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## One

A Year Later

SWAZI

"HAMBA NO JESU!! HAMBA NO JESU, INDLELA YONKE!! HAMBA NO JESU, HAMBA NO JESU NJALO!!"

I wake up painting for air, sweats cascading down my face. My body hot as if it's on fire, Tears blinding my vision and my heart throbbing in pain.

My hands slowly find my chest and hold on to it for dear life, hoping that if I just press harder, the pain in my heart might just vanish

But I still feel it

The immense pain swamping all of me

I can still hear the heart-rending chorus, ringing in my ears,  
cutting through my veins and crashing my world into million  
pieces

The sorrowful cries of his schoolmates,

His father and brothers

I still see myself

Standing, no tears shedding

No voice to apologize

I brought them into their lives

My brothers...

And for that I'll never be happy

For as long as I live

Misery, sorrow and darkness will be my everyday meal

I deserve it

Phikelela was such a good soul, he didn't deserve what  
happened to him. He was too young, too bright and had a lot to

live for but instead his life was cut short by none other than, my so-called family

I quickly wipe the tears and run to the nursery as his cries fill up the entire house.

This boy can cry a river and still have the energy to suck thumb.

I find him sucking his thumb, his tiny feet dangling up and down.

I pick him, rush to the kitchen to make his formula. I couldn't keep breastfeeding while I'm still working so I stopped breastfeeding him.

A While later he is in a good mood. Instead of sleeping his eyes are moving around and I know it's one of those nights where he is just on a mission to drive me crazy. It's going to be a long night for me.

I love this little guy but sometimes he just sucks out my whole energy

My heart warms up as he softly giggles, now I should put away my sleep and focus on him. I wouldn't trade him for anything though, he is my superhuman.

My son, my hope. My reason for being.

I hear his footsteps before I can see him. He enters the kitchen and stand before us smiling.

“I heard him crying, is he okay?”

“yes, he just wanted his favorite meal” I say. He chuckles and take his son to his arms.

Our Sbanisethu Zulu

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I hate working on Sundays! But I've I have no choice, the boss called, and I answered I'm pacing up and down making sure that I've put everything I'll need for the day.

Sis Pam comes in

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Sbani fast asleep in her arms. Little betrayer, he kept me awake almost the whole night and now he is asleep.

"Sisi" she says

"I'm in a rush Pam, you'll call me if you need anything"

I grab the apple, peck his tiny mouth and rush to the Garage and drive out.

Checking the time on my wristwatch, I'm 20 minutes late! Oh Jesus!

I park like a lunatic as I reach the parking lot and rush to my office.

My phone has about 6 missed calls, I'll call them later. I have a busy day ahead.

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My phone is ringing again, it's Mthunzi. I left him fast asleep at home

"Mama ka Sbani" he says

"Baba ka Sbani"

Through the toughest time, God still blessed us with a healthy baby boy

"Are you okay?"

He's always asking this question. The answer is still the same

"You know I'll never be okay Mthunzi"

He sighs

"Please come back early today. I've got plans for us"

"I will"

"I love you Swazelihle. Just always remember that"

I drop the call and blink tears away. It hurts, I wish I had been there, maybe I would have stopped everything.

We no longer live in Eshowe. After the tragic death of Phikelela I couldn't face his family. I'm the one who brought my crazy brothers into their lives and that alone made me feel like I was responsible for it all

Mthunzi is such a loving husband, but he can't help me this time. No one can.

We now live in Kwamashu N section, Mthunzi works at a Private Hospital in Glenwood, Jones and Jonas Private Hospital.

While I work in Boston Holdings, in Bridge City.

My life is just that, I leave Sbani with the nanny, sis Pam and bury myself to work. I make sure to spend my weekends and off days with him...

but today I'm on overtime

Mthunzi is forever busy, he is forever being called even when it's not his shift, I'm not complaining though.

I'm just glad he took me away from his family. I could see it in their eyes that they blamed me, and I blame myself too

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LIFE ST JOSEPH'S PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL



The gates open, she comes out and stands still letting the sea breeze hit her face. Jessica Jones, a tall colored woman with a hypnotizing beauty

Her father gets out of the car approaching her with a proud smile

"jy het dit gemaak my dodo (you've made it) " he says engulfing her in a warm tight hug

"Ek het vir jou gesê om my te vertrou pappa (I told you to trust me)"

Jessica's eyes are glued outside the window, taking it all in. It's been more than 10 years since she was casted inside the psychiatric Hospital

"a lot has changed" she remarks

"the world keeps on changing my dodo". Says her father..

"How is Angeline, she hardly visited me"she asks

"fine"

Silence

"Jewel.." she's never bothered to ask this question before

"Angeline has a big heart. They are fine"

A long sigh of relief takes over her

"She will need her father one day" she blurts

"NO! she won't" Jackson Jones, her father irritably utters " have you heard from.. From him?".

"He is married, Jessica. forget about him"

Brushing her long black hair she looks out the window thinking..

Two

Swazi

How did life changed for the worst so suddenly, I feel trapped in an unending torture and no matter how Mthunzi tries, my skeptical mind still wakes up in hope that I'd see Phikelela walking through the door, dissing me and making me laugh at the same time

It's surreal, my life is surrounded by bad luck and there is nothing I can do but sink deeper and deeper.

I'm woken up by a soft pat, it's my boss Mr. Boston standing in front of me. I'm so embarrassed right now

"Sir.. I'm sorry I might have dozed off while working on the paperwork"

He shakes his head dissatisfied, I face down, wiping my sleepy eyes

"this is not how it should, I expect that paperwork on my desk first thing in the morning"

He is such a strict old man

"will do sir"

He leaves and I quickly start working

There's a soft knock at the door

"Swazelihle" I quickly stand up and meet him halfway

"What are you doing here? I'm still busy with work Mthunzi and you know Mr. Boston doesn't want me to bring my family at work"

He doesn't say anything, just staring at me until I give in and sigh

" I had plans for us" he sadly says

Flip, totally forgot. I feel bad

"I'm sorry, I lost track of time"

Checking the time on the wall, It's after 1 pm already. I quickly take my belongings and follow Mthunzi. Sbani might be going crazy wherever he is, he needs me

Reaching home, the first thing I do is to take my baby into my arms and feed him.

When I'm done, I bath him then put him to bed. He falls asleep immediately

I find Mthunzi watching soccer in the living room

"Are you not on the night shift today?"

I ask, seeing that its approaching four in the evening and he is way too relaxed

"if you actually pay attention when I speak, you'd know that I'm on day shifts as of tomorrow"

I claw the back of my neck shamefully

"Do you need anything to eat ? I can make anything you want"

"No"

My heart sinks deeper. I might be sinking in my own pit but he is still the man that I love. And I want him to be okay, even when I'm not

"Aw"

He stands up and come to me

"I want you Swazelihle"

I'm a bit confused

"But I'm here"

He stares at me deeply

"I want the woman I fell in love with. The Swazelihle that shouts, scream and laugh at my stupid jokes. I miss my friend in you, I miss you. I miss us"

I drop my gaze

"I made a mistake by allowing you to work, I thought It will help you deal with everything but you seem to be slipping further and further away... Tell me what I need to do to get my wife back"

He sounds desperate and broken

I feel his hands lifting my chin

"Since you gave birth, we haven't even been intimate Swazelihle. What's happening to us, talk to me"

I feel tears threatening my eyes

"I don't know how to go on.."

They roll down my face and I don't bother to wipe them

".. .. It feels wrong to go on without him...".

He engulfs me in a warm hug, and I let it out

"I'm here, I'll always be here"

He keeps on repeating the same words patting my back and I cry even more.

I've calmed down as he leads me to the bedroom. We get in bed and I've rested on my favorite pillow

Advertisement

his chest and he holds me tight reminding me that he will always be here "let's take a nap, we'll go out some other time"  
I guess he wanted to take me out

\*\*

Time reads 9:50 am, the loud wailing of Sbani grabs my attention.

It's another day! And again, I'm late. I'm not going to work at all. I rush out looking for the crying baby of mine. I can't believe I slept that long, I haven't had such a good sleep in a long time.

I find Pam shushing him and I take him

"Come on boy boy, stop crying I'm here now, mama is here..."

During the day I drive to Mthunzi's workplace, with Sbani. I messed up whatever plans he had for us yesterday, so this is me, bringing him lunch and apologizing. I know that he'll be happy to see both of us. I miss Ndondo, how I wished her granny agreed to let her come with us, but she blatantly refused. I heard that she can't have kids of her own, maybe that's why she has such a big yet selfish heart when it comes to Ndondo. I keep on failing that kid, I'm such a bad person. Being a parent is hard and takes an unbelievable amount of patience.

His office is locked, his phone is off. It might be one of those crazy days. I'm seated in benches just outside his office waiting for him. Sbani is beginning to be restless.

I'm on my feet trying to calm him down but he just doesn't budge



"Hey. Can I hold him" someone suddenly says, I'm met with a beautiful colored woman

"Sorry, I've been watching at a distance, so I decided to come"

She speaks. Sbani start wailing gaining attention and I feel myself getting hot

I give hand her, cautious to stand close. Strange things happen these days.

It takes just a minute to shut him, little betrayer

"Wow, that's amazing" I say as she gives me back. He is too quiet sucking his tiny thumb is if he wasn't just screaming a second ago

"I love babies. Pity I don't have one of my own"

She says

"your time will come too. Believe me"

I say

"I've been trying for years now" she sadly says, shame

"I was in your shoes once. I know that feeling of questioning everything, God, nature, your qualities as a woman. It sucks but good things take time to come. Wait for your turn, I mean look at me now" she smiles

"Thank you. I really needed to hear that. I'm Jessica, by the way"

"Nice to meet you Jessica. I'm Swazi"

THREE

## THE ZULU HOUSEHOLD

"Gogo, where is mama?" her innocent eyes are glued on her as she asks

"Eat your food Ndondo, what did I say about talking on the Table " firmly she says

Everyone on the table pretend to be minding their own business but her saddened voice really hurts

"I want my mama!" she blinks, and tears fall off shortly

"Hhay Ndondo!" a warning look from her granny

Her intense cries fills up the entire house

"I want my mama! I want baba! Take me to them Gogo, please take me! Please"

The quiet breakfast turns sour instantly

"Ndondo yababa, your mother is working far away but she will return with lots of sweats for you and Sqalo" adds Ngcebo but she wails even louder

Sqalo, the 9 months old boy. Thembeke and Delani's son. As if he can tell what's happening, he also begins crying, crawling towards his mother's direction.

It's intense, saddening and mournful in the Zulu homestead. It's been this hard, since the good, humble yet very colorful soul was painfully snatched away, since he departed the land of the living with no goodbyes, since he was buried deep in the grave.

They've all gone back to their designated houses. Ndabezitha is standing just above his kraal buried in deep thoughts as Ngcebo passes him

"Dalingcebo" he sternly utters. Ngcebo turns and stand by him

It's silence for a while making Ngcebo unsteady. It's getting late and the old man doesn't seem to care that he has work

"sibusisiw isbaya so Mageba Ndodana. Sinonophele ngalezinkomo abangiphe zona " it's every African man's dream to see their kraal full. He couldn't be prouder.

"kunjalo Ndabezitha" - Ngcebo.

The livestock did return, strangely they were just stolen by thief's and not the Mthonga Brothers. But they will not apologize to them, not after snatching Phikelela's soul

"ubuhle be ndoda zinkomo zayo. Umthatha nin umfazi Dalingcebo. I'm old now, one of these days I won't wake up to see the sunshine." this doesn't sit well with Dalingcebo. He doesn't even have a straight girlfriend to begin with and the thought of losing another family member makes his heart hurt even worse

It's after 8 am as he drives out in his mini truck heading to his place of work.

Being a constructor, he finally scored himself a tender to build toilets in the nearby high school.

It's not much but it's his breakthrough. This should have been something to be celebrated, but Phikelela is gone, Mthunzi is far away, Delani is occupied by his son. His mother's sister, Ndondo's grandmother is busy taking care of his father whose health has decided to take a U turn.

He's all alone, never happy but always lost in the darkness of sorrow. Happiness seems to be far away from him, the word 'happiness' alone is probably covered by a spider's web in his mind.

Yes, it's tough. It's burdensome, baffling and somehow, he blames himself for everything that happened. Had he put his feet down and forced Phikelela to return home, he'd be alive and doing his matric this year.

His phone rings just as he drives inside the school premises. He stops and pick up

"Please tell me you've got new information. I'm losing my mind now Zakhele"

Ngcebo says sounding exhausted and hurt

"My guy has found something interesting. Come here after work and we'll discuss everything"

A long, shuddering sigh escapes his mouth. A year later, he is finally getting something to work on

"Okay, I'll come by later. Thank you bafoz"

He says

"anything for you bafoz"

The call drops. Burying his face on his hands he leans on the steering wheel; his body starts shaking vigorously and for once in a long time he allows the emotions to take over. He allows his heart to release intense, aching feelings through his eyes.

He lets the tears fall.

A sudden knock disturbs the intense moment. Furiously he wipes the tears avoiding the persisting knock

"Haibo, bhut wabantu can I get your attention!"

A tiny, yet sweet voice says, with an aim to deliver a strong message but her voice doesn't allow her to shout. It's too sweet, too soft for shouting

"Bhuti!"

She persists, hitting the window.

His tongue clicks, as he looks up angrily, she gasps

His bloodshot eyes are scarier indicating that he's been crying, his face darker than normal, the scar on his left cheekbone never helps the situation.

He's had the scar since that huge fight, it's a daily reminder of what Mandlakhe did, of what he took from him and for that, he'll pay. However long it takes

"Can I help you?"

He coldly asks, staring at a plump, fair dark skinned woman with her lips opened slightly. She looks frightened but somehow, she is still glaring at him

"we Nkosazana"

He half yells and she snap out of it, suddenly engulfs in embarrassment. No one wants to be caught staring

"ahem, I.. I'm.. I just wanted to... tell you that you are blocking the way..."

It's strange, why is she stuttering, he thinks.

Indeed, he parked in the driveway.

..

The sun is all out and shining, it's the middle of the day already and work is going accordingly. Except for the girl who's always on her phone

" and you? Don't you have work to do?"



Ask Ngcebo as he reaches her. She stands up quickly and joins the others.

The day has finally ended, much to his satisfaction.

Before leaving he heads to the toilet but stops instantly as a melodic voice hits his ears...

\*\*Oko ngahlangana nawe

Nawe sthandwa sam

Seyize yaphola yaphola inhliziyo yam

Oko ngahlangana nawe

Nawe sthandwa sam

Seyize yaphola yaphola inhliziyo yam

Nakuwe ngicela makubheda

Ubokhumbul ukuthi

Nami nginay' nami nginay' inhliziyo

Nakuwe ngicela makubheda

Ubokhumbul ukuthi

Nami nginay' nami nginay' inhliziyo... \*\*\*

Her sweet, innocent voice rings in every part of his body,  
something about her voice brings him comfort and.. Hope

He is brought back to earth by his phone ringing

"don't come to my house. I'll come to you instead. "

Zakhele says, as the call ends he shoves the cellphone back to  
his pocket.

Disappointed that she's stopped singing, he stands still, hoping  
and waiting to hear her sing just one more time but she  
doesn't...

He returns to his truck and drives off, her voice still ringing at  
the back of his head. He shake his head feeling pressed,  
somehow hearing her voice made him forget that he was  
heading to the toilet. Who is she anyway?

Finding Zakhele waiting for him in his house makes his heart  
fasten. He's been waiting for this day.

"bafoz"

They bump shoulders, take beers then get to business. They are in his house, in King Dinuzulu Township.

"so you mean he doesn't know who his father his?" - Ngcebo

"Apparently he never knew his biological father, never met him and that alone could be our ticket"

Adds Zakhele

"so, he has siblings from his father's side?"

He asks

"Yes. A sister and a mentally disturbed brother"

"I want him to feel the pain I felt when I lost my little brother. I don't know what the plan is for now but this is big."

His eyes darken, it's all coming together.

\*\*\*\*\*

Swazi

"I'm fast asleep when I'm woken up by a soft pat. It's Pam.

I yawn stretching my arms

" sisi, bhut said I should tell you to pick up your phone. He's been calling"

Flip! I get up and start searching for it.

She get out

Sbani has been giving me a headache, I was just taking a nap

Where the hell is the damn phone, it's ringing again

Pam appears, carrying my phone on her hands. I sigh and pick up

"Hellow, am I speaking to Swazi?"

It's a woman's voice, not Mthunzi. I check the caller ID and it's an unsaved number

"Hi, how can I help you?"

I asks, confused.

"it's Jessica, from the hospital yesterday"

Such a good woman. I might have scored a friend in her

"Jess, I've been expecting your call"

I say, waiting for Mthunzi was a bit long that we ended up exchanging numbers

"I was a bit busy hey. But I'm okay now. Where is the little one"

She asks

"sleeping"

After speaking to Jessica, I head to the kitchen and drink some water. A mouthwatering aroma hit my nostrils; Pam cooked again!

I specifically banned her from cooking in this house. I can take care of my family, she only helps with Sbani, that's all.

"Sis Pam!"

I yell, she comes running

"I thought I made it clear that you don't cook. You only look after Sbani, nothing else"

I don't want her to think that I'm taking advantage of her

"I'm sorry sisi. I was just bored so I decided to cook"

I sigh, my phone rings again

"baba ka Sbani"

I say softly

"How are things that side, how is my little warrior"

"We are fine. When are you coming back from work?"

I ask, something I haven't asked in a while

"you miss me?"

He ask, I can tell he is smirking

"no! I didn't say that Mthunzi"

I argue, which is pointless because he just laughs, making me smile

"Just admit it Swazelihle. You miss me"

He is cocky

"it's not you that I'm missing. It's that thing hanging between your legs.."

He laughs loudly, hurting my ears. I can't believe I just said that. I haven't thought about sex in a while

"Finally! She admits the truth"

He says, still laughing

"I'm dropping this call Mthunzi"

"Okay okay! I'm not laughing any more. We are going somewhere today. Please wear something sexy, I'll be there in less than minutes.. "

"Where are we going "

I ask

"My boss is hosting a party. He invited most of the employees"

Must be nice to work for a private medical practice, maybe I do need a getaway. To mingle a little

"okay, you'll find me ready then"

"really!"

