, and she's such a good person. Oh, and she's ready to give her mother a chance again, I told her about the importance of family, at least her mother is alive and willing to make up for the lost time. We even discussed a cleansing ceremony that we need to do. My life is complete, and I'm grateful for everything. I only wish for a peaceful relationship filled with love between all of us. Patience is a virtue, and God's timing is the best.

My name is Vuyo Maraba

and this was my story. I hope you've learned something from it.
See you on the other side...

LUXOLO

The club is not that busy as per se, but I find it quite strange that it's not packed, and it's almost 19:00 in the evening, usually around this time clubs are almost packed. This place is dry honestly even the bouncers here are not doing their job, sighs. I ascend the stairs and saunter straight to her office as directed by one of the bouncers, I told them that I'm here for business, she's expecting me, but they didn't even double-check with her, incompetence. There are guards here, she's clearly relaxed. I knock once, and she yells for me to come in, I push the door open and her body tenses when she sees me. Unlike Nikolai, her instinct alarms her to react immediately, and the gun is already in her hand aiming at me.

“What are you doing here?” Her voice is steady, I like.

“I came in peace,” raising my hands.

Her: “Don't bullshit me! Peace is not in your parlance, Tammy. What the fuck do you want here?”

Me: “Well,” I pull the free chair and sit down, my right leg placed on my thigh. “So, tell me here; why were you trying to sabotage my club? Who gave me the freedom to tell my boys

not to work? Who again, gave you the fucking freedom to sponsor them with bhev hindering them from doing their job?" My mouth twitches.

Her: "Wh- what are you talking about?"

Me: "You know what I'm talking about, don't make me a fool, Adele. You are too pretty to act dumb."

Her: "Leave my office at this instant before I blow your brains out, Tammy!"

Me: "I just want answers, that's all. There's no need for you to be violent or threaten to kill me," I sigh. I'm sure she's dumbfounded by my calm manner, if only she knew that her wall office will soon be spattered with her blood.

Her: "Fuck, Tammy. What game are you playing at?"

Me: "I just want answers then I leave, I'm not here to fight. We are both club owners, there's no need for bad blood between us. Just give me the answers I need." I sneer, and she chuckles.

Her: "I don't have any answers for you, Tammy. Now leave!" I nod, I withdraw the short sword that was hidden in my boots, and press it hard in my hand. "Leave!"

Me: "Fine." I push the chair back, and get up from the chair. "But I'll be back."

Her: "You won't. Leave and never come back here or else I will kill you, I'm not bluffing, Tammy Guns." She puts her gun on top of the table letting her guard down, perfect. I walk towards the door yanking it open, I tilt my head and watch her as she sits down not glancing at me.

Me: "Hey, Adele." She lifts her head and looks at me. "Rest in fucking pieces!" Before she can even comprehend what's happening, the short sword it's already making its way to her neck. She gasps as it lodges straight in her throat, she bellows like a dying cow, and blood gushes out of her throat. I step out banging the door behind me, by the time they realize that she's dead it will be too late. Signed, sealed, and delivered...

ONE YEAR LATER

"I still don't understand as to why you chose a black dress out of all the dress," Milan complains as she zips up my dress. Today is my big day, I'm finally getting married to the man of my dreams, and I'm 4 months pregnant, but I haven't told him yet, I want it to be a surprise.

"I love the color, and besides everyone gets married in a white dress, so, why don't I be unique?"

Her: "Fine. But a white dress would've suited you, anyway, it's just my observation."

“I think the dress is perfect, she's dark too and has a dark soul, it fits her character perfectly,” Biggie says stepping inside the make-up room. “Hey, girls.” See, biggie and Nomalanga made peace months ago, their bond is too strong, and I also got introduced to biggie's brother such a cool dude he is, not forgetting his humble and God-fearing wife Dineo, together with their beautiful kids. Let me just say we are one big happy family.

Me: “Thank you, biggie.”

Her: “You are welcome. And where's your maid of honor?”

“I'm here. I was making sure that everything is set you know how incompetent people are, I detest last-minute hiccups. So far, everything is going great.” Lindiwe says stepping inside the room too panting.

Me: “Perfect.”

Her: “Are you ready?”

Me: “I've been ready the very first time my eyes laid on him. Hahaha, I'm kidding.”

Biggie: “You are not kidding smallie.”

Me: “Of course, I'm not.”

Milan: "I'm so happy for you, Tammy."

Me: "Thank you, baby. Who knows, you might be next in line."

Her: Laughing. "Chile, I'm never getting married."

Biggie: "What if Leon wants marriage?" Yeah, they are a couple now, no more bofebe zonke zihamba ngo layini.

Her: "It's a mutual agreement. He doesn't want marriage too, but we do want kids, lots and lots of kids!" We all laugh.

Lindiwe: "Girl, raising a baby ain't no child's play."

Biggie: "Don't worry, smallie here will tell you how the experiment it's like."

Milan: "Whoa, wait. Is she...? She looks at me. "Are you?" I nod. They scream in excitement.

