



my TRUE
HAPPINESS HAS
COME.

By: S. VALERIE SIBEKO.

INSERT 1.

MELISSA.

It's a one Tuesday morning. Very chilled and sunny. No noise and the house is filled with silence. I wonder where the heck is everyone because its barely quiet in this house. You could hear my mom sing or my dad gets busy with his garden tools outside the yard or my sister talking over the phone with who knows who. I turn around and look at the clock behind me. It's 10:30am.

“Oh my gosh! I was supposed to be meeting up with a friend for lunch and now I'm horribly late.”

I say to myself as I gets off the bed and rush to the shower. As soon as I'm done I go to the wardrobe and pick one of my favorite blue skinny jeans black Nike Airforce and a plain black oversized t-shirt but I tuck it in to look neat and more girly. I tie my hair in a messy but stylish bun and put on a little bit of strawberry lipstick and a

black eyeliner to make my looks pop up. It looks too simple but cute too. I look at myself terrified by the mirror and I

do the turnarounds to see if this is the kind of style I'm going for today.

"I hope
this doesn't reveal much of my boobs."

I say in thought. I've been having a huge challenge with my boobs since I started high school. Everybody will mock at me and making fun of them. There was a rumor that was trending decades ago that if a girl is found with big boobs then a boy must've touched them or if you had sex with so many boys and your boobs will automatically grow bigger and bigger which I found it really stupid to make such stories but people tend to believe these crazy superstitions. Things were really hard for me and every time I walk to my school and to my class I have some explanation to do but nobody seemed to believe me when I told them that they just grew naturally. One day during the Life Skills period my teacher introduced us to puberty and that's when everything made sense to me but that didn't seem to make everybody understand the way I thought they would be. The questioning still went on until everyone assumed I was not a virgin. I don't know how did come about but I noticed how everyone was so dumb. They all believed being a virgin has to do with straight and pointy boobs and that was absolutely not true. There are girls who have bigger and saggy boobs yet they are still virgins. I had to come with a solid point to prove to them that my boobs have nothing to do with my virginity. I was impatiently waiting to finish my seventh grade and move on to high school. When I started high school everything

changed. Nobody was asking about my boobs or making fun of them. Instead there were girls who had bigger boobs than mine but my level of confidence was still down to a zero. I tried to adjust to everything around me and live freely but it was hard. I almost felt as if everybody was still looking at them. My boobs caused me trauma and brought me uneasiness in my teenage life till this day. I still have a feeling they are not normal or if they are meant for a twenty-one year old.

What

hurts the most is that I'm the only female in the house who is actually God gifted with big boobs. As much as I try by all means to wear oversized clothing to make them appear smaller it still doesn't make any difference from my view but the interesting part it draws away people's attention and that's where I keep track to uplift my level of confidence back.

I bring my hands over to my head with worry and take a deep breath. Then I quickly head off to the nearest café where I've agreed to meet up with my friend Thando. We've been friends for over five years now and it all started the first week I moved in to study at the university of Free State (UFS). She was the first amongst all people to approach me inside the school library and we became reading buddies ever since. She used to come to my house often to go for ice-cream dates or exchange books when either of us is done reading and from those moments we became the closest friends.

FEW MINUTES LATER AT THE BITTER & SWEET CAFÉ.

I make it inside the café and oh boy the smell of Coffee hits through my nostrils and that makes me crave for it even more but I rush to Thando who is impatiently waiting for me. I can tell she was getting mad because she was tapping her foot on the floor but I quickly make it to her table without her noticing I'm walking to her direction.

MELISSA: "Babe sorry I'm late."

I say as I take a sit front opposite to her. She giggles and I was hoping she'll get mad at me then storms off and leaves but she didn't. Which is unexpected.

THANDO: " Don't worry about it. I'm getting used to the fact that I always have to wait for thirty minutes before you can show up."

MELISSA: "Oh please its not like I do this everyday.

I have days were I get delayed and if I'm not mistaken this is for the second

time I've ever done this but you're saying it as if I've done this numerous times."

We both share a short laugh.

MELISSA: "So have you ordered anything?"

THANDO: "No I just had water as you can see."

She points over to an empty bottle and a half glass of water that was on the table.

MELISSA: "We cannot wait any longer. Let's order. I'm starving."

I left the house without eating any breakfast meal and I'm mad hungry. I make a silly frowny face as I rub my tummy playfully.

THANDO: "How about we get our favorite?"

MELISSA: "Mhh I've had enough of fried bacon and eggs. Can't we get something new? Maybe a toasted cheese sandwich or doughnuts?"

I'm loving this café so much. There's no owner who's as brilliant as this Bitter & Sweet café owner who decided to open separate dining areas. One that serves coffee and the other for heavy and light brunch meals. This place took time to operate but it was worth it. More people come here for their breakfast and lunch meals here. At times it gets irritatingly full but patience is all we got and there's no other place like Bitter & Sweet café.

Luckily the waiter comes to our table and offers us a food menu combined with a list of sorts and sorts of coffee drinks to choose from. Then she approaches us with a warm smile on her face.

WAITER: "Good morning I'm Sarah and I'll be taking your order today but before I can do that I would like to introduce our newest menu in the house the cinnamon and mint bun served with honey syrup plus a cherry on top but if you don't have a sweet tooth we can replace the honey with a vanilla ice-cream and that will help to cut down the sugar level a

little bit. All this is made out of love and I'm pretty sure one bite will leave you with smiles on your faces."