He sounds surprised

"yes"

"Ngyakthanda Swazelihle"

My heart still skips, there is something about the way he says my name. Like it means more than just a name.

I'm done bathing, I head out with a towel covering my body.

I find my phone ringing and my heart starts beating. It's Ndondo's granny.

She calls once in a full moon

"mama" I say

"why are you so selfish Swazi?"

Okay, this is not a good sign

"mah?"

"you just left! Ndondo is forever crying while you are living your best life in Durban. You are a selfish, self-centered woman who's separated a child from her father! How can you be so heartless! I trusted you, I thought you were a good girl, but I was wrong!

You are weak man! When problems come your way, you run!  
You're such a dissapoin.. "

The phone in my hands falls, tears are flowing freely in my eyes. I'm back there again, I was beginning to move on but in less than a second, she's brought me back to that dark hole

I feel his presence before he can say anything.



I'm in his arms, still crying. It hurts, she doesn't know what I'm going through. She refused, I wanted to take Ndondo with, but she refused. I couldn't stay, not after what happened. Why can't she get that?

Does she think I'm happy? Because I sure as am not. I miss Ndondo so much, I want her to be here but I can't kidnap her. I can't!

I've calmed down, he's staring at me waiting for an explanation, but I can't give him.

"Are you going to tell me what's going on?"

He finally asks, I look anywhere but his direction.

I'm turned back by his strong hold grabbing my chin

He cups my face, wiping the remaining tears in my eyes.

Closer he brings me, and I feel nerves kicking in. We haven't been this close in a very long time, whenever he tries something, I'd push him but right now I don't have the strength

His lips find mine and I feel my heartbeat skipping harder, my stomach filling up with butterflies

He kisses me, faster than usual and quickly flips me over, I find myself underneath him.

As the kiss deepens, Phikelela's image flashes in my mind and I quickly push him and run towards the bathroom.

"Swazelihle! What exactly is going on with you!?"

He shouts, knocking on the door but I don't dare say a word. I've locked him out, he can't get in.

I'm balled up at the corner, crying softly. Why is it so hard? It's been months but I can't seem to move on from this..

"Swazi!"

He is losing patience. I can feel it.

He clicks his tongue and his footsteps fade away. He is gone

\*\*\*\*\*

It's parked, he's been taking shots after shots, but the pain worsens instead of getting better.

He is in pain too, looking at the woman he loves so much who happens to be the sister of his sworn enemy is no child's play

But he loves her, to the moon and back

He is hurting but what he needs is her, can't she see that he is silently breaking.

He's been too strong, but it's too much especially when he's lacking a supportive system

"Are you sure you need another one?"

Ask the concerned bar man as he motions for another. It's a sophisticated party, no hooligans are allowed in this high residential area..

"give him.. I'll look after him"

A woman's voice says behind him.

As she appears, he quickly brush his eyes not believing if it's alcohol or what

"still have these bedroom eyes.. You don't change"

She was always taken back by his sleepy eyes, bedroom eyes she called them

"Jessica!"

He exclaims.

And it now starts to make sense, how his boss hosted this unexpected party during the week. He is celebrating the return of his daughter, she's an ugly past. The one he is not ready to share. Why is she back again?

Five

Swazi

I'm on my way to see Jess for a drink. Maybe she'll light up my mood. I was the first one to leave Boston Holdings Gates when 4pm hit the clock. Mthunzi decided to ignore me an entire day. No call, not even a WhatsApp message yet I've seen countless status updates of him and Sbani on WhatsApp. He is at home, I guess he is off.

As if that's not enough, Mr. Boston gave me an earful when I arrived at work this morning. To conclude, my day was just a waste of my breath.

I find her already eating, we share a hug and I order a cake and a juice for myself. I also order takeaways for Mthunzi, myself and Pam for tonight's supper. I'm in no mood to cook

"So, how are you doing, how was your day?" I ask, she puts down the fork, wipes her mouth and

smiles

"Okay, at least one of us had a happy day" I comment, landing myself a soft laughter

"let's just say yesterday I bumped into my soul mate, the love of life and my heart just swelled up with joy" She's squeezing her cheeks, her eyes twinkles "How was it? Did you hug and kiss?" I quickly ask. She shakes her head "bummer" I'd use any good news right now

" I think he was shocked to see me, so was I. It's been long since we last saw each other" she says "How long?" "it's been a while, about nine years" I can't hide the shock on my face "that's a very long time Jessica" I don't think I can survive that long without Mthunzi next to me.

"Something came between us, but we'll reunite. Come rain or sunshine" "that's the spirit. So, when are you planning to see him again?" "Soon, anyway enough about me. How are you? How is your family doing"

"Definitely not great. Mthunzi's his mother will send me straight to the grave I tell you"

I haven't forgotten how she scolded me like spineless child yesterday, it was horrific

"What happened? " "Mthunzi and I aren't in good terms, and she just added salt to our already wounded relationship" argh! My order arrives and my cake, don't feel like cake anymore so I'll take it home

"That's wrong, why include family in your relationship? maybe you should introduce me to him so that I can talk to him about how he makes you feel" She hasn't met Mthunzi, and I'm not yet ready to introduce her "that's extreme, don't you think" She nods and starts telling me about her ex again. Apparently, they were the power couple back in Medical School

"So you are a doctor?, yebanna you don't say!!"

I'm surrounded by Doctors, what a lucky girl I am

"I didn't finish my studies though, something happened"  
Ow, sounds like there's a story behind but she's not ready to share when I ask her. My afternoon is better than my entire day and I'm grateful to Jessica for that

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It's after six when I drive inside the yard, it'll be a miracle if Mthunzi doesn't scold me for being this late. Sbani must be getting restless.

I'm greeted by a deafening wailing and Mthunzi and Pam on their feet trying to calm him down. He stops crying the moment I hold him in my arms, I feel peace washing all over me. Babies are such a huge blessing.

"Forgotten that you have a baby Swazeelihle?" I knew that it is coming, I still hate it when he shouts at me. "I was with my friend Mthunzi, we lost track of time. I'm sorry" I'm not even looking at him, my focus is on my boy "didn't realize you've made friends already" behind his statement is him, questioning my every move, I know him.

"I have" I can feel his heavy stare on me, but I don't dare look. He wants me to explain more but I won't.

Let me warn those who haven't made the decision of falling pregnant for a controlling man, don't do it.

Sbani falls asleep when he is full, so I head to his nursery and tuck him. What I love about Mthunzi is that he isn't afraid to change our son's diaper or bathe him. He is a hands-on father; I give him that. He had already bathed him when I arrived

Warm shower is always the best part of my day, the feeling of hot water tumbling down my body is just soothing, the heat inside the shower just makes my body feel so warm and at peace.

Moments later I cover my body with a towel and head out only to be met by Mthunzi lying on our bed, blessing himself with my cake! My heart immediately sinks

"Mthunzi, is that my cake?" I don't even know why I'm asking, a little part of me is hoping that it's not my cake



"This is so good, where did you buy it?" There goes my hope it's indeed mine and there's only a piece of it left. I rush to him and try to take the plate, but he quickly stands up and raises up his arm.

"Mthunzi please, don't do this" I can't believe I'm begging him for my own cake

"Do what?" what a wicked husband! I'm on the bed but he is still taller, there's nothing sexy about a tall man. Had I picked my own size we'd be talking a different language. I jump up trying to reach him but end up falling on the bed

"aw, my ankle" Yes, I'm lying. He panics, putting the plate down checking my ankle.

Now is the chance. My hands reach for the remaining piece of cake, then my feet make the run of my life. Never underestimate a short woman, we can run given a chance, speaking for all the penguins out there.

I feel him closing in behind me and I swiftly gulp it all down

His strong hands quickly hold me and in no time I'm on his shoulders being led back to the bedroom "Mthunzi Put me down already" He just spanks my butt and I can't help but giggle

"That was a strong abusive spank Mthunzi. .." I say "I'm an iron man baby. I have an iron fist"

Both of us are laughing, I don't even know why we are enjoying this moment

I'm harshly dropped on the bed causing my body to jump a bit and the towel on me loosen up exposing my swollen, bigger boobs. I try to hide them, but he is quick to remove the towel leaving me completely naked.

I can't look at him in the eyes, I'm completely uncomfortable and shy

"Mthunzi, give me back my towel" I firmly say, hiding them with my hands. Instead of doing what I ask he hovers over my body structure putting his hands around me, completely closing me in.

“Since when are you shy and uncomfortable around me Swazelihle?”

His voice carries heaviness, my eyes look anywhere but him.

“Swazi, look at me when I’m talking” “I’m not shy Mthunzi” I futilely argue and meet his hard gaze. Now I regret even fighting for the damn cake “then why are you hiding your body from me, you think I haven’t noticed how you act when I find you naked, how quickly you cover your body when I’m around. Why are you even hiding your breast right now?” now I’m being scolded for hiding my own body, wonders shall never end.

“I’m sorry”

I slowly remove my hands and take a deep breath. He moves his eyes from me and stare at my saggy, swollen boobs, my saggy tummy and when he is satisfied, he stares at me once again with a softer expression.

"you're beautiful Swazelihle" softly he says.

A strong yet warm feeling tingles my tummy. My heart swells up with joy “I know, mirror tells me” I laugh trying to soften the mood, he doesn’t.

“don’t hide yourself from me Swazelihle, you are my wife, the mother of my child”

it’s easy for him to say “but I’m no longer the same Mthunzi, my boobs are bigger, my tummy is saggy and my body is just so fat” “changes in your body are the proof of your bravery, a beautiful reminder of the blessing you brought into this world, our son. To me you still the most beautiful woman I’ve ever met, I’ll choose you any day” he caresses my cheeks, squeezing them a little. I can’t help but blush harder

“Be my woman again sthandwa sam, let me in. Allow me to be the man, to love and take care of you. Give us a chance again” His look is intensifying, I can feel the heaviness in his eyes and posture and that put me in a vulnerable position, he is finally reminding me that he can weaken me anytime he wants to “Please” I want to say something but he is an inch close to my face that my breathing is shallow, one word our lips will collide

How did we go from fighting over a cake to this firm moment?  
My breathing is increasing with each breath I take, my heart is  
beginning to be the only thing loud in here and it is getting hot.

.

“Swazelihle, ngyakthanda” he whispers, my eyes are  
countlessly blinking failing to hold his deep gaze. His face  
lowers and his lips rest on mine. Butterflies instantly  
overwhelm my tummy as he gives me a deep, lingering kiss. His  
hand slides down to my sacred place. He gently starts rubbing  
my clit, I instantly quiver, pleasure overwhelming me. A soft  
moan escapes my mouth as he continues toying with me.  
Something tells me this is going to be a long night, the one to  
remember.....

SIX

Mthunzi Zulu

It's been a long time since he felt this way, his heart is swelled up with joy and happiness. He cannot wait to go back home to his wife. As much as he loves his job but not today, the day is dragging

After finishing his rounds, he heads to his office "Doctor Zulu!" someone yells his name behind him, as he turns he finds the security guard "Doc, someone is here for you. She's been waiting for you for a while" he says

"tell that person to come to my office" and he leaves

A while later a knock comes through. What stands at the door has his eyeballs all out, his heart beating faster than normal "hello there, can I come in?" she asks, standing still. "what are you doing here Jessica?" he asks, standing up slowly "are you going to invite me in or what" she says, smiling "Jessica Jones, I'm not going to ask you twice" boldly he says "I can tell you aren't happy to see me, I'm sorry. I just wanted to say hi and that I'm back and i'd like for us to have a drink. You know for

old time's sake" she says gaining a scornful laughter from Mthunzi

"don't tell me shit Jessica, old time's sake my foot!"

Jessica feels anger visit her, but she controls herself

"you've got nothing to lose Mthu. Say yes, I promise it'll be worth your while" licking her lips she seductively says

"Let me be a gentle man and ask you nicely to get the fuck out of my office. I must head home to my WIFE and my SON, they miss me, just as I miss them"

That hit home, as if a needle poked her already bleeding wound.

The hate for Swazi and her little rascal rises even more in her heart.

"You must really love her, hey. Some girls are lucky" she says, staring at him straight in his eyes, her hypnotizing beauty can confuse a stranger. It surpasses her darkest heart.

"Actually, it's the other way around, I'm the lucky one"

He utters moving towards her at the doorstep.

"I thought that you'll wait. for me" she finally says.

Two of them are an inch close to each other, breathing heavily and glaring as two soldiers ready for war

"life goes on Jessica" carelessly he responds and that drive her to the edge.

she smiles, an evil smile that she always had when something bad was about to go down "Does she know? The real Mthunzi behind the veil? The devil... "

"GET OUT!!" angrily he screams, pointing at the door. Few people passing by give out strange looks. The door is open afterall .

Damn the ugly past, can't it just stays hidden forever.



“You know it’s always been you Mthunzi, just you” a ball of emotions she is. One minute she’s boiling, the next she’s soft and hungry for his love again. There’s no words from Mthunzi, just his hard breathing showing how angry he feels

This is not how he planned to end his day.

What’s so hard about loving her again as he did all those years ago

“What we had long perished from the face of the earth

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now it's nothing but the worst memory I'll forever regret my entire existence” he coldly states, his disgusted features on his face souring with each second.

"What we had was a beautiful thing Mthunzi" she argues

“ I have a family now, I'll never trade them for anything because nothing matters in this world, but them. I love them, with my whole being so how about you take whatever fantasy of us you've been cooking in that loony hole and shove it where the sun doesn't shine” She doesn't blink, as hurt as she is.

“I guess our love was a game to you, a game...” an unfriendly chuckle escapes her mouth “ I love games and hey, two can play this game”

her facials enraged she states and walk out leaving Mthunzi in turmoil.

.....

As he reaches home, he finds Swazi sleeping on the couch, with Sbani in her arms. The haunting image of Jessica quickly leaves his mind as he stares at his lovely blessing. God really blessed him When he met with Swazi. He knows, he'll never do anything to mess up what they have.

His hands reach for his pockets, and he takes out his cell phone then takes a picture and does something he's never bothered to do, logging on Facebook and updating his display picture.

Its after nine as they both slide in bed. He snuggles behind her, bringing her warm body in his arms “Swazelihle” he whispers on her ear softly “Mthunzomuhle” she says, her eyes tightly closed. She hardly slept last night, Mthunzi kept her

awake

“ngiyakuthanda, you and my son mean the world to me. No matter what happens don't ever doubt the love I have for you”  
..he knows this man

“Mthunzi, is something bothering you? ” she asks, turning to face him.

"do you want to tell me something?" His eyes give nothing away

He wants to tell her everything, the entire truth about his past that's haunting him but her innocent eyes blinking at him just makes his mouth dry. The words are stuck on his throat. Afraid to break what they just rebuilt a day ago he shakes his head and plant a soft kiss on her forehead

she blushes at the warm gesture staring at him lovingly. This is the woman he loves wholeheartedly and would choose any day. Tomorrow is another day; he'll tell her then.

“How about a quickie” he randomly says, hitting her with words she never expected. Her eyes are wide open, amazed.

“No Mthunzi, nope. Are you trying to kill me and leave Sbani motherless? imagine the headlines “too much sex kills, a wife in KwaMashu died early this morning” He throws a loud laughter at how exaggerating his wife can be. She’s laughing with him, She’s a breath of fresh air

“You are unbelievable sometimes, after tearing my barbie apart last night. Really?” she says, still sharing a beautiful laugh

“Please mama ka Sbani, I’ll be gentle. I promise. ”

Loudly she laughs disappearing in his hard chest

"Nginike phela mama inkomo yam, I paid a lot of money for it, or you've forgotten” his hands slowly slid down to her barbie causing her laughter to be replaced by a light moan.

His hands gently start rubbing her clit, pleasure shoot up her entire body “please” he whispers, planting a wet kiss on her nape...

## SEVEN

Swazi

Another day to live a happy life. I can't even recall the last time I was this happy. It feels like a dream somehow. After spending such a great night full of moans, orgasms and screams I didn't think I'd wake up early.

I'm lotioning my body when I feel his presence, he is behind me. His hands swirls around my waist and he plants a soft kiss on the nape of my neck "mama wabantwana" he says, I giggle at the tickling feeling his mouth leaves "Ndabezitha" I'm quickly turned around and meet his soft gaze. This man loves me, his heart is worn on his sleeves I can see it

"mama Zulu" I can't help the wide smile spreading across my face, I look like a monkey right now

"when are we tying the knot? I want to see the ring on your finger, I want your last name to be Zulu" and that means we

must go back. He knows I'm not ready, in a second the smile on my face is gone.

"You do understand that we must go back at some point, right?" he boldly says, caressing my cheek. I look down his feet, but his index finger lifts my chin until I meet his stern gaze

"There is a lot we need to fix Swazelihle. Running away never solves any problem" There he goes, switching from being soft to being all serious

"I know, but it doesn't have to be now" we might be on good terms but I'm not ready to face the entire Zulu clan

He is staring, deeply and in his eyes I see dominance, the Zulu man in him emitting in his eyes. My heart skips

"We are going back home, oZulu bayangbiza maMthonga" his tone of voice is stern, as if he is done nursing my feelings.

I want to protest but I'm shut by the kiss, it goes for a minute, and he leaves me breathless and hungry for more of him. I love this man, my body and soul agree with me.. But home?

I kiss Sbani goodbye and get in my car. My phone beeps indicating an incoming message, Jess wants us to meet urgently. I wonder what's going on.

I'll see her for a few minutes then head back to work. The restaurant we are meeting at isn't that far anyway, so I'll drive past her.

"Not even in my wildest dream did I think that a piece of cake would be our best reunion. Mthunzi is one hell of a kisser, I miss his lips, okay everything about him really" I say, taking a bite of the same cake that fixed my relationship.

Maybe talking might light up her mood. "Had I known I would have bought it a long time ago, it started with fighting over a cake and ended up with me screaming his name in pleasure" I giggle as flashbacks of him on top of me fills up my mind.

“That's beautiful” she says, not even looking at me. Her hands have been tapping on that glass of wine since I arrived

“Jessica, what’s bothering you? I need to go to work you know”  
Speaking of work, I hate Mr. Boston with passion. That man is old and always on my throat.