Lindiwe: Hugging me. “Congratulations baby, but why did you not tell us sooner?” She breaks the hug, and moves her eyes to my stomach with a smile plastered on her face.

Me: “I was going to tell you after the wedding, I wanted to surprise you but biggie here just couldn't keep her mouth shut.”

Milan: “She did good, and I'm a Godmother no arguments.”

Biggie: “You wish. I'm his/her Godmother wena!” They go back and forth arguing about whose going to be a Godmother and why. Lindiwe is in stitches with laughter.

I'm looking at myself in the mirror and smile. Ndimhle maarn, ndiyanyisa. Who would've thought that one day I'll walk down the aisle with the man I love? Marriage was something I've never dreamed of or wanted, but look at me now. I'm going to be someone's wife, Mrs. Ngubeni to be, and a mother to be it all feels surreal, but I'm so fucking happy, no lies detected there. Dear God, I'm grateful. I close my eyes and take it all in.

It's happening, and I know that nothing will disrupt us. Rumor is that Sanele has relocated to America to pursue his law career he actually needed a clean slate. The best decision he took ever since he was born.

The soft knock at the door is what brings a halt to the bickering of biggie & Milan. Lindiwe, attends the door and Tsakani's mother is standing there looking all nervous. This is actually my first time after the lobola I get to be in the same room as her.

Me: "You can come in."

Biggie: "We will be right outside," I nod and they step out of the room giving us space.

Babalwa: "You look beautiful."

Me: "Thank you." We are looking at each other through the mirror.

Her: "Well, I'd like to apologize for how I've treated you and your mother the past year. Guess, I was still a bitter woman who never wanted to let go of the past. But I know better now, I truly am sorry."

Me: "Forgiven." Honestly, I have no time to hate on Babalwa I have far more important things to worry about.

Her: "Thank you. And thank you for loving my son with all his flaws." A smile breaks out from my lips, and I see her smile too. "I wish you all the best in your marriage, may God bless it, and may death be the only thing that separates the two of you."

Me: "Thank you so much, and we receive."

Her: "Hug?" I get up from the chair and we hug. "I love you," she whispers.

Me: "Me too." We break the hug when my father clears his throat. Oh, he & Nomalanga decided to give love a chance. Wonder's of the world.

“Ready?” He implores. I nod picking up my black roses on the bed, the theme is all black. He takes my arm, and links it to his elbow. I breathe out and we head to the venue. Milan & Nandi are my bridesmaids.

They rise from their seats when the music starts playing “kukhala sakho sginci x Sjava & Mdu.” It's the song that walks me down the aisle, there aren't many guests just family & close friends. My husband is looking beautiful in his three-piece black tuxedo, dreads plaited upwards, shaved yazini let me just say he's God himself, don't argue with me. The tears veiling his eyes are impossible to miss, this man you guys. I love him. My father offers me to him, I smile when I see him threatening Tsakani, jokingly though.

“You are looking beautiful,” he whispers in my ear making me blush.

“And you are handsome as fuck,” he winks, and we look at the pastor.

Him: “Wosh ebandleni.” Spikes is the one marrying us, I don't know what Tsakani was thinking when he hired him. Oh, but wait. We are having a unique wedding after all. “Gintsa no Gintsakazi ingani le namba bo kleva. Niyafathafatha?”

(Gangster & gangsteress today is all about you. Are you saying your vows) Spikes has just woken up Talon from the dead, he's tsotsi taal is on point, but he will never replace him, yet we will still see him in Spikes.

“Igazi nge gazi. Inhlavu nes'bhamu, ngeyami neyakho mina ngithi size sihlukaniwe isibhodi.” (Blood for blood. Bullet & gun. Mine & yours till death do us part) I giggle, I'm sure the elders are confused af, Milan, too.

“Inombolo iyaphikamiswa. Igazi lachitheka. Mina ngingo wakho wena ungowami. Is'gwebo sethu is'bhodi.” (The number has been raised. Blood was spilled. I am yours and you are mine. Our sentence is death)

Him: “Ngiyazisha ngawe.” (I love you)

Me: “Umlilo uyavutha.” (I love you too)

Spikes: "Iphakeme inombolo. Amathe e mathane." (The number has been lifted. You can now kiss each other) Tsakani lifts the veil, cups my cheeks, and smash his lips unto mine, my arms wrap around his neck.

Spikes close the ceremony after speeches were exchanged with umthandazo wabo love. I can't get over my diamond ring, I'm obsessed. And now for our first dance

Tsakani: "I can't believe that you are officially y mine."

Me: "You best believe it, and there's something I want to tell you."

Him: "What is it?"

Me: "A mini bullet is on the way."

Him: "Wait, what?" He takes a step back and looks at my tummy. "We are going to be parents?" I nod. "Yes!" He screams picking me up, thanks to the music not everyone heard him scream except for the ones next to us who are minding their own. "Thank you, bubbles. I love you."

Me: "I'm just happy that I'm the first & last woman man to carry your seed. I love you too."

Him: "To forever and more kids," I laugh, and bury my head on his chest, I'm content.

.....**The End**.....

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