THANDO: "Oh wow! I'm so impressed. You know what Sarah? Hit me up with one of those."

She takes out her small note book and takes down her order and then she turns at my direction.

SARAH: "And what about you?"

MELISSA: "Sure count me in."

SARAH: "Anything else?"

MELISSA: "A sugar-free strong cappuccino with whip cream."

SARAH: "And I'll have water."

She scrabbles it down and leaves. After what feels like an hour the waiter brings our orders with a silver tray and I won't lie the minute she places the dessert on the table a smile appears on my face. We are both taken by surprise and I had no idea it was going to look this fabulous. I sniff from my plate and it smells amazingly good. The bun is freshly baked by looking at the puff and the fluffiness from the inside. It's gold and crispy around the edges. I can just eat it without having to order any beverage.

THANDO: "Let me take a snap and upload it on Instagram and caption it. Don't eat that yet."

She takes couple of pictures and within couple of seconds she is done. She switches off her phone and place it on the table.

MELISSA: "Finally! Can we eat now?"

THANDO: "Yes and sorry about that. You know how your girl can be with photos."

MELISSA: "Is it always necessary for you to post everything you do and to keep everyone updated with your everyday activities?"

THANDO: "Yes and that's how you'll earn more followers. Especially to those who love food as much as you do. They will probably want to know where you bought it and I'm not only just doing it for me but for the restaurant too. I should be paid for doing this."

MELISSA: "They didn't ask you to do this. You did and it's your idea."

We take our first bites and we moan in satisfaction. We keep ongoing nonstop with taking the bites one after the other until we empty our plates.

THANDO: "This is the best breakfast I've ever had in ages. I really enjoyed it."

MELISSA: "I did too."

THANDO: "Want some more? I can order one extra plate and we can eat it together."

MELISSA: "Oh no. I'm full. Plus we have drinks waiting for us. We can always make another day for this breakfast again..."

She nods and takes a sip to her cup of her water and makes a disgust look and I bust into laughter.

Why that look? Is it too cold?"

I know how bad she dislikes cool water. All she prefer is ice cold water from the refrigerator.

THANDO: "My water tastes horrible. The ice has dissolved and it's not cold anymore."

I drink my coffee and it tastes good.

MELISSA: "You can call the waiter to bring more ice."

THANDO: "No it's okay. I'll try to drink it. I don't want to look hilarious for calling her for some stupid ice."

We continue to enjoy our drinks and the waiter

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Sarah comes through with the bill and my friend pays for it.

SARAH: "Thank you so much. If you guys need anything I'll be here at your service."

The waiter leaves. Truly speaking she is good looking. I assume she's Colored based on her ascent and the texture of her hair

long and black curly hair. She looks beautiful and her body structure is just exactly how I position my body to look like. That starts to trigger my mind and for a moment my facial expression changes to sadness. Why do people have to be this lucky and I'm not?

THANDO: "What's wrong? You know you can talk to me?"

I didn't know she notices something wrong with me. She sounds worried as she holds my hand that is laying on the table. I sigh.

MELISSA: "Friend do you find me beautiful? Do you look at me differently? Not in an ugly but in a beautiful way?"

THANDO: "Haw friend why you asking me all of this? Did someone say anything to you?"

Not only did I show a sad facial expression but the tone in my voice sounds too low.

MELISSA: "Not really. Everybody has been quiet lately. Nobody discriminates me and it feels really good but still when I looked at myself in the mirror today I felt ugly somehow and I feel even more uglier when I compare myself to that Sarah waitress."

On social media people will do what we call "cyberbullying". Every time I upload a picture everyone would mock me through the comments section where anybody can say anything about your photo or video. They kept on making jokes with my boobs and I think it's only the people who either knew me or people who were just against women with big boobs. Everything that was happening there I didn't like it and that's when I decided delete all my social media accounts and be left alone with WhatsApp. I don't know why can't people just leave you alone and stop making life hard for me because I did not I choose to make myself like this but Jesus did. He saw me "good" enough in his own image.

I pause for a while to consume the pain from holding back the tears and it is hard to even swallow the saliva.

THANDO: "Ah c'mon Melissa don't do that. You're

being silly right now. You can just do comparison with random strangers.”

MELISSA: “This thing of having big boobs still bothers me. I'm single because of this stupid body part. If it wasn't for them I would still be happily in a relationship with my high school lover.”

THANDO: “Don't tell me about that idiot. He was just so dumb and immature. Don't beat yourself about it.”

I get mad at myself when I think of my break-up.

My ex-boyfriend loved and adored me until this one day he invited me over to his house for some lunch like he always do when his parents were out to work. He made a little date for us and everything went smooth. After some time we started kissing and I was ready for sex. We were both ready. He was hungry for me and I was too. He took me to his bedroom and things were getting heated. My heart was pounding very fast as he unbuttons my demin dress but I was never going to stop him. We're doing this today. I stayed positive and had a feeling he wouldn't overreact to see my boobs. Little did I know when he was halfway to untie my bra from the hooks on my back he paused and looked at them speechless. I can still see his face getting flushed in disappointment. He didn't say anything else but to instruct me to put on my clothes back. I asked him why but he made an excuse and told me he had a problem with his balls. How stupid was that but I kept quiet and didn't want to ask him anymore

questions. I put my clothes back and walked back home with so many emotions in me. I can tell he was not impressed with my boobs and after some time he broke up with me. He hasn't told me the reason why but I just made an assumption it was my boobs 'cause nobody wants things that are too much handle. My boobs were just too much for him.