“Where are you going?” she quickly asks as I stand up.

“I’m going to the loo, I hope you’ll be ready to share whatever it is that’s eating you up when I return” I say and leave for the loo

Friends are just another 9 to five job that deserves their own salary. I don’t think I can stand it really. She’s just so gloomy as if I’m the one who begged her to come. Jesus, she's the one who called me here, not the other way around.

As I return to the table, I find my cell phone ringing. Its Nqaba, I heave a sigh and answer “bhuti” I haven’t heard from them in a while. But I do send money to gogo and I do call her sometimes



“there’s storm coming your way Qhamu, I had a bad dream last night” I feel my blood vessels drying up instantly. I’ve learnt to trust Nqaba’s strange dreams “what can I do bhuti? To stop the storm.. ” I quickly ask, feeling sweat dropping. I'm shaking okay. I hate stress

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I just found happiness for God's sake!

“You need to start praying for your family’s safety. Whatever you do, please don’t forget to pray... ”

I'm quite

" there's something else. You need to come back home, by home I mean here ko Mthonga. Ndondo must come as well. OMthonga baniding ekhaya dadewethu. That’s all I can say for now”

He drops the call leaving my heart beating faster.

Another home saga, Jesus

I see a waiter coming my way. Finally, my coffee is here. When has it taken so much time to make a mere coffee anyway?

I thank the damn waiter who seems lost somehow, his eyes keep on bulging out of their socket. He had a bad night I presume

"Who was that?" Jess quickly asks, seeing my gloomy face.

"My brother, he said something about danger approaching my life. I'm not sure how to feel anymore. Maybe I should go back home Jess" something bad might happen to me, my blood tells me something

"Askies, maybe it's not much of a big deal hey. Drink your coffee and head to work. I'll be fine" oh, almost forgot I was called by her here.

"silly me, how are you? You are the one who called me here. I'm sure something is going on with you" I say, I gulping a long sip and heave an exhausted sigh

"Nothing to worry about" she says, smiling widely. Strange

After spending my morning with Jess I drove straight to work feeling so down. I've been calling Mthunzi but his phone isn't going through. Mr Boston has been on my throat again, I told him that I might resign since Mthunzi hinted that it's time to go back..

There is a knock at my door, it might be him. As I stand up my feet become wobbly, i feel lightheaded and dizzy so I hold onto the armrest

“Hey are you okay?” I can hear Boston's voice from a distance. I want to say something when everything suddenly becomes blurry and all I see is nothing but... darkness.

oooo\_x\_x\_oooo

Ngcebo Zulu

Something is different today; he can feel it at the deepest of his sentiment. He woke up early, drank only one bottle of beer and

made himself a sandwich. He tried to copy the one she made yesterday but failed dismally

Surprisingly he slept so well today, something he hasn't had in a long time. When he left her place, it was around half four in the afternoon, she was so generous that she even gave him food to eat for supper. In her head, he is just a man going through a midlife crisis with his family and she felt sorry for him.

"Mfana wam" Ndondo's granny greets him while brushing his head, he is by the sink, washing her Tupperware.

"Mama, I'm too old for that" he complains, MaNtuli laughs and tells him he'll forever be his child. Ndondo jumps looking happy, Sqalo is taking small steps after her. Suddenly the kitchen is filled with chaos "have you spoken to Mthunzi lately?" MaNtuli asks "No, why?"

"Ndabezitha had a strange dream last night and he woke up sweating. He said Mthunzi was in the middle of a dark water, sinking deep. They need to come back with his weakest wife. Argh! I don't understand women these days. They love marriage, yet they can't even stand the challenges marriage

comes with” MaNtuli is already making porridge for Ndabezitha as he says, feeling all worked up all over again.

“Mthunzi is old, he can take care of himself.” –Ngcebo

He calls Zakhele the minute he drives out of the yard “nkabi” he says

“sho, did you find what we talked about?” “yes. Apparently the father is looking for someone to renovate his church”

This day is getting better and better!

Reaching school, his eyes wander around hoping to bump into the crazy, movie lover woman who helped him yesterday. He must thank her and hand her Tupperware back.

Later in the day she still hasn’t come to work, he is left with one option. To go to her house. There’s a burning desire to see her again today.

He drives out in speed only to be met by a closed door; she is not in. That alone turned his day into a complete disaster.

NINE

Swazi

I couldn't sleep a wink, I kept on tossing and turning afraid...

This Jessica woman is delusional, she's a ticking time bomb.  
Who befriends someone just to drug them?

Now it all starting to make sense. How she just emerged out of nowhere, she even told me about a certain boyfriend. Stupid me didn't even know she meant my Mthunzi.

A nightmare, that's what my life has turned out to be.

This morning I was woken up by Bhut Ngcebo in my neighbor's house, Mthunzi was nowhere to be seen.

I knew anyway there was no way I was going to spend a night in that house, the option was to come back home. I packed what I could, and we left. Mthunzi must bring people to fix the kitchen, the fire only damaged the kitchen appliances and not the roof or the door. It makes my blood runs cold that she was inside my house, she plugged an electric kettle with no water in it and it busted

At least she didn't use petrol or else we would be dead, dead an dead..

That thought alone, being in ashes with Sbani and Mthunzi just makes me want to scream and cry. Pam would have been the suspect since she was in the outside cottage.

An hour later Bhut Ngcebo drives inside the Zulu Homestead, with me behind him in my own car. I couldn't leave it behind for jess to slash my tires. Thank god she didn't go that far.

It's been a while since we arrived without the man who's my pillar of strength. His phone hasn't been going through at all. Mthunzi is going to be the death of me I swear. He just left yesterday after the sudden fire and never returned. I just know something is seriously wrong because Ngcebo dropped me, and Delani left with Ngcebo after he dropped me off. Thembeka said that Delani told him he was sorting something in Durban but never said what that was.

I'm going nuts without Mthunzi in this yard. It doesn't help that I had to spot Phikelela's grave, the only person who made this home colorful and homely.

The door swings open just as I put Sbani to sleep. Ndondo rush inside screaming

"mama! mama! Uzungntshontsh ugogo.. Mama"

I want to tell her to keep it down but the girl is swinging around my legs jumping and screaming,

Sigh\*

At that moment mama rushes in as well and this child of mine screams louder so I take her in my arms and she hides herself at the nape of my neck breathing heavily and screaming! The noise is defeating but soothing at the same time

"Where is she, have you seen my little Ndondo" she says, playing around. I laugh and shake my head.

"I'm glad you are home makoti" says mama smiling at me. You'd swear it wasn't her who was shouting at me the other day over the phone



And Sbani start screaming, with all the noise I'm not surprised  
Instead of taking Ndondo, she takes Sbani in her arms and  
shush him. The betrayer instantly shut up

"Mageba, usekhaya manje mfana. You are back from foreign  
cities with big troubles" yes she just said that to a five month  
old baby

"Can I hold him gogo, ingane ka mama encaneeee. Encu ncu  
ncu" She's forgotten about being stolen as she wiggles herself  
out of my hold and now she's on her feet begging with her arms  
open

"you'll hold her this afternoon after bathing. Asambe sobon  
umkhulu" and just like that they are gone.

"Sister Wife" She never change ever, always bubbly and  
straightforward

We chill in my house with her telling me everything that  
happened while I was gone.

"I'm telling you, something fishy is happening between the two,  
I call it oldies in action" my goodness

"She is her sister's husband Thembeke. Come on" I tell her but she doesn't believe me.

Apparently Ndabezitha and ndondo's granny might be more than a brother and sister in law, so she says

"Let me emphasize that, a dead sister. See wena sis when her sister died, she took over and raised Ndondo, now she's been living here since Phikelela was buried. Ask me where she spends the night, no don't ask I'll tell you free.. She spends the night in his bedroom.. His bedroom" I can't even imagine them in the... arg damn my mind

"She's just supporting.."

"heey wena kant itheku likwenzen your mind seems to be locked with cement. lalela la alidlal itswayi we sisi trust me, Delani and I couldn't even wait for that three month period after giving birth. We were on it after one month, I even felt like my stitches were coming back"

Okay I've heard enough..

.....

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Mthunzi Zulu

It was just a dream, a passion he loved and intended to follow no matter the circumstances.

When he passed his matric with 7 distinctions he made it to newspapers, newsroom and any other media out there ready to do a report on him.

A young boy, from a disadvantaged rural area. It was a dream back then. Being wanted by many companies offering bursaries it was easy for him to choose his passion. Medicine

During the first year at the UKZN Medical School everything seemed normal. He was chasing his dreams, couldn't be happier.

Then he met her, a knockout, dazzling girl with sky blue eyes and curly black hair.. Wanted by many yet she chose him, a

rural boy. A pressure grew on him to keeping her happy and money keeps a woman happy

But who was he, his family was just an average African family with no deep riches. Even the meal allowance seemed too little but he tried, until one morning he woke up with a message \*I'm pregnant baby\*

.

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He finds her drinking her favorite red wine at the restaurant they are meeting at. "Jessica" she smiles "I didn't think you'd come" she says, staring at him straight in his eyes

"As If I had a choice. After drugging my wife, setting my house on fire you thought hey let's add rape allegations on the table. That was a low blow Jessica, even for you. How can you be this delusional? Claiming that I raped you and made me spend a night in a holding cell"

He angrily hisses, taking a seat

"I dropped the charges relax

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don't be a sissy, it was just a game. If I wanted you all dead. You would be trust me, but it's too early to end this thrilling game" she carelessly says. Jessica's twisted mind games

"What do you want?"

She stares at him, for too long while tapping her long nails on the glass in her hand.

He once cherished this woman, her sky-blue eyes used to be his weakness. Why is she back again?

"a Game Mthu"

He blinks twice, feeling his body heating up

"My life isn't a fucking game!"

“you’ve made it clear that you do not want me, so I decided why not play a game with you. No hard feelings, I just want to know how far you are willing to go, to save your precious family”

His body cringe and she see that

"You are delusional Jessica..." he hiss

"The world doesn't know that, they only see a beautiful woman" she proudly responds.

"Ow, another thing. My dad kept something, a very beautiful video of a certain doctor slicing someone's organs out. I wonder how will your precious wife react when she realize that her sweet husband isn't so sweet after all.. oops let me keep my mouth zipped, I'm crazy after all"

His blood dries up instantly.

"...I own you this game, come on make it fun. You can't keep losing”

She leaves him burning in anger, fighting the urge to strangle life out of her.

Falling in love with a psycho isn't something he would have anticipated. The worst mistake of his entire existence. After hearing pregnancy news he knew he had to try harder.

He remembers Mzwandile offering to ask for a job for him to his boss. He didn't ask questions. His roommate Mzwandile always had money, it was his side hustle, so he said.

One morning Mzwandile came with good news, another mistake. He never knew the man was the father of his so-called girlfriend. To him he was just an owner of the most respected private hospital in Durban, the Jones and Jonas Private Hospital...

The man gladly offered him an easy job. He knew who he was, and he wasn't planning on letting him go. He was the genius Mzwandile always gloated about...

It all started with midnight surgeries. Kidneys, hearts, liver transplants. Those were mainly the reason for a surgery. Mthunzi knew a human body in and out way before he could be taught at school, Jones made sure of that. He was a fast learner, quick to understand the assignment and quick to finish the surgery. That meant more business, more business and more money and money meant power.

Mthunzi unknowingly brought that to the table.

In a lion's den he was, slicing people's organs and trading them to the black market wasn't something he thought he might find himself a part of.

That was his side, dirty dealings. Mr. Jones used medical students for his dealings and whenever the going gets tough, he'll eliminate them.

When he knew what was happening he was in too deep. Money, it was too good, besides the only way out was a dead body, with incomplete organs in your body. It how he led.

It got hard when two of the guys he worked with betrayed Mr Jones, Mzwandile as one of them. And he had to be the one slicing their kidneys..

He had to do it while they were watching, crying for help... That left Mzwandile paralyzed, the other guy dead.

That's the other video Jessica mentioned. Him slicing human's organs to prove to Mr. Jones that he was loyal only to him, Unknowing that the bastard took a video as a leverage over him...



He knows with no doubt that Jessica can send that video to Swazi just to spite him. She is a dangerous, unpredictable woman.. Nancy Thompson can attest to that, if she were alive. As much as he loved Jessica he was a man and a man has a wandering eye. He cheated with another colored student.

Jessica was livid. It was during a practical session when he poured something on her, some sort of a lethal acid that only she knows, in broad daylight with everyone watching. She died on the spot, after decomposing in their eyes, crying in agony. A gruesome memory that is hard to erase

After the gruesome acid incident she went to jail for few days. Her father again protected her, jail was going to be too brutal for her little girl. Hence a Psychiatric Hospital seemed like a better idea. She was after all bipolar and unstable, making it happen was a piece of cake...

The pregnancy. He was told by her father that stress caused her to miscarry. As wrong as it was, he felt relieved that she lost the baby, who would want to share a baby with a psycho.

TEN

MTHUNZI ZULU

As much as he'd love to slit her throat,  
she is still a woman. A woman is always hard to kill

Mthunzi has exhausted all the leads he thought would help him find her. He is waiting for possible leads from his Allie, Kenny Jones, the jailed brother of Mr. Jones. He is busy polishing a gun, trying so hard to shift his mind away from his family that he badly miss.

His mind and soul wants to be with her but he can't go back, not when he hasn't resolved what put his family at risk

It wasn't that hard to get Mr. Jones.

Jackson Jones, a 64 year old wealthy, ruthless man. He had two brothers who led the family legacy with. The Private Hospital. Greedy always knows its address, when it visited Jackson he wanted more than the legacy could offer.

He wanted power, to rule and have everyone tremble at the mention of his name.

One of his brothers was found hanged on a rope one morning in his house, while Kenny, the other brother is in jail. For some rape allegations against his only daughter, Jessica. It was his word against an innocent, unstable girl.

Hence Mthunzi made a deal with his brother inside, to bring him Mr. Jones inside

And he will do the rest. His brother has always wanted him but failed, he tried Mthunzi once but back then he had no compelling reason to betray Jackson Jones

That's how he planned to remove him. He only needed him to spend one night in jail then the rest is history

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murder case are hardly solved in prisons.

Five days!! Yet she hasn't been found.

The news travelled really fast. Mr. Jones is heard to be fighting for his life in some hospital bed. Kenny Jones wasted no time to

unleash his anger on his brother, much to Mthunzi's satisfaction.

Hence, it's not going to be easy to get to Jessica. She knows her father has been jailed, she's alone and that puts her to fidgety. She has suddenly gone AWOL, why else would she show her face knowing fully well that her protection is fighting for his life

"I didn't think you'd pull this one. Bravo" Delani says

"at least we'll go home soon."

Ngcebo has been nagging everyone about going back home. He can't sit here

There is a beeping sound. Mthunzi stand up instantly

"Great, three different leads. We'll check them all. It's time to end this"

They all follow each other out.

Two leads again led them to nothingness. They just joined a side gravel road outside Pietermaritzburg. It's the middle of the day.

Driven by rage, hunger seems to be the last thing on his mind.

After about an hour's drive they finally see a white farm house in a distance.

That when they park the car in the sugarcane way and start walking by foot

Jessica is on her way to get the washing on the line when she just bumps into three men in the yard.

She is too late to run as Mthunzi shoots twice leading her straight to the ground. The bullets went through the lower abdomen and she is on the ground, groaning in pain, blood oozing out of the wound...

"Hi.. Jessica" says Mthunzi, crouching on her level

She laughs, strangely

"Ah, sweaty. You think... that.. You have won. Trust me you haven't.."

She spits breathlessly

"Where is the videos Jessica?"

"If I can't have you, then she can't..."

She coughs blood and groan even more

Mthunzi points a gun on her forehead and she start begging for her life

"I would have forgiven you if it was me you touched. But my family Jessica.. They are off limits."

"Please don't kill me... please.."

"Tell me why I shouldn't empty these bullets on you right now..?"

"Because you and I have a daughter together okay..."

He laugh at her lame excuse

"Really Jessica. Is that all you can come up with"

Her eyes water...

"All I've ever wanted was to be with you, so that I can introduce our daughter to you. My father lied, I didn't miscarry. My... my

baby was alive and living with Angeline who used to be our helper. "

He clicks his tongue and a loud bang goes off...

Watching her take her last breath is like having coffee on a rainy day. It's refreshing and warm at the same time...

It's over... Or so he thought...

"Jessica , how long does it take to... "

They are startled by the sudden voice of a woman..

She appears out of nowhere and a loud wailing bursts from her side....

..Delani is quick to point a gun at her

Another shallow screams follow behind the woman, they freeze at the sight of a baby girl older than Ndondo..

ELEVEN

SWAZI...

A Part of me is at peace. Something I haven't felt in a long time.

I'm home, the Mthonga home. With Ndondo who almost drove me to insanity, she was sick for Five full days

She's way better now, infact she became better the day we returned home. Gogo literally cried when she saw her, Mandlakhe froze.

I felt so bad for not doing anything about this, when sickness couldn't get any better Nqaba told me to come back with her, I did that because there was no time to ask for chit chat.

Her granny doesn't like that she is here, but she doesn't have a choice because her ancestors, her mother wanted her home, it's what Nqaba said. He is weird most of the time. Nqaba isn't loud, outspoken and crazy like the others, he is down to earth,



always calm. He says what need to be aid and keep his mouth shut. He is that person you can never approach with a hug, you just wait for him to greet you first because even his presence is audacious and diplomatic

Mthunzi, that's a topic I'd rather leave for people who are insane. He calls but I want him, not phone calls.

It's Friday today, Ndondo is going back to the Zulu Homestead on Sunday. She has to, she's in grade 1, school need her.

There is loud noise outside, this yard is full of kids. It's always joyful and chaotic at the same time.

It drives me crazy sometimes but it's so homely and heartwarming.

All the kids are fussing over Ndondo, they protested in going to school today to spend the day with her.

Gogo being the sweetest granny agreed. Veli almost ate those rascals alive. I don't blame her, she wakes up early to prepare them for school.

"usuhlez kulento yakho? Wenzani futh manj bengath niyowasha no Veli?" Gogo says entering through the door.