I roughly

hold and squeeze my boobs because I am annoyed and frustrated. I don't care who's looking at me right now. My heart is filled with anger and at this point I feel like I can just make them disappear but I can't and it's highly impossible for me to do that. Only if it was magical I would've done that a long time ago.

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THANDO.

I am really confused and I don't know what else

to say to her. I've been trying with all my best to stop Melissa from seeing herself as this one ugly creature she keeps calling and comparing herself with.

Yes she does have big boobs but that shouldn't bother her because she has found a solution to her problem by wearing clothes that aren't revealing much

of her chest and I saw that as a brilliant idea. Now I don't know what to say to stop her from feeling this miserable and pathetic. I shake my head and take a deep breath.

THANDO: "Friend please. Not this again. I thought we

talked about this and you're getting in a process of accepting yourself for who you are regardless of who says what. I know it's hard to take that step but you need to stop having this hatred about your body honestly. You're getting me worried...

I see tears floating down her cheeks and I give

her a tissue to wipe herself before her makeup gets ruined.

Okay have you thought about what you're going to do

about your boobs? A way to perhaps make yourself feel better?"

MELISSA: "I thought about getting a breast surgery but it'll be costly for sure and my mom won't allow it. Not under her watch."

Shock takes over me. Nothing sounds riskier than undergoing for surgery. The cuts the stitches and the ongoing pain that hits you every single hour. Does she even know the after effects? What's even worse does she know the consequences she'll go through after the surgery? Hmm I wonder.

THANDO: "You just sound ridiculous right now. Getting a surgery it's not a solution. Do you know how painful it is to go through surgery and its after effects? They'll be problematic to you and cause complications for the rest of the recovery process. Which may also take a while."

She starts wiping her tears with another toilet paper from her purse as the one I gave her is torn to pieces.

MELISSA: "I know but I think I can handle it."

THANDO: "You don't mean that."

Melissa is scared of pain. I know her. She could barely handle the pain of a needle so what worst can she be after getting all the stitches underneath her boobs?

MELISSA: "I do and I've thought about it numerous times. I could have done my surgery but I was still young at that time. I conducted my own research and the surgery can be done when you're above eighteen so now that I'm older than that I can get it done."

THANDO: "Getting a surgery is not a child's play so you need to be very sure about that decision but let me tell you something. I was told it's terrifying in there. Don't ask me from who but you'll be exposed to the machines that you've never seen before. I'm not trying to scare you but be careful."

MELISSA: "Yes I know geez. As I said to you before considering a surgery I did my little research and I know what I'm getting myself into."

THANDO: "I'm just trying to help. I won't just lie to

you and tell you that that everything will be perfectly fine or assure that the procedure will go well knowing exactly that anything may go wrong...

She says in frustration. I check the time on my watch that's on my wrist and we've been here for almost three hours. I look back at her as I take my stuff from the table.

Friend I really should go I have a class to attend at four so we'll talk about this more and who knows? Maybe you need time to reconsider everything again."

MELISSA: "Yeah sure and I'm sorry for keeping you up."

We stand up and give each other a warm hug.

THANDO: "I'll text you after class."

We say our goodbyes and we separated. I rush to nearest Rea Vaya station and wait for the bus. I take a sit on one of the empty benches. I grab my earphones and my phone from my bag. I plug in my earphones in my phone and select a song from my music collection. I want a song to help me relax. I come across to the artist Sabrina Claudio and a song titled Frozen.

I lower down the volume to ten. Just in case I don't miss my bus.

INSERT 2.

RUSS.

RUSS: "Mom but why do you want me to marry someone I've never met? What's even worse is I don't even know how she looks like or if she'll ever love me."

MOM: "Russ baby I'm helping you because I can clearly see that you've been single for years now and that really bothers me....

She stands up and looks over the picture of my dad that is hanging on the wall.

I'm growing older yet I haven't receive any grandchild from you. Do you really want me to die before I could see you getting married or before I could see the birth of my grandchildren?"

Hearing my mom speak like this really breaks my heart. I really want to fulfill her dreams and it would be a great accomplishment to get her blessings for my marriage but for the heartbreaking part I have no one at the moment or someone who meets my interest. I've been terrible with relationships and my last relationship just didn't last that long. All the girls I come across with want a common thing...My money. I decide to walk up to her and softly lean my hand on her shoulder.

RUSS: "Mom I promise you. I'll meet that one special person in my life who'll bare you very beautiful grandchildren. I hate to say this but it's just not the right time. I really can't afford to marry someone I'm not into."

I see disappointment in her eyes and she nods lowly.

MOM: "I understand but you better make it snappy because time flies my boy."

RUSS: "Yes mother."

I say as I bring her head closer to my chest and lay a soft kiss on her forehead.

MOM: "I guess I'll have to deliver the news to the Mullah's family and tell them that they should try their luck to the other family since you rejected their daughter."

She breaks away from my arms and moves in front of my direction to where I'm standing. The Mullah family is a well-mannered and respected by the community. They are the filthy rich and very business minded people. We've known them since I was six years old. My dad made business deals with them and everything has been operating smooth. Their daughter that my mom wants me to be married too young for me. I'm sure she's nineteen years because I remember she was still a toddler when I was fifteen. There's nothing wrong with age but the level of understanding won't be the same. I need someone more grown and matured. Someone who can handle and manage things like an adult but people at her age don't do things properly.