"I'm checking my emails gogo. Haven't checked them in a long time"

She nods and settle on the empty sofa with a cup of tea on her hand. It's blazing hot outside by the way

One thing I miss about Durban is a washing machine and running water. I need to wash Sbani and Ndondo's clothes.

My mailbox is full of close to 20 unread messages. Mainly are from my colleagues asking if I'm okay. That how closed off I've been. I've never made any means of relationship with them that they can't even call me, instead they write emails.

There is also one from Mr Boston, wishing me speedy recovery and a question of when am I returning back to work.. Shem old man. It's time to draft that resignation letter...

I've resigned two jobs since I met Mthunzi... that can't be good.

I'm about to log out of my emails when I spot the unfamiliar one. The subject itself has my heart jolting...

It reads

\*the man you claim to love isn't as innocent as you think\*

A video clip.. Something tells me I won't like this. So I take my laptop and leave gogos house heading to the one I sleep in.

I'm on the bed, Sbani is sleeping on the sponge. I was advised not to put him on the bed when asleep because he might fall since he has started to crawl by his tummy. He can seat now. Trying to crawl. My baby is growing

It looks like theater. Musk are worn, Two man tied on the bed are wailing loud and painfully. The video seems old though, I can tell with the quality.

I stifle a scream when the unexpected happens. Aren't doctors supposed to be saviors... what's this?

I watch as this heartless man slice their tummies open. They are screaming in agony. It's clear they are not on medication. They feel every pain

It's so quick and inhumane, it's making my skin itchy and shivering...

Who are these people? How does this even concern me? Who sent this anyway?

It's like I'm watching some sort of how to get away with murder.. I'm no detective and I can't even do anything with this even if I wanted to.

The surgeon is done. Blood is all over him. His lazy eyes.. oh ...Goodness

They are same as... okay I'm losing it now it can't be.

But his eyes are so cold and lack any sort of emotion or sympathy, they make me flinch even from here.

Just when I think the video is over the musk's are taken off and..

Everything stops... my head spins.

I know.... That... face

"VELI!!!"

I bump into a hard surface as I head out, I can't see. Tears blinding my vision. My legs are wobbly. I don't know where I'm going, I just need to keep moving!

"Swazi!!"

I can't breathe...my chest tightens it's like there is this elephant seating on my chest blocking my airways..

My legs fail to carry me..

ooooxxoooo

Khwezi Nkosi

What I love about being a teacher is to leave work earlier than those leaving at Four. Fridays are the best days, I have only two periods in the morning and that's it.

The bell has rang, bringing nothing but happiness to me.

After packing all my belongings, I take my leave.

My phone is ringing

"khayelihle" he better have an explanation as to why I was ignored for this long

"baby" he says, as if everything is normal

"I'm waiting for you to tell me whether we are still dating or not so that I can move on and find myself a man that can call every second of the day"

Seriously I'd love that a lot. A man to call me every time I take a breath. Some men are just a bunch of stupid species really

Who does that, ignore their supposed girlfriend for three consecutive days

"I've been busy. But I'll see you tonight I promise" someone nudges me. It's Mr. Mpanza, I've been standing on the doorway so I make a way for him to pass.

"Too busy to buy just a mere R5 airtime Khaye, or take an airtime advance and hear my voice. Don't you miss me?" Vodacom is very sweet when it comes to airtime advance, they ask no questions

He is laughing, am I funny?

"I'll see you tonight sthandwa sam. I love you?"

NX! Bustard

One of these days I'll dump his sorry black ass... He is cute though. I like him

As I head out of the staffroom my heart almost pops out of my chest, my mouth is dry at the sight of somebody who's been a regular resident in my mind. For the past Five days I've looked around, hoping to see him but he was nowhere in sight.

I tried, I really did try to resist the thoughts of him.

There he is now, leaning against a navy dark Ford Ranger. For a change there is no skorokoro mini Truck

He looks different in black golf shirt, jeans and sneakers. This man is annoyingly tall. He looks thirtyish, clean shaven. His posture is that of a well built, strong, man.

I've only seen him in overalls and now. He looks breathtaking while I look.. why am I even ..sigh\*

I can just feel his intense gaze, for some reason my knees are wobbly. “Mkami” he gently says, just as I reach him. Something flips in my tummy. If I didn’t know myself I’d say I’m taken back.

“I’m not your wife” I quickly argue

“Yet” okay, breath in and out Khwezi. He stands tall and looks down at me without blinking or smiling. I’m intimidated by the state he is in, his uneasy look just gets to my tummy.

“How can I help you, sosha lomkhonto wesizwe? I hope you are not hungry again because I don't have cooked food this time. And you should stop treating me like I'm your wife, only wives do what I've been doing. What happened to your face?” I talk too much sometimes. He laughs, a loud deep laughter throwing his head back. The setting sun gives a little glow on his rich dark skin, his dull brown straight eyes are twinkling

Why am I trying so hard to suppress a smile on my face? There is that thing his laughter does to me, I hate to admit it



"So I'm a soldier now?" He is smiling widely, raising his jaw clearly amused.

"How else do you explain that scar on your face, and those fresh bruises? It's like you were dodging bullets in a very sticky war back on DRC" yes I said it.

Something flashes in his eyes, I can't explain but it is quick to vanish.

"I'm no soldier Nkosazane. I'm Dalingcebo, umfana ka Zulu. UZul oMnyama ondlela zimhlophe. UMalandela, owalandel inkomo zamadoda

Somebody shoot me for being so flushed!

"What brings you to me, Zulu?" I ask, my voice suddenly gentler than normal. My eyes are blinking rapidly. Everything in my body screams

"To take what belongs to me" he is confusing me right now "what's that?" "you" I look deep into his eyes thinking he'll look away, but he doesn't. His presence alone is diplomatic yet devious. "ngiwu Khwezi, ngowaka Nkosi isbongo" yes

## Advertisement

that's my mind, introducing me without even thinking. He smiles, warmly. My heart jolts, he really is a looker when...

“Ikhwezi lokusa, ntombenhle nangamazinyo. Ndlangamandla, Siwela. maNkosi” a strange, warm feeling tingles my tummy , this time I fail to suppress my smile. It spread across my face

He moves closer and stares down at me gently “what does a scarred man like me do to see that beautiful smile on your face more often?” He softly Asks, my mouth is dry for a second as I stare at him buried in different emotions “give me flowers and lots of chocolates...” he laughs.

I'm back in my little room in about a 10 minutes' walk. I quickly start cooking, I opt for a quickie, meatballs and spaghetti

When I got this job I was excited to the core, the thought of being my own person again, living by my rules really excited me.

However, what I wasn't ready for was this place!

It is so rural, they literally use vans for transport, no taxis. And to top it all, the shopping mall is an entire hour away. Arg!

I'm busy reading the beloved maShenge when a knock disturbs me. It's after six as I check the time, when I read a book time always moves faster.

"HI" I've never seen this person in my life

"Hi, I was told to deliver these"

I'd be damned. I'm handed beautiful flowers with chocolates and all the nice staff, must be nice to be Khaye, not calling for days then apologizing with flowers

He's never bought me flowers since we started dating, Khayelihle is just Khayelihle. He knows I love flowers, I tell him every time I get the chance

He thinks I'm stupid, he is apologizing for ignoring me for so many days. Well, maybe he might be forgiven. It not like he cheated or something

There is a note

\*mkami\*

My heart is loud. This takes me back to him. But it's not him sadly,

Dalingcebo left after giving me goosebumps and all that!

These feelings are strange to me. The only person who makes my heart smile is Khayelihle, my boyfriend but when I'm with Dalingcebo it's all different. I just felt attacked with all emotions that has my heart longing for his presence. I'm afraid to even try and explain, all I know is that in his presence I lose my self. It's as if there's a magnet pulling me to him

The five days he was AWOL just made things worse I thought about him more that I should. His image kept on residing in my mind

A scarred, strange man who ate my food and asked for some more. It started with me wondering why a man in his age looked so troubled. Then he just became thousand thoughts

Shame on me for thinking about another man while my boyfriend just bought me flowers. Strike me Pink!

My phone is ringing as I'm busy staffing myself, my flowers are on the vase as it is. Yes, I have a vase of flowers. I love their smell.

"Babe" I scream when I'm too excited about something. He hates it. But well he'll just have to deal

"Open up love, I'm outside" why is he not knocking! Sometimes he act crazy.

I quickly hug him just as he enters

"I love them, I sooo love them!" I'm screaming once again, happily

He looks so bored...

"Would you just stop screaming Khwezi. Ay suka!" he is snapping at me, this man

"Well I still love them. Thank you and yes you are forgiven"

I peck his cheeks and head to my bed

"Love what?"

I look at him, confusions written all over

"duuuh! the flowers Khaye" pointing with my head I say and continue with my nice staff.

"What are you talking about Khwezi?"

"Don't joke like that, it's not cute"

I quickly utter. Is he serious right now?

"I did not buy any stupid flowers. Who bought you flowers, Khwezi?"

It's only now that I notice he is serious. My goodness

"ngkhuluma nawe man Khwezi! Who bought you the damn flowers!"

He is getting angrier by the second. I'm lost for words..

"ahh.. You"

My heart is doing its own marathon as of now

Why am I always the barrier of bad luck?

"I didn't fucken buy any stupid flowers damn it!"

I flinch, he is shouting and I don't know what to say now.

It takes a second for him to take them and throw them outside with my vase, the sound of it breaking has my blood boiling in anger. How dare he!!

I haven't paid for that vase since I took it from maSibiya next door.

- 
- 

My head is all over the place.

My heart tells me, but my mind refuses to believe it. My brain cannot fathom this.

How can he do this? Buy me things without letting me know. I was with him but he never mentioned anything, anything at all.

Khayelihle left about two hours ago.

He had to because if he didn't something worst would have occurred. His hand would have probably landed on my cheeks, I felt it, and I knew it could come.

Thalente came to my rescue, he is the mastende's son. The only son. He is like a brother to me. Soft heart with a big smile. He had to drag him out of here in fist, bless his soul. May God give him a better job.

We've had fights before but this one, this one takes the cup. It was ugly, I made it worse when I blurted how other men do things for him. I was angry okay, he had no right to break my vase.

My heart is still broken as it is...

I'm falling asleep when my phone starts annoying me. It's ringing so loud.

I thought it's Khaye but nope. It's a number I've never seen...

I don't pick up strange phone calls at this time. It's after 9, approaching ten.

I'm black okay, I do believe in witchcraft even on the phone. Well, my mother told me about this story of a girl who died because she picked up a call late at night. I can't be the next victim.

Is this person crazy! This is the fifth missed call. He doesn't get tired does he? Now I believe I'm being bewitched, I mean how do you explain this...



Well not today Satan! Where is my Bible, yes I own one because my mother is a pastors wife, which makes me the pastor kid.

This witch won't know what hit her or him rather...

When the phone rings for the seventh time I answer and start screaming "uJesu esezelwe emihleni ka Herod iNkosi! KWAFIKA IZAZI ZIVELA EMPUMALANGA ZITHIII... NOT TODAY SATAN! GO BACK TO HELL WHERE YOU CAME FROM YOU WITCH! PERISH, FIRE!!!"

I'm breathlessly staring at the screen. The call is still ongoing. But there is no voice. Oh, are they dead?

"mkami"

Oh my Gooood!!

Oh no oh no!!!

My hands are on my spinning head. I don't know what to do, what to say and... Jesus why do you forsake me this much. I'm the choir leader for Christ sake, my prayer should be the first thing you see in the book of prayers...

"maNkosi, ngyaz ukhona. Khuluma nendoda"

Butterflies! my legs are wobbly. And my heart is literally racing out of my chest

"ahem... Zulu"

What a soft voice I have over here

"So I scored myself a praying wife. Kmele nghlabel oMageba ngbonge"

Oh damn you Dalingcebo. I can't help the widest smile resting on my lips...

"I'm sorry I thought it was a witch..."

I apologize. He is laughing. I can imagine his eyes twinkling, his face just fills up my mind...suddenly the desire to see him again fills up my heart that it even hurt a little..

"So witches on your side use phone calls. They are advanced and technologically gifted"

He is still laughing

"don't laugh Dalingcebo. These things happen. My mother told me about a girl who died because of....."

Okay I'm doing it again.. rumbling for no reason

"Don't stop, I'm listening nkosazane yam" my head is buzzing with multitude of emotions right now. What is this man doing to me?

"Hhayike mmm.." Jesus..

"Anyway Why are you calling me at this time. It's so late. I didn't know you had my number"

I say

"indoda yenz okmele ikwenze"

Everything this man says just get everything in me to jump

"Normal people are dreaming right now Dalingcebo" I tell him

"I'm dreaming too maNkosi.. About you"

I'm quite, I was caught off guard...

"These dreams I have of you are sucking my breath and squeezing my heart maNkosi. Maybe I'm just an idiot for falling for a woman I've only seen four times. Maybe I'm making a mistake for calling you this time but I want to be close to you. These dreams of you are keeping me awake, making me realize that you are far, far away from me and that.. That breaks me... "

I'm left defeated and shivering.. I feel something in me flipping.

" Dalingcebo I... "

"Please allow me to see that dazzling face of yours again nkosazane yam. Release me from these lingering dreams, please"

OH Bawo what's happening to me. I feel like my body is on fire

"kulungile Zulu"

## TWELVE

Khwezi

It's been exactly 10 minutes after that phone call that literally changed my life. I'm not sure how to react, what to do and what not.

My dishes are always clean but I'm washing them again. They might have some dust... okay my knees are dancing kwasakwa.. My thump is asking to be socked deep in my tongue but I'm still washing dishes.

My heart keep on skipping with every sound I hear. I'm done with the dishes. I've made the bed and what else... he might be hungry.

I take out my left over meatballs with spathethi and warm them up..

What else... What...

A hard knock has my heart in turmoil.

This is so annoying and strange. I'm highly agitated as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs.

"maNkosi. UDalingcebo" His gruffly voice rumbles softly...

My sweaty, shaking hands turn on the knob and he is here, I gulp at his sight staring at me as if I'm a miracle waiting to vanish

His finger make contact with my chin. I'm not sure how I'm still keeping a close gaze but we are just here, him playing with my chin and our eyes glued.

I'm having emotions attacking me at once. My stomach is in knots

"Khwezikazi, ungenzan mtanomuntu"

He speaks finally

I'm suddenly engulfed in a bone crushing hug that leaves me breathless.

He is on his black sweatpants and a leopard vest. God, he is wearing a leopard vest at night. No wonder he can't sleep

It's the third time he is here, difference is this time already he has found a perfect spot on my bed. Resting on his back, his arms as a pillow. I don't get why he is so relaxed on my bed watching every step I take.

It makes me feel nervous. If I wasn't dishing up for him my thumb would be in my mouth as of now .I can't believe I invited a stranger just because he called me mkami, my mother would call an entire prayer women on me if she were to hear about this. She's my best friend though, I'll probably tell her myself.

"you like doing that" I say and shoot a short glance at him "doing what?" of course he'll act dumb "staring at me" he chuckles again, he loves to chuckle I've concluded "do I make you nervous maNkosi?" wh.. "No!" that's a defensive, over the tone no. He is drilling me with his pricing gaze now, dude you are in my house! He can't be making me feel so small like an intruder in my own house, where I pay rent and...

He is standing up, charging towards me.

Yep. I'm going to faint today. I don't know what his presence does to me but I lose myself...

“buyakhazimula ubuhle bakho Khwezikazi, I don't mind staring at you day in day out” his voice suddenly rumbles. He has a horsey, gruff voice.

His finger find my chin and our eyes meet. With the rate my heart is pumping, I'm afraid heart attack is nearing.

My mouth opens to say something but I end up saying nothing. My voice is trapped in between my lungs and my pipeline...

I don't know what's happening but it's making my whole body paralyzed slowly his face dips until his warm lips land on my forehead and that has butterflies filling my tummy.

Then I'm pulled in a tight, bone crushing hug. He is hugger. I'm in love with this gesture.

The moment the hug breaks, eye contact begins. I want to look away, but I can't.

His eyes draws me in, I feel a burning desire to see beyond and know every single thing there is about him “you just vanished Dali, I thought I'd never see you again”



.. I should train my mind to keep things hidden sometime this week. His gaze is turning into a wide grin "Did you look for me?" he asks, amused but I shake my head. " Khwezi lam lokusa" whoever said boys must be burned was clearly losing their mind...

"ahm.." I'm speechless, all of me speechless!

He hasn't stopped, busy caressing my chin and that makes me feel like his own thing..

"I didn't vanish, I was sorting out something with my brothers.  
"

"It's crazy how I missed you for the past five days..."he says, I want to say I missed him too but I end up shying away from his gaze... looking down my feet

Two things I wasn't until I met him..

Shy and speechless... There are personalities that only he can manifest from me.

.

.

Everything seems so right. Me in his arms. It's Saturday morning, I can hear roosters crowing anticipating sunrise

Now how do I turn and face him.

His hands are all around me, he moves and I feel something poking me. My heart skips.. My body reacts strangely..

Oh God. He kisses my neck and squeeze my bums..

"ahem.. Daligcebo.."

My morning voice whispers

"ulale kahle mama?" damn these tingles in my tummy

"yes I sle... Uhm.. " oh God. He is nibbling my neck gently. And..

"what" he asks, still buried in my neck. His warm breath is tickling. I want to scream that's my weak spot!

But my senses are slowly leaving me..

I whimper softly, moving my head aside...

The knock!!

It brings back my sense and I quickly move away from him. He is laughing.

"Sis Khwezi. Can you please lend me your kettle?"

It's Thamente speaking outside my door. Why am I so frustrated all of a sudden..

I hand him the kettle in a tiny space. He can't see inside. As I turn I bump into a hard surface

"Who was that?"

I freak out.

I thought he was in bed, when did he jump to come to me

"it's...Thamente.he..he was borrowing an Iron" I'm stammering. It's the way he is looking at me. His face is a bit bold

"An Iron?"

"ye.. Oh flip. Silly me.. It's a kettle"

What's wrong with me this morning

"let's.. Take a bath" I quickly move away from him and start plugging water with my other kettle. I have two.

Here is a thing with this tiny room, there is no bathroom. So I use a basin to bath, at the corner near the door.

With the two of us here I won't be able to.

After giving him my brand new bath cloth and a soup

I pour water in the basin then take my things. I'll bath at the main house today.

He is done when I return, smelling everything I am. He is by the door, staring at my key. This man is strange

"What would you like for breakfast?"

He turns and stands behind me. I'm already putting a pan on the stove.

"Anything that comes to your mind maNkosi" I feel like those ancient wives back in the days

"If I fry a frog, would you eat it?" he is laughing. Dalingcebo is a breath of fresh air. His throaty, deep Laughter just ticks all the boxes

"Well, I know that frog will taste even more delicious than KFC. Anything made by you is delicious to me.."

Aw... my cheeks are burning right now

"Frogie it is then" I say, suppressing a blush.

I'm thinking he'll go to bed but not him. He has found a perfect spot on the fridge, he is leaning against it but very taller

I'm done putting cooking oil, waiting for them to heat up so I can put fish fingers

"Where is your vase? And flowers?" oh that..

"Khayelihle threw them out.... He"

I clear my throat.my life is moving too fast, on a very thin lane.  
How did I find myself in this situation...

"who's that?"

He is frowning.. Think! think!!

"My friend. I asked her to clean and she broke the vase so I told her to throw it away.."

He mumbles a long "mmmm"

"Dalingcebo. You bought flowers without telling me"

I say, trying to change the topic. I'm back to frying fish fingers

I feel his hand encircling my waist behind me and yes.. His mouth is on my neck. Tingles shoot through my body

"You said they put a smile on your face, I love to put a smile on your face"

When I speak he listens, I'm sold. This man. He turns me around and just burn me with his hard yet warm stare.

I feel like the prettiest princess

My thumb is already dancing with my mouth, his look makes me nervous

Slowly he takes my thumb out and I gasp as he slowly sucks it in his mouth..

I'm dazed. This gesture is somehow erotic

He stops. I'm thinking he'll return to bed instead I'm suddenly lifted up and bounced on the bed like a sack of potatoes..

I didn't even get the chance to scream..

And now he is on top of me. Staring at me, his presence is still bold and... making me edgy

"manj uth ubani lomasaka?"

Wh...did he just..

"which one?" I whisper

"the kettle ..."

"Thalente" I reply, his gaze is really burning me

I'm in between his arms staring up at him. He completely caged me in

"What is he to you?" he quickly ask

".. Nothing. Just a mastende's son. He is not a bad guy. He's like a brother to me because when I have trouble with the door he fixes it, and that kettle. He is the one who fixed it. I have a new one now but when I suggested he takes it, he refused"

I'm speaking fast without even taking time to breathe. I feel suffocated, he is up my face breathing down on me.. I can't concentrate, I'm losing it

"Isikhon indoda manj. Akafusege!" I'm taken back. with that his face lowers. I'm blinking countlessly, my drumming heart is too much on my chest

"Can I kiss you mkam" My breathing instantly quickens as the tip of his tongue teases my lips. In less than a second I'm thrown in a deep lingering kiss, I feel a burst of adrenaline rushing through my body like firecrackers

His kisses travel to my weakest spot, his hands gently playing with my hard nipples ... "Dali...Ngcebo".. I whimper softly, my heart is loud, my breathing is like I just ran a 100km marathon.

My body feels hot and craving for his touches even more..

I feel the other hand resting on my forbidden fruit. I'm still in my pajamas but his touch manages to make me moan softly..

My head is thrown back, he is rubbing me gently that an extreme pleasure shoots in every inch of my body..

The Knock again!!!

"Sis Imina futh. Ngleth ketela"

He stops. Literally as If he expected that Thacente would knock anytime and head straight to the door.



I'm frustrated, and... I have a throbbing clit here asking for a release. Thacente has no bloody timing

He takes the kettle and goes out with Thacente closing the door behind him. The hell! I was hiding him and now he out there chit chatting with... are they even chit chatting

My senses return. And I smell something burning... flip!!

The breakfast!

He is back in less than a minute and I'm by the dish washing basin putting water on my very burnt pan.. This man is making me do things I've never thought I would. I can't believe I forgot food!

He finds this whole thing humorous as his laughter vibrates behind me.

Dalingcebo can't keep his hands to himself. I feel him squeezing my bum.. Jesus

"What did you talk about with Thacente?"

I quickly ask. His heavy head is on my poor shoulder

"besikhulum eyamadoda mkam"... That mkami makes me feel uncomfortable because of the tone he used. As if politely telling me to ask no further...

Arg!

ooooxxoooo

SWAZI

My laptop is totally damaged. The ink is all over the screen. I can't believe I broke it down, I don't even know when or how.

This isn't normal, I fainted again yesterday after what I watched. I was woken up by Veli splashing cold water on my face.

I've been numb since then. I'm that one person who just closes off when I'm going through shit, and this one is worse than shit..

Mthunzi is going to send me to an early grave. I can't even stomach anything

I'm hurting, deeply. My phone is ringing for the umpteenth time. As if he can sense that something is wrong he has been calling and calling

. And I'm doing a very good job at ignoring him.

You know what. Let me wipe my hands clean and..

\*whatever we had is over. You can send your people to take back your sick, thin cows suffering from kwashiorkor. I hate you Mthunzi Zulu. I curse the day I met you\*

Send and..... Blocked.. Great.

Time to move on.. Why do I feel like screaming my lungs out?

Veli is staring at me strangely as we wash clothes by the lake. Sbani is with Gogo, she didn't want me to take him.

Ndondo, she has totally forgotten about me that one. She loves Mandlakhe more than she loves me..

"What?" I ask.

"What's going on with you? That wasn't a normal outburst yesterday?" she ask glancing at me shortly

Thank God my laptop got damaged before she could see that video.

Is that his t-shirt? How did it end up in my clothes? Or, I packed the t shirt when I left Durban.

Veli is shocked to see me hitting and destroying the t shirt...

My lungs close in, the lump in my throat grows. I'm losing my mind...

"Swazi bakit"

My legs fail me as I slide down the ground and let out a loud wail...

Oh Mthunzi...

## THIRTEEN

Khwezi

He keeps staring at me, one thing about me is I eat. Sometimes I feel like I eat for two dead people, like they eat through me because holy air keeps them hungry. Why do we have to eat holy air though when we are dead. It worries me that one day I'll have no ribs, no wings, no medium done steak and French fries. Just holy air...

That thought fry my brain completely.

Maybe the Garden of Eden still have fruits and vegetables. But I doubt.. With the race of people dying...

"What's on your mind?" I'm brought back by his voice. After that burnt breakfast this morning he offered to take us out for breakfast. Though we had to pass by his home to change. Let's just say the moment he drove inside the yard I laid down the chair so that no one could see me and well.. Nobody saw me

"Do you think holy air is delicious, I feel like it's a tasteless kind of food. That's if it's even food to begin with"

He is confused. The lines on his forehead are formed

"The holy air that we eat once we are dead" I remind his frozen brain. He is laughing again. Arg this man

"Why are you even thinking about this?"

He asks, still finding me funny

"It worries me. Seriously Dalingcebo. What if the holy air is isn't enough for everyone" he's looking at me as if I'm insane

"At least you'll get to eat that holy air. Some of us will be dancing with the devil in hell" I'm taken back. Why do I feel like there is a lot more buried in that statement and... God it makes me uncomfortable

"What makes you say that?"

"Because I know heaven will freeze even if I step my foot by mistake"

What...

"don't you dare tell me you kill people Dalingcebo Zulu"

Sometimes I say whatever

He doesn't seem shocked

"Only those who asks for it..."

I choke on my food, stare at him bewildered. He looks unshaken.

My goodness! Is he serious?

"Ahem. You are not serious. Phew! What a bad joke" that's what I end up saying. I'm trying to convince myself...

He is staring at me

"You are very beautiful maNkosi"

He tells me gently. Look at me falling in the trap

"Tell me, who is Khwezi Nkosi? Besides being umkami " now he is trying to soften me...

"Well I'm Khwezi Nkosi as you know. I have a brother whom I'd rather not talk about a lot. My father is pastor Nkosi and my mother is married to him. I'm from a small Christian family back

in Eskhawini, J2. I grew up singing 10 commandments and attending Sunday school..

"How old are you?" he is smiling beautifully

"I'm a 24-year-old Geography teacher who's been secretly crushing on a scar faced contractor and thinking about him a lot" I didn't just say that out loud. Right, I did.

Dalingcebo is grilling me with a bold gaze.

"What did you imagine me doing? While thinking about me" he gently says, licking his bottom lip. My breathing hinge

His gaze is piercing as if trying to unleash the bitchy side of me  
He looks erotic

"Nothing..."

"That's sad because I've imagined doing a lot of things to you....Lot of wild things"

my clit throbs once...

"Uhm... Really?" I'm such an idiot



"Take off your underwear" he roughly commands, his eyes smaller than normal

I do as told. I'm a chicken sometimes

My mouth is slightly opened, his eyes are glued into me as he sniffs on my red number. Why am I getting sexually aroused with this?

"woza la maNkosi" We are seated at the corner, Spur and its dim lighting will work in my favor . I hope no one sees this

I slowly go to him and he quickly makes me sit on top of him. As to why I wore a dress. Must be the zuluish in him that compelled me

"Spread your legs for me Mami" he whispers and I quickly do that, hooking them on either of his tall legs

My fruit is throbbing and wide open

I'm heaving and falling as his hands start drawing circles on my thighs. I'm holding my breath

"Breathe we don't want you to faint now do we" he utters in my ear

His hand trail up until they reach my fruit.

"Don't make noise" he orders. Before I nod I feel his finger teasing the tip of my entrance. My head falls on the table, my mouth biting my bare arm trying to stifle moans

His fingertip slips between my folds "Dali..." I whimper softly

He parts my fold with two fingers and finds my clit, rubbing it in small circles. I'm failing to hold it in. I'm thrown in deep pleasures engulfing all of me.

His fingers are working hard down there. My eyes are surely rolling back as I'm consumed by the immense pleasure. . He begins a steady rhythm as his fingers flicker over my clit and ...

I'm whimpering, I can't keep still, my hips are moving side to side.

I feel it building from the deepest of my soul, an unexpected long faint moan escapes my mouth as I'm hit by an intense orgasm breaking my bones...

"What's wrong with her....is she okay?" I hear a voice as I try to recover

"She's going to be fine. Nothing to worry about."- Dalingcebo

"Are you okay Mami?"

He whispers in my ear, nibbling my neck...

What did I get myself into...?

:

:

Dalingcebo dropped me off a while ago. Ended up spending my entire day with him. I can't seem to get away from him, I want to be in his presence all the time. He bought me another vase and flowers. He is such a gentle man.

After breakfast we lazed around town until my feet were aching. He even drove us to his house at King Dinuzulu. We cleaned and then left.

I can't stop myself from smiling. I'm over the moon, I keep on pinching myself just to feel if I'm still real.

I'm not a high school kid, I know when I have feelings for a man but with Dalingcebo it's just a whole new level. It almost make my heart ache a little. I totally lose myself when I'm with him.

The last hours have been my happiest, the most glorious moment that can never be erased in my unstable mind.

It's starting to be dark outside. I'm not cooking, Dalingcebo bought me a bucket of KFC. I think he is obsessed with it because he bought a whole bucket for himself too.

I dial my mother's, she picks up on the first ring

"awusangfun wena ngane!" that her line of greeting

"aw mfaz kababa. What have I done ke ngoku"

"You ignored me for two days. Hey, what's wrong with you. You want me to die of a heart attack"

She's always exaggerating

"You could have called me too you know, you are the one married to a principal here. Not me"

I say Laughing

"don't act smart with me young lady. I'm a housewife here, you are a whole teacher!"

"okay okay... I'm so sorry ndodakaz ka Mngwengwe" she laughs

And ask how I am

"I'm feeling soooo happy..."

"Please tell me you didn't just have sex with that black ass of yours..."

Gross. Khayelihle is hated by this Christian woman

"Mama!" as blunt as she is, she's still my mother and sex talk is still strange

"Please think of my grandkids Khwezi. Seriously who will play with your kids? I know I won't"

Trust her to remind me every day that I'm dark skinned. It doesn't hurt me

"Forget about Khaye. I'll dump his ass soon..."

She's ululating hurting my eardrums, I didn't know she hated him this much

There's a sudden knock at the door.

"I'll call you later mama, someone is at the door"

I drop the call.

The knock persist annoying me

Opening my door I'm met with an enraged lion ready to eat me...

I'm shocked and freaked out

"Khaye" that's all I manage to say

"So it's true?" I'm confused

"What are you talking about?"

I gulp, I'm shaking on the inside. His gaze is unsettling and chilly

"Would you look at that, it's a mosquito bite is it? What a strong mosquito"

He deeply states, inspecting my neck.

Flip, my hand rush straight to my neck hiding what he has already seen.

Damn Dalingcebo, he fucken left a hickey! I'm not amazed, he is obsessed with my neck. Its worse that I'm wearing a revealing dress

"So you are not even going to deny it?"

"Whatever you think you heard is not my business. Ngcel ungsukela phamb komnyango wam Khayelihle"

He moves inside, I stagger back...

"uyangnyela Yaz Khwezi! Ungbhanqa nolwatha manj wena?"

He is screaming in rage..

"Khaye, please leave my house.."

"so that you can invite your boyfriend again??"

I scream as he pushes me against the fridge.

Thalente is here in a blink of an eye. They quarrel until he leaves. Thalente promised him a bullet through his eyes shall he return...

"Thank you" I say, still shaken.

"Fix this mess Khwezi. Before Ngcebo finds out"

And he leaves. What does he mean Ngcebo? Are they friends now. In just one second since they met he is already taking his side.

I lock my door and throw my heavy body on my bed.

Where is my phone?

\*its over\*

Send...

I hope it's enough to back him off.

My phone beeps..

\*in your dreams\*

. Yemam!

I quickly block his number and heave a sigh. Everything happened so fast. One minute I was with Khaye then Dalingcebo just resurfaced and changed everything. Had I got



enough time, I swear I would have broken up with him properly.

My phone vibrates again... its Dalingcebo this time. Oh no I can't talk to him right now.

I ignore his calls. I already know he'll call me until I give in so I switch my phone off and sleep...

.

I'm deeply sleeping when I suddenly feel the urge to open my eyes. Is someone in my house?

"Khwezi lam"

"AHHHH!"

My chest is pumping hard

"You gave me such a fright Dalingcebo, are you trying to kill me?" I breathlessly shout at him. How dare he?

The lights are on. But it's dark outside. When did Ngcebo arrive?

"Who allowed you inside my room??"

This is creepy...

He is standing, staring down at me.

What's with the black clothes, black hoodie.. And track pants

"sondela skhulume" he deeply says.

Why am I feeling intimidated? His presence isn't welcoming. I feel chills down my spine

I'm seated at the edge of the bed. Him in front of me crouching on my level, head down. His hands are buried deep in his pockets

"what's happening Zulu?"

I ask, feeling scared suddenly

"I have only one question for you and please. Think before lying to me"

I swallow nothingness. I don't like his stern tone. He voice is calm but scaring me

"you're scaring me Dalingcebo"

I softly say

"Who is Khayelihle?"

My blood vessels dry up..

My brain is frozen. The fact that he is not even sparing me a look kills me even more.

He looks up. Our eyes meet and my inside shrinks.

"he is ...was my boyfriend. But I broke up with him. You can see the message yours self if you don't believe me"

"So he is not your friend anymore?"

"ngiyaxolisa Zulu.." I quickly say. Why is he looking so scary?

"ukhalelan pho?" who wouldn't cry in such a complicated situation.

"Mami, I know I came on too strong but when I ask you a question, I expect nothing but the truth." his voice has become soft.

He leans in and plants a wet peck on my lips, Wipes my tears and stares deep in my eyes as if searching for something...

My stomach is in knots. He is making me nervous. My thumb socked in my mouth

He stands, goes towards the door and turn

"ngyabuya.." the keys are in his pockets. Is that Thacente outside the door?

"Hi sis"he says, peaking his face. The.. Hell!

He gave Dalingcebo the spare keys..

And Dali is putting back the keys when they suddenly fall.

Something catches my eyes on his waist as he bow down to pick the keys... I'm on my feet in a blink

" Oh God.. Is that a gun, Dalingcebo? "

He doesn't seem fazed, instead he stares at me and says "lala mkam, uyekel amadoda enz umsebenzi wawo"

The door closes before I can say anything...

I'm crying, shaking as I dial my mother's number

"mama! Uzombulala mah!"

oooo\_x\_x\_oooo

## Swazi

Sunday mornings are always glory for a church going granny of mine. She woke up early, made a porridge for all of us and left for church.

And I'm now forced to feed my five month old baby a Maize porridge. Gogo is the one who started, she said I'm starving Sbani. And the little man really muffed the porridge. I feel so bad.. Then this is my first child, and definitely the last.

I'm done packing Ndondo's bag. It's suddenly gloomy. No one wants her to leave. A part of me wants to believe that gogo went to church to avoid seeing her leaving.

Delani is the one who'll fetch her. Again I'm separated from her. And it's hurting me but I can't really do anything. At least she'll visit during school holidays and weekends..

I take her bag after saying her goodbyes and walk out. The car is parked very far from my home.

These people still hate each other like cat and dogs. About a 10 minute walk we reach the car. I give her a long, tight hug.

The driver's door opens and Delani comes out...

"koti" he acknowledges me, I nod.

I'm about to turn when the back door opens revealing my worst nightmare..

I'm engulfed with all emotions, I don't know whether to hug him or shoot him or just break down and cry.....

Then I feel it, the heavy presence that he carries everywhere he goes. He is in front of me, his heavy presence is weighing down on me as he stares down at me..

His gaze is boring a hole on me...

"Can we talk?" its sound like a demand.

I bet he saw my message and then I blocked him...

"Bye Ndondo"

I turn, only to be grabbed abruptly and bump on his chest

"don't touch me!" he let's go.

He is angry, way too angry. His eyes emits fire

"usuyahlanyan Swazelihle?"