RUSS: "It'll be a bit harsh rather tell them I've met someone else already and I'm about to be married to her."

She giggles.

MOM: "Oh yes. That sounds even better. I will give them a call the first thing in the morning."

Watching her smile like that warms my heart. I haven't seen her like that after the death of my father. My father

was a hero to all of us. He was a loving father to his kids a good husband to

his wife and a great business partner you'd wish to work with. His death was very painful to us. I don't know why the world could be so cruel. He got killed on the parking lot at his work. He got cuts from his neck and other stabs from the back of his head. It was clear that the killer was in his car this whole time waiting for him to knock off. I remember my mom cooked a lovely meal for her husband and prepared a bath for him. She was all excited for her husband to come home and have a decent meal as he would carry a sandwich lunch box to work everyday. While we we're waiting for him to come through there was no sign of him or even receiving any call from him. He just went quiet on and mom decided to give him an hour 'cause she thought maybe he got delayed somewhere so we did exactly like that and waited for him. We waited and waited until everyone got super worried. My oldest brother decided to go to his work place and check what's going on. He took his car keys and drove. Meanwhile my younger sisters were trying to comfort mom. I was pacing back and forth in the kitchen waiting for my brother to hit us up. I held my phone on me and there was no call. I became furious and anxious as to why the fuck is dad not calling like he always does. When he's late he informs us. Out of the blue we heard sirens. I didn't know if it was directed to our house but my mom asked me to go and see what was going on outside.

I opened the door and right on the spot two policemen walked to my direction and my brother was walking behind them with his hoodie covering his face. I couldn't see what was going on with him. I was expecting to see them walking with my father but he wasn't there. I started to freak out but I cooled myself down. When the policemen approached me they took

off their hats and I was confused. My brother walked in between them and ran to his bedroom. I heard a loud bang from upstairs and one of my sisters excused herself to check on him. She left and I allowed them to come in. It was only me my sister and I left in the kitchen. They grabbed chairs and sat across my mother. My eyes were till glued on them waiting for any of them to speak. They kept exchanging looks to one another until I snapped at them to tell us something. They took a deep breath and told us my dad has been found murdered. My mom broke down and cried. She was already weak and she immediately became weaker. I held my emotions and wanted to cry too but I didn't. I had to be strong for my mother. It was really hard but I pushed myself to become a man at the age of nineteen. My sister covered her mouth in shock. I walked to them and held the both of them tightly. My mom's anger was way too much until she broke in my arms and threw herself on the cold floor. My other sister came running downstairs and I told her what happened. They were both emotionally hurt too and they tried to pick her up and she was willing. She asked them to take her to her room and they obeyed. I was now left with the policemen and they continued to tell me everything and how he was killed.

My heart broke so much to think how can such a bad person brutally stab him five times cut him directly to his throat and shoot him on top of that. The police said they took him in to the examiner so they can run few tests on him and see if they can find any evidence that may lead to his killer. Few days later they found nothing. The killer knew what he was doing. He did everything

clean and his work was a success. The police promised us that they'll continue to look for the killer and fight for my dad's justice. Days went on planning for his funeral while his body was still at a mortuary. Luckily he had a funeral cover from Allianz so we used the rest of the money to pay for his tombstone his coffin catering and the rest of the important stuff that was needed for the funeral. We also organized clothes to wear on that day and organized a church. A week after his death his body came in and he stayed over for two days. My dad's family and from my mom's family had already been told about his death and they pulled through to support us. The day of the funeral his body was delivered to the church early in the morning. We were already dressed and prepared to lay my father to rest. We arrived few minutes later to the church and obviously the community knew too so we found them there and already seated. Their support meant the world to us. While we were waiting for the pastor the mothers from my community and my mom's best friends came through to confront her and to cheer her up at the back room. They all shared tears but they became alright. My sisters done their make-up and looked great to their black dresses. My brothers and I looked fine with our black tuxedos. My mom kept it simple and put on a black dress black stilettos that match with her daughters some black shades and a black hat. The pastor arrived fifteen minutes late but that didn't stop us from burying my dad. We walked inside the church and sat in the front row. The pastor did the Roman's prayer and asked the family to come through and see him for the last time. We did that one by one and it was my mom's turn. She asked if I can walk with her and I did. We walked together and we saw him laying peacefully on his coffin. He was a little pale but still looked handsome in his navy blue tuxedo

that was chosen by his wife while we went out for a shopping spree. My mom blew him a kiss while crying and I walked us back to our seats. After church we went to the grave yard to lay him to his restful place.