He angrily ask

"Of course I'm losing my mind after seeing a video of you slicing people's organs out "

I scream. He staggers back, looking like he just saw a ghost.

"What are you saying?"

He ask

.I click my tongue and leave

Advertisement

he can figure that out on his own. I'm done...

My legs are getting wobbly. Tears are blurring my vision.

\*\*\*Penelope Nhleko\*\*\*

He just looked at me and deeply said

"usumnik usawoti ekhanda lakho Zobuhle. Uyakuhlanyisa and I'm going to deal with it."

I thought he was just saying, but when his touch made contact with my skin, I shivered

The kiss that day was different. I've been with men who kissed me just to get under my skirt but his, it carried a strong, heavy message

His hands traveled all of me, even the places I thought had no feelings were just screaming at his touch.

I always imagined our first time to be in a hotel, not on that tiny rondavel of his. It's why we were fighting in the first place. Because I had booked a hotel and told him we must spend a weekend there.

As always, he disagreed with me. I don't know how he knew what I was planning but he plainly told me that he was going to



have me anywhere he wanted, anyhow and I won't do anything to stop him. The hell!

I was so offended so with anger I fired

"udakiwe Mandla" and that's when he told me about a sawoti he had to take care of and he did

Laying on the bed I was already out of it. Ready for him

He took his time, kissing every inch of me. Even my toes, my knees. I remember crying, begging him to be inside.. I was under his spell and I was out of it.

My walls clenched as he finally entered me, so deep that I screamed and he had to keep his hand on my mouth to shut me. I'd never felt aroused like that, the repetitive deep strokes, in and out of me drove me insane, the sudden urge to pee grew and I cried begging for nothing really but I was so powerless.

Beyond that deep, internal sensation, I felt like I was going through a sudden heat flash.

My legs held up high, he pat my bum and said "let it all out Mama"

And he did take out all the salt he said I had..

I cried, for what. I don't know.. A harsh, yet consuming orgasm I've never had, had my whole body trembling, squeezing my tummy, my toes curling and that was it for me. After that huge release I felt a sudden wetness afterwards...

Mandlakhe humbled me, he dealt with me and for the first time in my life I became a marinated chicken during the deed, just crying, whimpering, begging and moaning

"hey, who are you planning to kill this time" ..

I'm nudged by a familiar voice, it's Belly. My business partner. We are having a meeting at Nandos, in Sithebe. This colored gay who's smart as they come.

"I need the loo"

My legs are tight, I feel so sexually aroused. Damn it, let me see the loo.

I'm not in the mood for anything. As if Belly knew, he ended our meeting. He knows what I'm going through.

Instead of going home I drive straight to Ndulinde.

We don't talk much anymore. Since last Monday, I lost another baby. In a space of four months since the last miscarriage.

Pain doesn't begin to describe how I am, it's like I'm in a bottomless pit with no hope of being rescueded.

Mandlakhe just calls, ask how I am and that's it.

I have no strength, I'm drained. Mandla is Mandla. He is stubborn and refuses to talk to me about his pain. But it really hit us bad this time.

They don't mind me anymore in this yard, they recognize me and I think they've warmed up to me.

I greet gogo who gives me a tightly warm hug that I almost break down in her arms

"Nangu antiiii!!" Qedi, my baby girl screams. I've learnt to always bring sweet things when I come here. I give Qedi the plastics, I also bought gogo's favorite snack, Nik Naks.

Opening the door, he is lying awake. He knows I'm in here but he doesn't look up.

There was a time where my presence made him jump..

"Zobuhle" another change, I'm no longer maNhleko

"Honey" I've grown to be love sick puppy. My love for him seems to grow every single day.

I take off my clothes and get in bed. He takes me in his arms. I put my head in his shoulder and close my eyes.

I do miss him, he knows

It doesn't take long for our bodies to dance in one, he is like that. Gone are the love making days. He just fucks me and watch me sleep. He is good at that..

I'm lying on my stomach, him pumping hard behind me. I'm whimpering and he is just there, not even groaning softly. He

deals with loss difficulty. I Love him but I don't know how long this will last..

"Mandla.." my strangled voice call out his name, my toes curling as an orgasm hit me hard. In no later than a second he collapse on top of me. Breathing heavily.

The only language we speak nowadays is this.. Nothing else

Today I don't sleep. Instead I ask how he is doing, his hand is under the blanket again and he finds my Barbie. I moan.

His touch alone is magical

And before I know it I'm being finger fucked.. I'm a screamer and he knows, I'm just moaning as pleasure consumes me once again. This will kill us, sex but not talking. It will destroy us..

I don't know when we fell asleep but it's dark when I'm woken up by his arms tightening around me, his hands touching my breast. Of course my body always responds to his touch but it's nothing new. I sleep naked, and he sleeps naked too.

Something we haven't changed so far. Through this hardest time, my body is still his favorite place. Sometimes he just hold me all night and says nothing. It scares me

I feel him entering me from behind, a deep moan follows... He is killing me this man.

I grab the sheets and cry a deep moan

He hasn't moved when I feel him shaking behind me, then I feel liquid dropping on my skin..

"Mandlakhe" I try to turn instead he hold me tight and the speed increases. I'm crying, for what I'm feeling in my body and my heart. He is not sniffing but I know. He is crying too..

How did we reach this level? ...

My man crying behind me, not wanting me to look at his vulnerable state and.. Comfort him..

We need each other but he is not letting me in.

I'm unable to walk properly as I prepare to leave. After the crying saga he just pat my bum and ordered me to sleep.

Now he is here, looking sexy as If we don't have problems threatening our reunion... sigh\*

"Swazi is back" he suddenly utters,

Kiss my cheek and get out.

.

He doesn't want to admit but she means a lot to him. They shared the same womb, same mother that I've concluded he loves and hates at the same time .

A year later, there are still scars that I cannot heal. They are deeper than me. Mandla has issues, motherly issues.

He doesn't talk about his mother. I had to hear the story from gogo. When I hinted it his face changed into something else.

He hates his mother. I think it's because she left him with gogo when he was young and craved for her love and comfort.

And there is another issue of his father, he doesn't know who his father is. He only has just a Surname, Nkosi.

And that's just it.

I know boys love their fathers, in a way he craves his father too, his roots and knowing who he really is. He has never bothered to try and find his father but I know he need him, as old as he is that is that boy in him that craves a father.

## FOURTEEN

Khwezi

I've been wide awake since the wee hours of the morning, but I don't have the energy to leave my bedroom.

I've sent the principal a message that I'm home, there is an emergency. I'm not one to just absent for no reason so he understood and gave me today and tomorrow.

After Ngcebo saga I couldn't stay. Sunday morning I packed what I could and left. I'm home, trying to think of ways to get out of the mess that I created.

Whenever I think of Dalingcebo I feel every bit of me leaving.

My father was here this morning, I pretended to be asleep so he kissed my forehead and left.



My parents love me and they've never hid that. Sabelo, my brother is probably somewhere in the hood causing havoc.

Sabelo is 10 years older than me. While he was in grade 11 he just changed out of the blue. Did some weed, drugs and now He is a total hobo.

It's strange, the only son whose father is the most respected in the community. My father is a principal at Bajabulile Primary school and also a pastor at eNkanyisweni Lutheran Church.

But his son is everything he is not..

Sometimes it's like his mind is off..

He seems unstable or so... yes we hide our wallets because he is good at making money vanish.

Sometimes I wish I had at least a sister, maybe we'd get along with her. There's a knock at the door, I quickly pull my blanket and pretend to be asleep

“yehheni! Ngyaliwa kwami! Wake up you spoiled brat” my blanket is harshly removed from me and I sit up, yawning and grumping.

“This is not a hotel wena ngane! Omama bomthandazo are coming over and you want them to find you still in your pajamas, sies man Khwezi” as to why that is my business, I don’t know “it’s not even Thursday nje mama, beside you saw these women just yesterday at church. Why am I being disturbed for things that aren’t my business?” I ask, getting off the bed.

I quickly dive a very hard slap coming my way, see. She is a drama queen

“

MAMA!”

“konj phel usuqomile wena, sunendond entsha sha and his dick is driving you crazy...”

His fingers actually but...

" mama! "

" mayebulalan lamadoda ungisize ntomb ungangkhalel. Come and help me with the baking. I can’t have people over only to starve them” she is making the bed for me, oh bawo. I shouldn't have told her about my crazy love life.

“Those who are hungry will eat the voice of God, with a Salad of holy air on the side. We can’t be feeding these ungrateful group of gossipers with my father’s hard earned money..”

I’m mumbling thinking she can’t hear me, another slap, this one landed on my back and I’m in pain damn this woman

I’m in my simple clothes and we are busy baking in the kitchen.

“When are you giving me grandkids we Khwezi” she can’t keep her mouth shut

“when I’m old enough mah, why are even talking about grandkids when my love life is this messy.. ” I say, she laughs.

Nothing is funny!

“Oh my baby, I should see this new guy who carries guns like toys. He is driving you insane. I've never seen you like this. You're so in love my baby”

I look at her in awe

" there's nothing funny about a man holding a gun  
mama"

"Solve your problems wena and stop running away from  
gunman"

I rest my case

“Men are trash. I want to be a lesbian” a swap is thrown at my direction and I quickly dodge it

“aibo! Mama!” what! At the kitchen door stands none other than my childhood best friend, I scream and give him a hug

“Phehelo, wow! Look at you. All grown and looking handsome” yeap, the new man in his life is treating him good. He is gay but in my dad's eyes he is his perfect future in law...

“Oh well, you know who is responsible for this glow. Hi Mam mfundisi” she hugs my mother

Phehelo dresses like a man, he is not the girlish type of gay. He is a man. You'd mistake him for straight guys if you don't know.

I don't blame my father for hoping, sadly there is a gunman future in law for him

Okay why am I even... can he just leave my mind in peace,

“Akobe awumithangake we Phehelo” trust my mother to say something stupid..

"so, how is life?" he asks, settling in one of the free chairs. Mom leaves us for privacy I think

"life is... ungreat" he laughs

"I know, one minute you think you are in love, the next minute you grill yourself for even allowing yourself to fall in love"

Now I'm curious

"What happened?"

I ask, settling next to him

"my man cheated, with my employer"okay..here I am thinking they are having it easy in the gay community

"ow! He is trash" I can't believe that's all I could say to him

"I'm done with him." shem, mjolo is a total scam

"so you are leaving your job?" how else would he be here during the week day

"no, of course not. I'm just taking a day break" I feel him..

Spending time at home is always joyful to me, Phehelo is still around. Sabelo is back as well, at least he is clean today. We love him at home, my mother still hope that he'll change one day. I doubt.

He's been sent to more than eight rehabilitation centers. Even the ones that aren't free yet he only recovers for a few days and the old him emerges..

I once tried, and took him to therapy.

He said things that didn't even make sense.

That's when I knew that this man is beyond saving. But I still pray for him..

.

I'm lazing around with Phehelo, even Binge watching my favorite movies on my laptop is just boring. My mind is stacked on this Zulu man who has my life upside down.

Later in the day I walk Phehelo out and return back home. I pass the lounge area and close my ears. My mother and her

prayer buddies are filling up the entire lounge area loudly screaming Jesus name. This is abuse to the man of God, I feel sorry on his behalf

Let me just take a nap, I'll wake up with a better solution...

I'm almost dozing off when a knock suddenly comes through. My mom peaks her head

"kunengane laph ekfunayo"

God knows how I hate being distracted in my own time. Arg!

I find this kid I've seen in church smiling widely..

"hi sis, khon umunt oth angkucele" who could ask for me and have no courage to get inside my home.

"who is that person? "

I ask, people are getting kidnapped every day and I can't just up and go

"uthen angimcelel umkami?"

I'm not Mka... oh God!!

"Tell him to get lost" with that I quickly rush inside with my stomach doing wonders...

Dalingcebo can't go around carrying guns after telling me he kills those who ask for it.. God he wasn't joking. I don't want anyone's death on my hands..

Damn you Dalingcebo Zulu. My head is buzzing with questions. I can't keep still. Why can't he just stay away?

I had to switch my phone off, with the rate he was calling and now he following me home? Why is he doing this to me. How did he even know where I live?

Oh shit.

Where are my things...

I find my mother in the kitchen serving her buddies

"mama, I'm leaving" I tell her. She swiftly turn and a wide smile appears on her

"I knew it! Go. And please don't forget to use a condom.... "she says, Bawo!

"Kiss dad for me please.."



"kissing him, 100% will do. But for you. Noo. I'll be kissing him for me.."

I've heard enough, I quickly leave her laughing

He is Parked about six houses away from my house. I wonder how long he has been here, did he see me with Phehelo? I doubt

He is leaning against the bonnet, smoking and well staring at me of course. He smoke? But then I've only known him for what, two days.

I'm so sure I was angry yesterday, but now my heart is swelled up in excitement as I see his face. My heart is beginning to change its normal rhythm..

"mkami"

I hate the way he is looking at me. He is making me weak.

"tell that mpungushe to stay away if he wants to see another day"

So he did see him. I'm drained

I'm in his car. He is driving, stealing glances at me. Don't judge, I can't think properly when I'm around him.

I'm in love. My mother was right.

I never thought that loving someone can turn me into such a hypocrite...

Dalingcebo just wiped every ounce of like I had with Khayelihle.

"I thought he took you and killed you" he suddenly says..

"I was going crazy. I thought that I'll lose someone I hold dear again.. . Please don't this again maNkosi" he begs. Now that I notice he looks deranged. His dull brown eyes are heavy and lack life

"don't bring guns in my presence and don't scare me Zulu. I don't want you killing anyone.. " I tell him

"That boy is messing with the wrong person. Why didn't you tell me he manhandled you?"

His eyes changes, they emit anger and something else..

"It was nothing..."

The car abruptly stops.

"uthin?" okay... someone tells me why I'm back with him

"Khwezi I'm not going to pretend with you. Lesdwanyampuphu make sakthinta fut. Ngzosisakaz ubuchopho"

And with that he starts the engine again and drives.. I'm having a hard time dealing with this. Somehow I'm relieved that he hasn't done anything stupid, like shooting Khaye.

His hand is entangled with mine, while the other is driving.

.. I lean on his shoulder and close my eyes...

I feel complete...

In about an hour we drive inside his house.

I would have started cooking but then this house is empty. There is nothing, absolutely nothing. At Least we cleaned on Saturday

"Come here" he says as I return from the loo. He is on the bed

He makes me sit on him, my legs spread on his sides.

And yes, his hands are already squeezing my cheek bums. Some people love breasts and all but not him. He loves bums

"I know I scared you Mami, I apologize for that" he says. I see it in his eyes, he means it

"don't do it again. You scared me Dalingcebo" I tell him..

"I know"

I stare at the man in front of me and realize how much I want to be with him. Our eyes are glued

"What happened here? "

I ask, caressing the scar on his cheekbone

His body stiffens

I stop and stare at him

"let's just say I lost someone I dearly loved that day" is it a girlfriend? He looks sad but the thought of him hurting for another woman doesn't sit well with me

"Phikelela, my youngest brother" ow! Now I feel bad for even..  
Arg

"I'm sorry sthandwa sam"

I softly say

caressing his face.

"I know.."

Intense moment visit us...

I can't imagine myself losing Sabelo, I love my brother as crazy as he is..

His face has darkened

Eyes changing color to bloodshot red. He reminds me of the first time I saw him parked in the driveway. It feels like a long time ago now.

I encircle my arms around his neck and lay my head on his chest listening to his soothing sound of heartbeat. And he tightens his arms around me

"I'm glad you are here maNkosi" he says

"I'm happy to be here.."

"Ngiyakthanda ndodakaz ka Nkosi"

My heart jumps, my body stiffens.. It's the first time hearing him saying this to me

"Before I met you I'm sure I was a walking ghost. I wasn't alive, just inhaling and exhaling. Since I met you I've had a reason to wake up with a smile. You are my peace, maNkosi.

I know we just met, but what I feel for you is deeper than I can anticipate. I want to be close to you always, I want to lie in your arms and feel your skin on me all the time. You drive me crazy Mami.."

This is the part where I say something but my mind is always frozen when this guy hits me with heavy words

Gently he takes my arms off him and our eyes lock.

His hands are on my face. He cups it and brings me closer. Our foreheads resting on one another

"I'm buried in anger, hatred and pain maNkosi. Losing my brother broke me. I'm dismally failing to accept that he is no more. This is me, I'm a sensitive man. Don't be fooled by looks, I easily get hurt so whatever you do, do remember that I'm an egg on the inside. I'm your own egg, handle me with care. Be my peace"

I kiss him, gently and passionately

My stomach growls! What a wrong timing. He is laughing in between the kiss. This man!

The sun is setting now. Ngcebo is in town, he had to buy something because I can't stay in a house with no food. I can't I've called my mother and told her I arrived safely. Didn't mention though that I'm in a man's house. She's still my mother. Growing up in a house with few people, one boy child and just me and my parents.

My mother made sure to be open about everything, from having my first period, my first crush to my first boyfriend and my first heartbreak. I knew about sex before I was taught about it in LO class.

My mom is my sister, my friend, my advisor and my everything. Being a pastor's kid didn't really put pressure on me, at home I was allowed to make mistakes, I was given love in every way. Sometimes it makes me wonder what made Sabelo turn out like this, I mean we were raised by loving parents.

There is sudden knock at the door. I'm thinking it Dalingcebo though he wouldn't knock in his house.

At the kitchen door stands a tall, yellow bone with a cute boy next to her. The boy is wearing nothing but an underwear. I get that we are in spring and it's sunny but... the boy is practically naked. We live in a cruel world, even boy children aren't safe anymore, rape befalls in all genders these days.

"Is Ngce Home?" so she doesn't greet. What a wow!

Let me return back..

"sawbona sis, is Ngce around?"

Hhe

"So now you see me? Just a second ago you didn't. And who is this Ngce?"

I don't like that



Camouflage mini dress, who

Still wears that anyway

"it's the owner of this house. Ngcebo"

I'm having a hard time to show a welcoming face.. I hate that Ngce shit\* his name is Dalingcebo. He was named like that for a reason.

"who is looking for Dalingcebo?"