We organized busses for everyone but some preferred to come with their cars and it was not a problem. Men from Allianz insurance company changed to over-rolls clothing and their equipment to dig a burial hole for my dad's coffin. Meanwhile everyone was admitted to the tent and serve themselves with water. It took them the whole two hours to finish. The men rushed to take the coffin from the hash car and carried it. They gently placed it on a stretcher. The pastor gathered his stuff and done a prayer. While he was doing so my dad's coffin was slowly towed down to his grave. Everyone became emotional

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including myself but I managed not let my mom see me. After an hour we reached a moment where we were supposed to throw in flowers as a way of

saying goodbye. Everyone else followed after his family. They poured soil on him until it was all covered up then they put on his tombstone that had a loving message on it. "To Our Father And To My Husband May Your Soul Rest In Peace. You Will Forever Be Remembered In Our Hearts. We Love You Angel." We had another venue rented for catering. We left the grave yard roughly after three to four hours and went to the second venue. The distance wasn't far from the church. Everyone went there and settled themselves. My mom did a speech to thank the community and I did too on behalf of my siblings. Everyone got up and dished up for themselves. We didn't plan to cook too much food to avoid waste. There was rice samp stewing beef and potatoes salad served with either a bottle of mango juice or apple flavored water. Everyone sunk in with their teeth and the leftovers were given back to the community who needed food. We took a bucket of vanilla baked scones and the other for banana muffins. It was already in the evening and later everyone went home. The buss driver was instructed to drop the people on the spots were they had been found. We made sure everyone went home safe before we drove and left for home too. We arrived home tired and everyone took a shower and slept. Our lives changed without dad and we are trying our best to adapt in life without him but we are still not at ease by knowing his killer is on the loose.

The issue of me having to bring her a wife and kids has been overwhelming and stressful for her but I can see process in her daily as she tries to understand where I'm coming from. After few minutes she breaks the silence and snaps me out of my thoughts.

MOM: "Want me to prepare creamy spaghetti and cheese for supper?"

I nod in excitement. I swear this home meal is

the best and it has been my favorite ever since I was about five years old until to this age. I still can't resist the melted cheese. She laughs as she walks over to the kitchen room

leaving me by myself in the living room. I keep my focus on the TV.

Where are my manners. I go by the name of Russ Skyline.

I'm a half Nigerian and half White. My mom is White and my dad is Nigerian. Their

love story is something else but it was interesting. They met on a

business trip that took place in Tanzania. A country that is part of the

African continent. My mom had owned a small printmaker business. My dad would come often and print a pile of newspapers from her. He showed his love and support. Then they started to go on friendly dates and became good business partners until my dad made his move and they fell in love. The distance wasn't fair to the both of them so my mom decided to move to Nigeria and be with the love of her love. She sold the business and used the money to invest in my dad's business. They were both owning the company and got married then they had us.

I come from a beautiful family of five and I'm the third

son in the family. I have two grown-ass brothers including myself and my two

beautiful sisters. All three of my brothers including one of my sisters they're

happily married and have a family of their own except for me and my youngest sister

who is the last boen. I guess we're both very unlucky when

it comes to relationships because love was never meant for us.

I run my dad's old company that publishes newspapers across the country titled the 'Skylines News' but at the same time I study medicine and I'm doing my second year at the Urungwe university. I've always wanted to know more about medicine and how did a pill come about. What has been used and how it all started.

Furthermore I am twenty-four years old of age.

I'm light skinned tall and I have more like green-ish eyes. I'm clean and neat as fuck. I learnt that from my dad and I must say it runs through the family because I don't appoint myself only but to each and everyone in my house.

My personality wise I'm funny but I can be

rude sometimes especially to those who find a way to play around with my

buttons for no damn reason. I tend to share jokes easy to make friends I'm choosy I always want what's best for myself and I'm a good cook. I do that from the heart and it was all my mom's work for making

me to be more
responsible and handy at certain things.

Relationship status I'm single. It's not
that I don't want to be in a relationship. I really do but people tend to toy around with
my heart and feelings forgetting that I'm also a human-being just like them.
Others destroyed me mentally and emotionally when they know how loyal and
honest I was to them. They just took advantage of my kindness and it hurts not
knowing the intentions of what the next person might do to my fragile heart.

Right now I live with my mom in Nigeria Lagos
but I'm planning to move out and find a place of my own in South Africa. Will
I really pursue my career and find the love of my life there? I shall find out.

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MELISSA.

I drag my feet from the café exit door until I reach to my neighborhood. My eyes meet a black Jeep car that is parked outside the garage door and I realize it belongs to my mom.

I walk through the front door and I try to cover myself with the end of the hand sleeves from my jersey. I keep my head down so that nobody sees my swollen eyes from crying too much. Before I can walk ahead of her my sister makes her way towards me and starts to approach me in a friendly manner but before she could say anything I run quickly upstairs and lock myself in my room. I sigh deeply and I hope she didn't take that rude. I'm just not in a mood to talk.

I can hear her talking to my mom and her name is Fiona. Fiona Rodriguez.

FIONA: "Mom I think something is wrong with Melissa. I know something bothers her and I think you should talk to her."

MOM: "She barely even hugged me and that was odd but I'll talk to her. Come on now and help me unpack this grocery."

So they went out for grocery this whole time? Great! I walk to bed breathing heavily from running to the stairs. I throw myself to bed and the next thing I know I'm already snoring with my head laying lifelessly on soft the pillow.

Later I hear a soft knock through the door. I can sense the door handle twist but unfortunately it's locked.

Baby? Its mommy open up."

MELISSA: "I'm tired ma."

I groan loudly for her to hear through the thick door. I doubt I'm even that loud as she continues to knock on the door.

MOM: "You know you can talk to me about anything right?"

MELISSA: "Yes mom and I'm fine. I need to do more sleep than talking okay? Just let me rest and I'll come downstairs later."

MOM: "Don't you want to come out and help us down in the

kitchen? We could need an extra hand.”

MELISSA: “No mommy. Two extra hands can do so much.