I ask

"I'm Nqobile. I live next door" I already know that I hate this Nqobile who doesn't seem to conquer her lack of fashion sense, and any Nqobile out there, even those who are yet to be born.. I hate them

"He isn't around, he left to town for.."

"I'll wait for him then"

She passes me by with her little rascal leaving me at the door.

She's seated around the table with four chairs. The boy is next to her..

Then she stands up, open the cupboards and all..

At the moment I'm feeling air leaving my lungs..

She finds nothing she's looking for and return to her chair..

After what feels like an eternity of misery Ngcebo is here at the door with spar plastic bags, and a KFC bag.

"aibo, is that Enzokuhle!" he says and the boy smiles widely.

Why I am not surprised with the baby name.

After putting down the plastics he lift the boy up and down playing with him then take about 5 piece of KFC and hand them to him

"Mami, this is Nqobile. She lives next door. And this is Enzokuhle, my little friend" ow!

I hope I don't look like I'm about to explode. Because that how I feel.

"Guys, umkami lo. UmaNkosi" mxm!

After the little reunion he orders them to leave.

I'm banging everything I find.

"Tea?" I feel like boiling water.

"No Mami"

He is denying my tea. I plug water still

"Hot water?" he looks at me and gives no answer.

"Hot water it is..."

You know what...

I leave everything and head to the bedroom. Where is my bag

"Khwezi lami" so he followed me

"Mami, kwenzenjan manj" The burning urge to scream overtakes me..

Oh, there is my bag..

I take it and.. He blocks my way

"Mkami" how is he so calm!! While I'm burning

His hands finds mine and take the bag from me putting it on the floor. I'm boiling

"Khuluma nendoda phela Mami, kwenzenjan"

Men are plain fools, simple as that

"You are annoying me Dalingcebo"

Why is he smiling like that, why?

"What have I done now so I can apologize?" he is sooo damn calm!

He is caressing my chin, that gesture alone is making me feel like his thing. He knows it

"I hate that Nqobile girl. She didn't greet me. What is she to you? She even called you Ngce like you are a street kid "

I wanted to scream and cause havoc.. But this calm demeanor calms down all the screaming veins...

"she's just a woman next door. Few days after we burried Phikelela I came here a lot. I'd drink and just wallow in pity. One day I was drinking outside and her son came by and started making those children stupid talks. I hated it at first but ended up enjoying his innocent presence. Her mother would then dish up for me or sometimes cook here. She took care of me while I was down"

I was sad until she mentioned her..

"sengikhonak manje Zulu. I don't want her near you"

I tell him.

He pecks my lips

"Anything you want Mami"

My tummy is in knots right now

"I love you maNkosi"

Let me kiss him and....

"So.." I know it, the way he is grinning. He is about annoy me

"When are we making our little rascals mkam?"

Wait...

"What?"

I want to hear him saying it

"ungvumela nin kuth ngingen emasangwen eJericho? I have a gun here ready to shoot"

The...! So now I'm a Jericho... With a gate and...a gun... What am I? a shooting Range

I pinch his arm and leave him whining abuse

What to do now?

We've eaten and the dishes are clean and dried up. I'm in the kitchen, suddenly nervous to go to the bedroom.

My body screams bath, but my mind is just in turmoil. Dalingcebo just had to mention sex. He messed with my mind real bad.

My stomach is jumpy, I'm nervous. What If he really want us to have sex. Is it not too early? I mean we just started dating. Lawd, I feel like I'm going to be losing my virginity all over again..

It's after 9 as I slowly enter the bedroom. Oh thank Goodness, he is fast asleep. Phew, I can finally wash this smell on my body. The last I took a bath was this morning, back in Skhawini. So I need this, otherwise I'll be scratching my body the entire night, imagine with a man next to me...I can't

Okay, no pajamas but at least I have a tight and my baggy top.  
So it'll do.

There's a shower here, no bathtub. Just a shower.

After checking the temperature I get in and stand still, taking it  
all in. The water feels like heaven on my body.

I lean on the wall with my head and close my eyes...perfection..

It's so warm and...

Cold...

Why the sudden cold and.. And that heaviness on my  
shoulders.

Where does it come from?

"Mami" oh My... oh my!

Why can't I get what I want, at least once ke

I'm literally naked and I've never been naked around him.

My legs are wobbly, my heart might jump out of my mouth as  
of now

Shivers engulfs all of me as I feel his hands encircling my waist  
and he brings my body to his...

"Dali..." I whisper as I feel his thing poking my behind.. My waistline to be precise. I can feel his skin on me, so He is naked..

I'm not sure what do anymore

His head is buried in my neck nibbling and kissing gently.

His hands travels to my breast and he start playing with them.

My body is acting up to his touch

I'm quickly turned around and be met by his warm lips smashing against mine. The kiss is fast, filled with hunger and lust, I can't help but moan softly

I'm carried against the wall, I hold onto his him for dear life, my arms around his neck, legs around his waist displaying my fruit.

A warm touch has me mourning as he gently rubs my clit.

He plunges inside me stretching my walls and a faint moan escapes my mouth, holding him even tighter. This is going to be the best night of my life.



ooooxxooooooooxxoooo

## The Mthonga Homestead

Mandlakhe

WORK

Work is not going great.

He started off well, had many clients but one morning he woke up to eight goats lying dead.

Nothing good is happening. Except for the fact that he is still breathing..

Mandlakhe can be strong and determined but his life is just going South.

The two miscarriage messed him up.

Nqaba finds him standing by the klaar, just buried deep in thoughts

"bafo"he says

"Do you think we'll ever have more than three zeros in our bank account? It's exhausting to watch your dream crumbling down bafo"

A sad man he is..

"it'll be over soon Bafo"

He speaks

"Why? you've seen something?"

Nqaba is a spiritually connected person. Sometimes he sees things that other people can't

"Have you noticed that nothing is going right since the death of that young Zulu boy?"

Mandlakhe swiftly turns

"What do you mean?"

"Qhude has never worked since then. Not even a piece job. Ndaba was beaten by unknown men and left him barely alive last month. Seluleko also lost a permanent job. I'm not even going to mention everyone else.. "

"What exactly are you saying to me?"

"His soul is haunting every single one of us. I haven't had a peaceful sleep in a long time.."

Silence

"I haven't either" he confess, heavy breathings visits them.

It's no secret that they kill if it comes to that but killing a child isn't something they ever thought of doing. It's a mistake that will forever hang around their heads...

Given a chance they would wake Phikelela from the grave. During that time of the attack they craved nothing but blood, driven by rage and whatever they bathed with.

But Phikelela is gone and they are left with nothing but painful regrets...

"Why can't we get rid of him, we can ask Magagula for help. He is the best traditional healer in this village"-Mandlakhe

"Only one thing can help at this point. We need to appease his ancestors and ask for forgiveness"

As hard as that is, he knows it's the only way

"His death cannot be in vain. Peace must be restored in our families.." -Nqaba

FIFTEEN

ooooXXoooo

A MONTH LATER...

Things got worse at the Mthonga's after the revelations of Phikelela.

They were forced to break the news to the Zulu's about forgiveness to both families, but as expected the Zulu's retaliated. Ngcebo being the angrier one, what forced them was how things turned out, Ndondo's sickness returned, Sqalo and Sbani were sick too. Swazi was also sick and they were left with no choice.

The ceremony has been done. The Mthonga's have appeased the Zulu ancestors and protocol was followed. It's time for them to leave now. It's not going to be an easy journey but the first step was taken for the sake of peace, of Phikelela and the blood shared between families..

Mthunzi is vomiting again

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the smell of incense got to him that he couldn't stand it. Once done he walks away from the vomit and lean against the wall of the rondavel.

"you're sick" Ngcebo says, giving him water.

"I'll be fine bafo" he drinks water and heaves a long sigh

"My life is a total mess!" he utters, tears start welling in his eyes. Ngcebo doesn't seem surprised. The hard core Mthunzi he knew vanished the day his Swazi left him

"don't be a sissy, Swazi loves you"

He laughs through tears

"My chest is burning. Swazelihle would have forgiven me if Jewel wasn't part of my past...nx that psycho woman tricked me and hid my child for years! Can I wake her up and kill her again bafo?"

They talked about a week ago with Swazi. She finally gave him a chance to explain himself but the mention of a child changed everything

"sorry bafo" he says patting his back

"I want my Swazelihle because I'll cry a river if she doesn't forgive me at all. She makes me so sad"

He says, wiping his teary face.

"I want cheese.." he blurts. Ngcebo is laughing loudly. Mthunzi is acting strange. If he isn't crying, he craves weird things. Just yesterday he wanted peanut butter.

"am I funny? Why are you laughing at me?" and he is very sensitive lately, which is strange

"I love her so much bafo. Can you beg her for me. I miss her so bad!" and he is back in crying for Swazelihle....

## SIXTEEN

Khwezi

I sleep a lot lately and it's starting to give me a headache

I'm woken up by Dalingcebo's call.

What's the use of an alarm if you have a walking, talking one

"Zulu" I softly say

"Mami, don't tell you are sleeping" a month later he still makes my heart melt

"I took a nap" I say. My room is dark. I need to turn on the light

"aren't you supposed to be home by now? " yes, I was supposed to go home today since it's Friday But I ended up choosing my sleep then an annoying long drive.

"You can take me home now if you want to. "

Thing is I just miss everything about him.

He laughs and tell me he is on his way.



There was some ceremony of some sort that was happening at his home. I don't know what it is but he's been gloomy since the week started. He doesn't support whatever that was going today

I'm peacefully sleeping when I feel warm hands caressing my face. Goosebumps shoot all over my body. I keep my eyes tightly closed suppressing a smile. I know his scent too well, he is here.

He start planting kisses on my face. I can feel his heavy presence on top of me. "Mami" And he knows how to grab my attention. My eyes are wide open now.

"Sthuli Sika Ndaba"

Did he just blush? His eyes twinkles and he attacks with a deep, lingering kiss..

"My father's yard is full of cows, maNkosi. Allow me to send my uncles on my behalf, how many cows must I bring to your father mami ? "

I laugh at him and tell him to bring eleven I don't care that he found me already deflowered...he is laughing too.

\*\* \*\*

We are parked just outside my gate its already after 8 in the evening he couldn't risk leaving me far.

It's been a while since we arrived outside my gate but my feet can't really carry me out of this car. I feel every bit of me dropping on the floor. I don't wanna leave my man

"usukhalelan manje mkami?"

I pout my lips and stare at him. Tears glittering in my eyes

"usazoybon indoda, ayyindawo. No sbhamu dubula will be waiting just for you" he gently says, brushing my chin..I should be laughing at him personalizing that thing hanging between his legs but..

I'm very clingy when it comes to this man

"Monday is way too far" I'm really breaking, it hurts to know that I'll spend such long hours without seeing Dalingcebo

"ngesonto I'll be here, asking for your hand in marriage maNkosi" he can be too sweet sometimes. I'm blushing

"Ngyakthanda Sthuli Sika Ndaba"

I'm squeezed in a bone crushing hug and as he let's go he throws me in a slow kiss that's awakening every single drop of love I have of him.

He wipes my tears, planting wet kisses all over my face.

The sound of my giggles are loud in this car

"uthandwa Imina mkam"

I love Dalingcebo Zulu

I knock once! Just once and the door burst open revealing my father's angry face. I gulp and suck my thumb, my other hand holding my bag.

"Khwezi Nkosi"

When you parent calls you with full names then you are in deep sh\*t

"Now that you are working you think you are old enough to do as you please, is that it?"

I flinch, I'm shaking in my boots. This man hardly shouts and when he does, even mama just let him

"You don't talk anymore?"

Tears are flowing down my face.

"ngzokunyathela ngane uyangziba?"

"I'm sorry baba"

He must have seen Dalingcebo's car outside.. Did he see us kissing? Oh no..

"get inside! Or you want to go back to that boy who lacks respect for elders!"

I pass my angry father and rush to my room,my heart beating so loud in my chest .

:

I woke up early today and made my family breakfast. I've prepared the gross stuff, fried eggs, fish fingers and all the works...

Sabelo is in a good mood today. He is clean and talking nonstop about a certain brother he will love

I can't maintain eye contact with baba. He seems to be enjoying breakfast though

"Who is this brother again?" I ask Sabelo

"You will see him one day. Ncane says he will be here " Okay, we are back to speaking in tongues.

"Ncane is no more Sabelosemfundo" father intervenes.

Ever met Sabelosemfundo with no matric, yes we have him in the Nkosi family. Come and greet him

"Ncane is hungry. He wants food" -Sabelo

There goes my peaceful breakfast.

There's a sudden knock at the door I quickly get up and find an old man I've never met. He asks for my father

As I return Sabelo is mugging food as if he's been starved for days.

"someone is asking for you baba" I tell him and he leaves

A while later I hear him screaming "Ordinance!" I break into laughter, Sabelo joins in and we are shut by the slaps on our back.

trust the parents to ruin your life, what in the name of Jesus were they thinking naming my mother Ordinance?

I always find this name funny..

" Khwezi!" baba is calling for me too,

Oh Bawo, what now

"Who are the Zulu's to you?"

Baba instantly says just as I seat down. I gulp. Did mother tell him about Dalingcebo

"no no, I didn't say anything" she quickly says as if reading my mind

"I just received a letter. Do you know what this letter in my hand is saying?"

He asks clearly angry

"just tell the kid Gamalakhe" what's wrong with them today and name calling

"they are asking for your hand in marriage and talking about lobola bullshit"

OH fuck no!

He wouldn't, would he?

My mom clap once

"why am I not surprised" she states

"would you like to say something about this letter Khwezi?" -  
father

"Ahem..."

"before you even proceed, you have a boyfriend now?"

I feel air leaving my lungs slowly. I don't know what to say, I end up staring at my father like a wet chicken.

"are you pregnant?" what!

"NO! I'M NOT PREGNANT"

I can't believe them right now, look at them giving me questioning looks

"you are 24 years Khwezi. What do you know about marriage?  
How old is this man anyway?"

Okay, I wasn't ready for this question

"28" through my teeth I lie, in my father's face. Hell is ready for me, with a fork written my name in bold letters. He is 35 years but I can't say that now can I

"Come here ngane yam" he says patting his lap. I hesitate

"hayi khona Ordinance. What has this boy done to my baby girl, she can't even seat on my lap on. Look at her" baba says, oh Jesus

I'm too old for this but I seat anyway and he stares at me with a warm look

"you do know that I love you and I'd do anything for you. Your happiness means a lot to me ngane yam" aw, baba

Tears twinkles my eyes

"I know baba" I say. I feel like I'm 10 all over again

"do you love this man?"

He gently asks.



" I do" I say, playing with my fingers

"how do you know you love him?"his face fills up my mind

"when I think about him my heart dances, he respect me. I feel safe when I'm around him"

"I need to call my brother so he can be here with me. call that gunman and tell him I want 15 cows tommorow"

GUN what? ..

"MAMA!"She told him about that gun saga. This woman!

"you'll understand once you are married Khwezi. Asambe myen wam soshumayel izwi Lenkosi" they are laughing..

"Amen mamakhe".. That's my father. Gross! I'm not kid I know they meant.

Wait

"Babaz, did you say tommorow?"

He nods and take his wife's hand heading to their bedroom..

I'm going to kill Dalingcebo. The hell..

I've been calling and calling but he is not picking up..  
Dalingcebo is.. My God he is a crazy

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stupid man. I'm sitting here, wondering why I'm even inlove  
with him. Okay I admit I said he should bring some cows but I  
didn't think he was serious.

"Sis wam, you are in deep thoughts whatap" he circles his arms  
around my neck and seat on my bed with me.

"Dalingcebo decided that it'll be good to send a letter to baba  
asking for my hand in marriage without consulting me first"

I tell him, he frowns

"You have a boyfriend? Don't tell me you are not a virgin  
anymore Khwezi?" is he serious? While he was busy running  
around the street causing havoc, I was living my life, you know  
like giving my 15 year old virginity to my high school boyfriend..  
Don't judge me I was old enough

"come on Sabelo, I'm 24, not 15"

"exactly! Too young to have boys playing with you"

"okay, is it not too late to be playing the big brother role Sabelo?"

He looks hurts.

"you are my sister Khwezi. I might not be the ideal big brother that you've wished for but I'm still your brother..."

Okay he is right

"Khwezi I know that I'm a disappointment in this family. I'm the crazy hobo that no one wants to share a Surname with but I did not make myself this way." there he goes again, he is going to start with his silly ncane stories. Thing is, This is mainly the issue. There was this uncle, he was the youngest in my father's siblings from what I heard.

He was too close with Sabelo, we called him ncane, short for babomncane. He was shot dead in our yard, while Sabelo was watching. I was young, about 5 when it happened so I don't really remember him, or anything of that kind.

After that incident Sabelo started these stories. He seemed to believe that Ncane is forever hungry, cold and want food, want this and that..

This family has never believed in the dead, We are the Christians and we don't believe in such..

"He is not resting in peace. Not until bhuti comes home" he adds, looking disturbed. I think he is really losing it now. It's ncane and bhuti, all the damn time.. Drugs mess up your mind real bad

"Sabelo, sometimes you need to seat down and think about your life. You can't be blaming things that don't even make sense just to feel good about yourself. If you want to change, accept that you've made mistakes so that you can move forward..." seriously he is starting to annoy me

"I see all of you think I'm crazy. I'm not crazy. I don't like this too you know..."

He is staring into space, his face wearing nothing but sadness and sorrow...

It's silence for a while

"I see him every day since the day he died. He is always here by my side. Crying and begging me to help him find my brother. He is always bleeding through that gun wound, begging me to give

him food. Begging me to give him blankets because he is cold..."it's getting hard to speak, hiccups are hitting him as he slowly breaks

" Now tell me Khwezi who wouldn't lose their mind if they were in my shoes.. All my life, I've been trying to tell you the same story but you think I'm crazy... "

I'm frozen, tears are now streaming down his face. He is painfully crying and I'm just a robot not knowing what to do...

Sabelo has never been the one to be sensitive, ever. He was too busy stealing and causing havoc..

I find myself hugging him as he cries harder.. And harder and...now I'm sniffing. My heart is breaking at this point.

Now he is screaming...

Baba suddenly barge inside my room..

"Sabelosemfundo, what's wrong my boy?" He is brushing his back.

Mom rushes in tying a robe a minute later.

Sabelo is now crying on my mother's shoulder. And my father looks like a world is on his shoulders..

It's getting dark outside. Sabelo is now fast asleep in my bed. My parents are in their bedroom. My mind is in turmoil, what if all this time he was telling the truth?

I grew up being taught about dead being just that, dead. I've never found my self in a situation where I had to question my beliefs. Dalingcebo is a traditionalist, his entire world revolves around it but he's never really sat me down and forced his beliefs down my throat. Infact, all he said was that one day I will see things differently, that the ancestors are real.

Maybe today is the day, maybe we've been too ignorant.

My phone is ringing! My phone. I have a phone!

I'm about to pick up when he cancel.. Arg!

A message comes through

\*I'm outside\*

Why am I not surprised...

It's strangely too quiet in this house. After Sabelo's outburst we all just couldn't handle it.

Dalingcebo is testing my father, now he is parked just two houses away.

"you are frying your lungs with that you know" he throw the cigarette down and step on it.

"mkam" he says and plant a soft peck on my lips

"I see you have a death wish" I tell him

His hands are already resting on my waist. I'm in between his legs while he is leaning on a car bonnet. Compromising position

"what did your father say about the letter". I'm about to reply when he squeezes my bums.

"Dalingcebo, we are in public!" he is laughing..

His eyes are a bit drowsy today..

He lean in and bury his head on my neck bringing me too close

"Ngyakthanda Khwezi lami. More that anything that breath."

He says

"Are you drunk?"

"you are my everything. You are my nose, I can't breath without you..."

Wh...

"Khwezi"

In a split second I'm very far from Dalingcebo. His eyes are countlesly blinking. It's as if he is seeing a ghost. Was he not drunk just a minute ago? He is standing straight as a ruler while brushing his hands together.

"baba" I nervously say

"go home" he command and I quickly run towards home... is that sound of a slap I'm hearing... God no!



## SEVENTEEN

Mandlakhe

Time reads 7:56 am.

He is driving past the Gingindlovu Shopping Center when he receives a call

"Mthonga" he greets

"Mqungebe, I'm on my way" Driving faster isn't in his genes, he wouldn't want to find himself causing an accident with Penelope's van

"By 8 o'clock you should be here. People are coming in numbers. I don't want you to find nothing when you arrive" the old man says.. Time is not on his side at all

He heaves a sigh

"I'll be there don't worry"

The call ends...

Mqungebe is closing down his farm due to old age. He lives in the rural of Mpangeni, Ntshidi. He is selling everything in low prices. Mandlakhe was told about him through a friend

As he takes a right turn joining R102 to Mthunzini, he stumbles upon a huge crowd. It seems there has been an accident because there are angry citizens shouting, an ambulance, and police van with few police officers hiding someone from an angry crowd.

There is a white mini Cooper lying on the side road, upside down, a Siyaya Blue taxi on its normal standup just a bit far from the mini cooper.

"What's wrong?" he asks after parking.

Someone start telling him about an accident, apparently the taxi driver is drunk and he collided with the car...

As he is about to leave he is stopped by a man, old enough to be his father

"Ndodana, I'm sorry to bother you. Can you please help my wife and me? My daughter is having lobola negotiations today. I have to be there as in now"

The smell of alcohol hits his nostrils as the man speaks. Is it not too early to be drinking? He thinks

"Baba I'm sorry to disappoint but.."

"Please, my son. Please help us. We'll pay you I Promise."

He sighs, clearly frustrated.

"Where?" he ask, maybe he can drop them off along the way

"Skhawini, J2"

As to why he even stopped to begin with.

ooooxxoooo

Khwezi

Time flies.

It's a busy morning.

we've been awake since Five am.

We are almost done, the kitchen is filled with mouthwatering aroma I must say..

Mama said we should wake up early to start preparing food for the Zulu men because they are gifted with huge appetite, they can eat a whole cow without even inviting the whole community so we shouldn't starve them..

There is ma Doli and her Daughter Hlehle who's almost my age, she is mama's friend. She's Seating here sipping on coffee and helping with nothing but complaints..

I'm not in a good mood at all, Sabelo is... gloomy. As we speak he is sleeping. And baba slapped my man back to himself yesterday. To think I was embarrassed would be an understatement. Dalingcebo has been bombarding my phone asking If my father will accept his lobola or not.. He is losing it.

"I feel so damn sleepy!" I state

"You are getting married to the Zulu's, back in the rural from what I heard. You need to stop being a princess ngane, uyatefa.  
" yeap, my mother's besty

"In a few hours from now you'll be Mrs. Zulu by tradition. stop being a spoilt little brat, kunensimu kamoba that's waiting for

you emzini”she is annoying  
me...

Hlehle is  
laughing

“what if.. what is if something bad happens..” I blurt out.. Six  
set of eyes are staring at me as if I suddenly grew  
horns

“hhay don’t think like that wena” mama says.. “but even  
Sabelo is not okay and..” “stop worrying about your brother.  
He's gonna be fine. ..” I nodded

“sukuman, let's bow our head and pray a bit ” I'm this close to  
rolling my eyes. I forgot to say that this neighbour is a devoted  
Christian...

"Nkosi, Dlangamandla, Mphazima! Mntungwa!"

They are here! Shouting outside the gate

My tummy is doing the worst, I can't believe this is happening..

"Sebefikile sis!" Sabelo says entering the kitchen. I'm so relieved to see him

"you are awake, I thought you were still sleeping" I say and quickly hug him

"Today is a big day sis. I'm happy. My brother is also coming home.."

Okay..

"How do you know?" I ask, breaking the hug. I've decided to just listen to this story of ncane

"Ncane told me" I smile

"Go to your room Khwezi, go with her Hlehle. Don't come out unless you are told to" mama commands.

And just like that we head to my bedroom.

Oh God, this is real. It's actually happening...

"I'm so scared. What If we break up along the way? I mean it's not even that long since we met Hlehle." come to think of it, our relationship is less than three months old yet we are already going down the marriage route. Why did I fall in love with a 35 year old again?

"I think we are making a mistake, this happened too fast. I should call Dalingcebo and tell him to stop all this.."

I'm pacing up and down

"I'm not even an expert in these things we Khwezi. But if I find a man who sees a wife, a future with me

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"I'll grab him with my two hands baby" she's right...arg I love the man and spending my entire life with him would be a huge blessing.

..

..

.....

The Nkosi Household

He is angry. If it were up to him he would have kicked them out of this car already. 9 O'clock has hit the clock, he is supposed to be in Ntshidi buying goats for his business. But instead he is in

Eskhawini J2 driving the drunk man who seems to be too loud in the car.

"Right there mfana, yes.." he says pointing at a big beautiful home.

"It's so strange how your face seems so familiar son. It's like I've seen you somewhere. You are a good man, your father is lucky to have a son like you. May God bless you" the man genuinely says. Who he learnt is Maqhawe Nkosi. He found himself wondering about his biological father too, does he ever think about him? If he does then why can't he look for him, does he hate him?

"ah suka!" the man exclaims proudly. "ziphila saka, zinonophele futh" he says, staring at the truck full of cows. He has parked the car along the road. There are about 4 cars parked Infront of him, and a truck filled with cows

The man is talking nonstop. He seems to be very proud of this daughter. His wife is just as proud. She keeps on smiling every now and then..



The man start searching his pockets and comes back empty handed

"MaNgcobo, is my wallet with you?" he asks, there goes his peace.

"No, you had it after paying the driver"

He is quietly watching as the man empty his pockets and return with a begging expression

"I don't know what's going on. I'm sure I had it with me. I'm sorry to be such a burden, my son. I'll head inside and ask my brother. He'll give me your money"

He is angry but he hides it with a smile

"it's okay baba, I'll just leave. You don't have to pay me anything..." he says

"No no! you've helped us a lot. Please allow me to pay you son" he nods and watch them as they get off the car.

He gets out of the car and leans on it while waiting. It's clear that something is happening. What a big house, there are two more houses outside. A rondavel and a two bedroom house.

The neighborhood is neat and somehow heartwarming. He's never been in such places, he grew up in the rural of Ndulinde his whole life hence the township life never fazed him

"Mandlakhe" a voice says behind him. He turns and be shocked to see the man Infront of him

"Ngcebo" he acknowledge his presence but still fail to hide the shock in his voice.

The two men still have unfished business, although the ceremony forced them to forgive and move on but not even a spilled blood of a goat can never amend the beef and hatred Dalingcebo has...

Intense silence

Ngcebo feels the need to strangle him but he is the brother of his love. He can't do anything.

When he found out that Khwezi was the sister he was planning to get revenge with, every plan he had went down the drain. He also found out that Mandlakhe's father is the dead brother of Khwezi's father.

He dropped everything and decided to focus on her. It is an undeniable fact that he loves her more than anything, she found him while he was down and she picked him up and gave him a reason to live. She is his peace, his love and sanity. She is his life..

"What brings you here? It's strange to just meet in such a random place don't you think" Mandlakhe finally breaks the ice

The strong resemblance is there as he looks at Mandlakhe while thinking about Khwezi, Khwezi has that thing of tapping her foot randomly, Mandlakhe is doing it too

"shouldn't I be asking you the same thing" he says

It's clear he still doesn't know his identity yet, otherwise he'd be strangling him for being in love with his sister.

"What brings you here?" Ngcebo ask Mandlakhe

"I helped this people who needed transport, I'm waiting for them to pay me" he says. Fate works in mysterious ways indeed, for bringing him here, just outside his home.

He's never going to get rid of the man, he seems to be everywhere he goes.

"Are you paying lobola Mageba?" he suddenly asks, after inspecting his attire and the entire scenario

"I'm getting old. I need a woman by my side." Mandlakhe chuckles.

"You are a man Zulu" he states

Silence again

"I regret what I did, what my brothers and I did. We meant what we said. I know nothing will bring him back, but know that we are sorry. " Mandlakhe says deeply, staring at Ngcebo who clench his Jaws and remain calm..

"Do you ever wish to meet your father's side of family" Ngcebo suddenly asks causing Mandlakhe to look at him, frowning.

"sometimes" he states

"you are staring at your father's family, brother in law" –  
Ngcebo

Mandlakhe is still fazed when Sabelo comes out of nowhere and attacks him with a hug, crying and screaming...

"bafo, you are home.. You are home... you are home..."

## EIGHTEEN

Khwezi

There is never a dull moment in this life.

The negotiations were cut short yesterday, lobola cows left with Bab Maqhawe who lives in the rural of Makhilimba

Sabelo's outbursts shocked everyone.

As it turned out he was right all along, baba would have never believed that the man Sabelo claimed was the brother until he saw him. I don't really remember ncane's face, but that man does look like my father too and uncle Maqhawe. Baba said he looks exactly like ncane, it was an emotional moment for all of us

But they said something about a DNA test to confirm, Sabelo was not crazy. I felt so bad for not believing in him

I hate spring and it's on and off unpredictable weather, this morning it was sunny and now I'm met with a chill air hitting my body. The clouds have gathered, and it might rain any second. I'm done for the day as I step out of the school's gate.

I spot Khayelihle's car parked outside the gate. It's too late to return, he has seen me, so I keep going until I reach him

"Khwezi, sawbona" he says, he is with someone in the car. It's his brother. He is on the driver's seat

"HI Khaye"

He gets out, limping in crutches. There are bruises on his face, he looks a bit deranged.

"I'd ask how you are, but I can see you are doing good." He tells me I smile and keep going. I'm wearing a bottle green pencil skirt that shows off my thickness, a white top with black heels. On my head I have a straight up.

"Can we talk"

As if we are not doing that already

"I'm sorry Khwezi. For what I almost did to you"

He speaks, I'm walking slowly matching his slow movements

"As you should."

"But that didn't give your man the right to kill me" I freeze. Hearing him confirming what I suspected makes me feel uneasy.

"That man of yours tried to kill me. He attacked me in my home during the night. I let it slide because I love you Khwezi.. I still love you"

"Dalingcebo Is not a killer" yes I defend my man against vultures like Khaye "I've known that man since forever Khwezi. Trust me when I say he doesn't deserve you" oh GOD

"And you deserve me?" I ask him

"I might not deserve you too but at least I've never had any secrets like planning murder against you" he is losing me right now

"what are you talking about?" I ask, irritated

"Ngcebo is a friend with my cousin, Zakhele. I once overheard their conversation..." I stop him

"I'm not interested Khaye. You and I have broken up. Accept that and move on" I tell him "He has secrets Khwezi, if you don't believe me ask him about a man named Mandlakhe . He was going to find you, kill you just to avenge his brother's death..." he is not making any sense.

I'm about to ask more when I spot Dalingcebo's car in a distance.

He stops just next to us. I suddenly feel gloomy. He gets out heading towards me. I'm about to greet him when he just grabs me by my waist unexpectedly then smashes his lips on mine. He kisses me so hard that I feel my knees getting wobbly

The moment we step inside my house he quickly attacks me with another kiss, my clothes are quickly taken off. I help him take his off and I'm thrown on my bed panting for air...

I've worn my fluffy pajamas; it has started to rain outside. I'm by the stove preparing something to eat for both of us.

I'm hungry, after that hot session who would blame me. Dalingcebo hasn't said a thing about Khaye, but I know that he is angry. I can feel the anger from him, from the kiss, the sex and his aura. That kiss while I was with Khaye was unnecessary, he was just being possessive for no reason.

I don't know how to shy away from his gaze. There's something that cannot allow me to look at him. He is on the bed, in nothing but boxers and starring at my every move can't he feel the cold? I want to ask him about what Khaye said. Mandlakhe



is ncane's son, he is the bhuti that Sabelo always mentioned. we just found out about him just yesterday. It's impossible that he would know about him. But Khaye's words keeps on ringing in my ears..

"So, you attack people in their sleep now Dalingcebo?" I ask, he doesn't seem fazed "instead of fighting me like a man he sends you to fight his battles and like a little girl you do exactly that" wow, I can't believe he just said that to me

"Khaye did not send me, I'm talking to you. Why did you do that?" he comes to me and hovers over me

"Why are you asking? What are you going to do if I say I attacked him, will you cry and go back to him?" I feel tears twinkling my eyes

"You could have been arrested! What if he opened a case of assault against you?" can't he just see reason

"Since you are his spokesperson, do tell him to try, this time he'll have no teeth to utter a single word" my blood vessels are getting hot

"Dalingcebo! What you did was wrong why can't just you see that? Are you crazy now

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you want to become a criminal and kill people?" I'm screaming

"I thought we were talking here, like adults do, not screaming as if we are mindless teenagers" I heave a sigh, hands holding my head

"You had a gun when you left here Dalingcebo, a gun! What if you shot him dead? he has a family" he is grilling me with his look.

"That man was ready to hit you Khwezi, if Thalent wasn't here maybe he would have done more yet here you are defending him. Are you sure you are okay upstairs?" he is calm, so calm yet his words are heavy and hurting me, I'm fuming

"I'd rather be crazy than being a killer" I shoot back, he stares at me, he is angry I know because his eyes aren't blinking at all

"Why are you angry Khwezi? Because I'm failing to understand your logic" Oh God

"I'm angry because you are a killer okay! I won't have a man who'll wake up in jail one day Dalingcebo. I refuse to be that woman who'll wait for you while you spend years in jail. At least Khaye is not killer like you" that came out wrong

His eyes narrows, I feel my heart skipping.

“What did that douchebag tell you exactly?” sternly he asks, burning me with his look I swallow nothingness and ask him

“Khaye said something about you knowing about Mandlakhe, did you know about him being my brother?”

“I knew about that man before I even met you, I’ve hated him since he killed my brother. And yes Khwezi, I was planning to kill his sister and made him feel what I felt. I would have done it; trust me I would have. I didn’t know it was you and when I realized I was already in love with you so I let everything go..”

I’m ...lost for words. “get out” I whisper, tears streaming down my face “Khwezi listen to...”

“Just leave me alone Dalingcebo Zulu. I won’t be associated with murders who kill for the sake of it.”

Pain strikes his eyes, but I don’t care

“Khaye was right. You don’t deserve me”

He left. After what I said he quickly left

I’m left with a throbbing heart and a mother of all headaches. I haven’t stopped crying; I don’t even know why I’m crying so much.

When I calm down, I make myself a sandwich and start eating. I'm in the middle of it when I feel something rising my throat, I quickly rush to bathing basin and everything I just ate harshly come out of my mouth

My heart feels so heavy. I don't even know what to do.

I feel so awful after that fight with Dalingcebo, I hate to admit that I miss him. Every notification has me jumping up, hoping that its him but sadly its not.

I shouldn't have allowed Khaye to get into my head. I'm sure Dalingcebo would have explained everything to me when the right time comes, he just paid lobola just yesterday. Already we are fighting.

I call my mother and cry a river

"I love him mama, I really do" I tell her, sniffing "what happened exactly?" she asks

"I don't wanna talk about it" she heaves a sigh

“Whatever happened I’m sure can be fixed. ditch the pride and talk to him” she says

She’s right.

I’ve been staring at my phone after that phone call with mama contemplating whether to call him or not. Arg! Love can be draining at times..

Let me close my eyes a little.

I’m dozing off when a sudden uneasy feeling visits me. I quickly call Dalingcebo, his phone drives me straight to voicemail. That’s new, his phone is always switched on, I mean always. I try him, again and again and again..

I’m pacing up and down now, I am worried, and I just can’t shake this deep feeling that maybe something bad will occur

I head out and knock on the main house. It’s raining so much damn it Thalente opens the door and I get in wiping my self “Sis Khwezi, is everything okay?” “Dalingcebo and I had a fight earlier and he left in a bad state and now I can’t reach him on the phone” tears starts tickling my eyes, even my voice is shaking... “Sis that is normal, couples fight all the time” he doesn’t get it “NO, listen to me. Something is wrong I can feel it” I tell him “hhay Khwezi. you need to stop stressing....”

My phone rings unexpectedly making my heart jump “Hellow”

“Am I speaking to Khwezi” it’s a male voice

“Yes, who am I speaking to?”

“this is Mthunzi, Ngcebo’s brother..”

My knees instantly weakens.

.....**THE END**.....

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