Can you just leave?”

I ask respectfully and she sighs. My head is still tucked on the pillow. I really want to go downstairs and help them but I don't want them to see me like this and I don't want to bring this boob issue to her 'cause I know how much of a stress it'll cause her.

MOM: Okay my baby. Let me leave you before I burn my pots.”

I sigh

too and keep my head tucked on the pillow and sleep. Few hours later from waking up to a deep sleep my phone rings. I check the caller ID and it's my friend Thando. I pick up the phone and place it directly to my ear.

NSERT 3.

THANDO

Before I can phone call Melissa my day went like a disaster because all I could think of was the conversation we had earlier at the café. I was worried about her and I find it serious to take this matter into discussion once again. After the class I send a text to Noxolo.

Meet me at the library before school's out. Sharp.

Noxolo is my other best friend. We've been friends for two years. We met in a debate competition that happened ages ago. She is twenty-three years old very good looking. She has a cute baby face and you'd doubt she's younger than me but we share the same age. She is more into makeup and more into guys. Not that in a "slut" type way but she just can't resist with flirting or giving away her contact details to any guy that approaches her or even go out with them. She is tall in height thick lips ocean blue bright eyes and brown in complexion and has a long thick black hair.

The day goes by and I head to the library as I come across her sitting at the back corner paging through a book. I don't know if she was really reading or she did that because of boredom but I know my Noxolo won't just randomly take a book from the shelves and read it. She spots me and waves a hand. I walk up close to her and take a seat.

NOXOLO: "And the message? The library? What's going on?"

THANDO: "Eish I had one heck of a busy day today but I need to talk to you about something and I'm a little worried too."

She then raises her eyebrows.

NOXOLO: "You're freaking me out. Say something!"

THANDO: "It's about Melissa."

I take a deep breath as I'm still trying to tell her what happened and I did. I expected the same reaction and her jaws drop in shock.

NOXOLO: "No what?! But why a surgeon though? Aren't there any pills she can take to reduce the size of her boobs? I'm sure clicks pharmacies sell them."

I give her the deadly look.

THANDO: "Are you kidding me? You want her to actually change her physical appearance to just please some random people? Wow Noxolo. We shouldn't be condoning this."

NOXOLO: "What else are we supposed to do? She's not listening to us. We tried talking to her in multiple occasions and it didn't work. We should just let her do what she wants."

THANDO: "But still it feels wrong. We should try to talk some sense to her. The same way we did right after she went to a break-up with

that guy. What's his name again?"

NOXOLO: "James."

THANDO: "Yeah that dumb-ass. He's the reason she's like this and she needs us."

NOXOLO: "Yes. I agree with you but can we do that tomorrow though? I think she has a class tomorrow."

THANDO: "Yes that will do. See you tomorrow then."

We take our school backpacks and leave the school premises. I take a taxi and it drops me directly to my house. As soon as I get in I give my mom a kiss and walk to my bedroom.

I walk to my wardrobe and change into something more comfortable. A pair of loose jeans and a short sleeve t-shirt. I make the call. It rings and after the third ring she answers.

MELISSA: "Hey..."

She says with a sleepy voice. It's good she was
asleep to wipe off the negativity out of her thick skull.

I know you must think I've
changed my mind but I haven't. Not even a bit so forget
about trying to prevent me from getting a surgery."

I am hurt and my mood literally changed from a hundred
to a zero. I was expecting something new but I guess we'll keep on going
back to the same scenario.

THANDO: "But why? What happened to that confidence?
That beautiful and happy soul? Who took that precious spark from you because you
were doing so well?"

I sound as if I'm about to breakdown and cry but
I hold the back the tears. I don't want to make her emotional and cry too.

MELISSA: "Today I just woke up hating myself. I'm
not even pretty like everyone else. I'm just ugly and nobody likes me Thando!"

She says angrily. I bet if it was possible for a
person to pop out of the phone screen she would've done that.

THANDO: "What exactly is the problem? You don't

love your boobs because you hate them or you care what other people say about them?"

She takes a while to answer me. She clears her throat and answers but she was mumbling and that means she doesn't know herself either.

MELISSA: "Both. Everybody leaves me as soon as my boobs are exposed to them. Remember the relationship I was once involved in?"

THANDO: "You mean James?"

Ugh. I knew she was going to bring his ass up.

MELISSA: "Yes that asshole."

THANDO: " You two broke up and he moved on with someone else. That's all I know."

MELISSA: "He broke up with me over a text and stated that he doesn't date girls like me. He said the most horrible stuff to me and at first I failed to believe him but I figured he was right. I do look ugly and it's clear I'm not anyone's dream girl."

What an idiot but why is she telling me this

now?

THANDO: "You never told me any of this and why did you keep it from me?"

MELISSA: "I didn't want you to hate him..."

THANDO: "I hate him already. That he must know."

I cut her in but I apologize after and let her finish.

MELISSA: "As I was saying I know you would have done something crazy and fight for me but that would've pushed his anger to the limit and cause him to keep on saying bad stuff about me to you."

And she literally think I'll allow him to badmouth her to me? Wow I guess she doesn't know what kind of a person I really am.

THANDO: "Who? Me? I wouldn't even allow him to finish off his sentence if he was about to talk crap about you. You know I don't tolerate anyone who badmouths people I love and care about."

By me saying that I can feel her smiling and I was right. Anyone who wants to hurt my girls has to start from me first.

MELISSA: " No wonder why I love you this much. You're one of a kind. Seriously."

THANDO: "So please get rid of that mentality of you not being beautiful. You are beautiful in your own way. Don't even compare yourself with others and don't let James words play inside your head. He knows nothing and I think his intentions to say all of that to you was to actually destroy you even more

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and I think his intentions to say all of that to you was to actually destroy you even more so don't worry you'll find someone whom will love you for who you are and appreciate you okay? We'll work on this together."

She sighs.

MELISSA: "Yeah you're right. I'll just stay put and focus on my myself along with my studies then when the right time comes my man will reach out to me and I'll be right here waiting for him."

A smile appears on my face but I'm still not convinced enough. Maybe she's just bluffing.

THANDO: "That's my girl! Thank you for listening to me again. I hope you meant what you said. Remember you're not just doing this for me but for yourself..."

I think of something solid and more to add on that will be positively encourage her for good.

If this feeling comes please try by all means and fight it. If you're still failing and you need someone to talk to I'm one call away."

MELISSA: "Of course and I have to leave now. Mom is calling out for me. See you tomorrow."

She hang up and I got in the dining area to join everyone as they are eating supper.

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RUSS.

I just came back from work and I feel very tired. Being a manager is not as easy as it sounds. I take a long bath and put on my casual clothes. The oversized grey pants and a black long sleeve vest. As I'm about to reach out to the door I meet this divine and cheesy smell coming from the kitchen. In less than a second my stomach starts crumbling like it always does.

I find my mom dishing up and I patiently wait for her at the dinner table. After few minutes she comes with a tray and two plates on it.

MOM: "Dinner is ready."

I keep rubbing my hands and licking my mouth as she gives me my plate.

RUSS: "Get ready to be eaten."

I make one creepy fake laugh and mom looks at me in a strangest way but I don't care less. I begin to eat my food.

MOM: "So you're actually leaving me here by myself?"

I slow down the pace from eating too fast to eating too slow. I hope she's not trying to make me feel guilty about this.

RUSS: "But I asked you to come with me and you said something about taking care of your house. I wouldn't actually mind to live with you but you refused."

MOM: "Yes I know but I can't just abandon this house. Your father worked so much for it and it's a remembrance of him. I feel like he's here with us so I really can't leave."

What my mom said make sense but will she cope to be all alone in this huge house? Let alone by herself? I doubt she can but I tried to convince her to sell the house and start over somewhere else again but she's too attached to this house.

RUSS: "Will you manage to be alone? Because this house will be dead silent when I'm gone."

It's just the two of us in this house. My brothers and sisters left. They're somewhere out there living their lives. The past is not holding them down. They do what they wanna do and life moves on. My mom was supposed to go back to her mother's house and stay there but she refused. I don't know what she wants but if she thinks of me getting me to stay with her then that's not going

to happen. I need to work on my life too. She softly hits me to my shoulder and frowns.

MOM: "Hey! Your dad is here so don't say that.

He might not be physically be here with us but he is spiritually and you need to respect that."

RUSS: "Oh sorry momma but you know you can always

visit me whenever you want and I'll obviously do so too. I'll make time to visit you as possibly as I can."

She rubs my face with her soft hands. I love it when she does that. It calms me down at some point.

MOM: "Yes I know my pumpkin. Just promise me

you won't forget your family and your roots. Don't be fooled by the new city

and forget where you came from. You're an Igbo man so never allow new changes try and influence that."

RUSS: "I promise you mom. I'll be in my best behavior."

MOM: "I love you."

RUSS: "I love you too my queen."

I walk to her seat and place a soft kiss on her forehead. This is my woman and I love her. She may not be with me by my side but I'll never forget her.

INSERT 4.

MELISSA

My mom is calling out for me and it is actually dinner time. I head downstairs and everyone is already digging to their food.

MOM: "Come here baby. Your food is almost cold."

She says as she opens the seat for me.

DAD: "Do you want your sister to reheat it for you?"

MELISSA: "Oh no daddy it's okay. Ngizokudla.... (I'll eat.)

I sit down and my sister is staring at me constantly. I don't know what's her problem and I can tell she wants me to say something.

You do know it's rude to stare."

FIONA: "I know that very well but I'm still trying to figure out what was wrong with you today. You just barged in without talking to anyone.....

She takes a long pause and continues to say.

You just ran to your room as if you had something to hide from us. Mom was even surprised that you didn't bother to greet her like you normally do."

Mom looks at me and says nothing. She continues to focus on her plate and plays with her fork. I fake a smile.

MELISSA: "Pshh it was nothing. I was experiencing bad period cramps and I needed to drink pills then go to sleep."

She raises her eyebrows and continues to play around with a fork that is between her fingers. She copies mom.

FIONA: "Oh really?"

MOM: "Fiona? Please? You heard her. She just had troubles with her cramps and she looks fine now. Can you eat your food and leave he alone?"

She says in a polite tone. My mom never shouts but she will if she has to.

MELISSA: "Yes and would you stop staring me. I'm trying to eat in peace here..."

I point out straight to my dish and rolling my eyes at her.

so please do you mind?"

FIONA: " Whatever. I'm outta here."

She clicks her tongue in annoyance and shifts from her chair and gathers her fork and knife together with her plate.

DAD: "Where do you think you're going?"

FIONA: "To my room. Somewhere better."

She says as she stands up from her seat
aggressively and goes to her room.

MOM: "And what was that?"

She asks looking at her husband in confusion and
looks back at me.

MELISSA: "I don't know. I think she has problems or
something. Maybe she had a stressful day from work."

I shrug my shoulders and I take my plate too along with my fork and knife.

MOM: "Where are you going with that plate?"

MELISSA: "I think I'll enjoy the rest of my dish
in my room so love you mom and love you too dad."

I share a kiss to the both of them and head to
my bedroom. I sit on my study table and go through my facebook account. I
decided to do it again but I opened a new account. That old one was toxic. I didn't upload any pictures
but it's an ordinary selfie I took months go with not so many likes. Maybe it's
because I have fewer friends. I do the scrolling and a profile of a guy named
Russ Skyline pops in my screen.

"Who in the
world is this guy?"

I say to myself as I'm going through his profile
and I find myself having interest in being friends with him because his bio caught
my attention.

It states:

I'm just a humble guy and very friendly but more
friendlier to those who fuck with me. I dislike judgmental people and those
who think better than themselves over the others.

It furthers to say:

I enjoy cooking and I enjoy the rugby sports. I do go
to the gym but only by chance. Looks may be tricky but I'm single and I'm
cool with that unless there's someone who can change that by making me hers
and love me genuinely.

"Oh wow so
he's single? Hmm impressive."

I proceed and go through his personal details. He's

from Nigeria? I look over to his friends and it's nothing but a bunch of guys. There are girls too but they're just few and it

takes me off guard for a guy like him to not socialize with many women.

"Is he gay? Hmm

it better not be but there aren't any signs that he could be possibly gay by judging his pictures. He looks too formal and casual on the other pictures."

I risk it all and send him friend request. I

know for sure he wouldn't go for a girl like me but I'm just taking my

chances. I close my laptop and drop off my plate to the kitchen sink then

I pour myself a big full glass of water to drink to detox. I lay my head on the pillow then I quickly doze off to sleep.

THE FOLLOWING DAY.

I wake up in the morning in a hope of this Russ

guy would message me and he didn't. I don't know if he did see it or he

completely didn't and just ignored it. I believe there's plenty of us

who threw themselves at him. I let pass through that and go take a warm

shower. Today the weather is windy so I decide to put on black jeggings a

grey polar neck t-shirt with a pair of white Jordan sneakers and a black scarf.

I head down to the kitchen for breakfast and

greet my family with the brightest smile on my face. I feel better than yesterday.

FIONA: "Someone surely woke up in a good mood
so now tell me who is he?..."

Like really? I don't answer her. I decide to remain silent.

Mom!! Someone usenesoka. (someone has a
boyfriend.)

She shouts loudly and I roll my eyes at her jokingly.

MELISSA: "Oh please not everyone is like you.

I don't just wake up in a bundle of joy just
because I met someone. I don't adapt to your actions 'honey'....

I make inverted commas with my fingers.

And someone seems to have overcome whatever that was
bothering her last night too."

She started with me and I'll start with her
too.

FIONA: "Khawuye eskoleni please." (Kindy go to school.)

She says annoyingly and I completely don't

care. I take a sit and pour myself Kellogg's Coco Pops and milk. I don't drink a regular milk. It makes me wanna puke. Almond milk is better. I get

a feeling Fiona gives me the deadliest look from my back but we can fix our issues later. Right now she has to prepare for work and I have to be at school in next ten minutes.

MOM: "You two are really a character. I'm going to work now. Melissa would you like me to drive you to school?"

MELISSA: "I would appreciate that a lot mom."

I finish up my breakfast and drink the remaining milk from the bowl. I grab an apply from the fridge and walk out of the door. My mom and I make our way to her car. It's nice and cozy. We drive off until she parks outside the gate.

MOM: "I love you and take care..."

I open the door and she stops me by holding my thighs.

Do you have money for lunch?".

MELISSA: "Yeah. Just twenty bucks."

She reaches out for her purse from the backseat
and gives me an extra thirty bucks.

MOM: "I hope that'll be enough."

MELISSA: "It's more than enough but what is it for?"

I ask in confusion.

MOM: "I thought maybe you'll add on to the things you might want to buy for yourself."

MELISSA: "Thank you mom."

I give her smile. She proceeds to give me a kiss
on the cheek and I immediately rush to class. I'm a minute late. The
punctuality in this place is crazy. I walk in and the class has already started
but luckily Noxolo pats an empty seat that is next to her. What a lifesaver
but I still don't like her. She gossips a lot so whatever secret you share it
with her just know that it's not gonna stay between the two of you. I met her from
a mutual friend Thando. Those two have been best friends for ages. That's
what I heard them both say unless they were capping.

HOURS LATER AT THE CAFETERIA .

MELISSA: "Why you eating rabbit food?"

Noxolo and I have pizza and burger on the table

but Thando is having greens and it's my first time seeing her eating such food.

THANDO: "I'm nursing my waist girl. I had some

difficulties putting on a pencil tight dress. I was about to put it on earlier

this morning you know? To show off my skin a little bit since it's been a

while but guess what? The bloody dress didn't fit and it ripped off!"

She says banging at the table and the students

attention draws to us. We find ourselves bursting into laughter after

everybody turns their head back and focus to whatever they were doing.

NOXOLO: "It seems like Sanele is treating you right.

All that extra weight wouldn't be coming anywhere else."

THANDO: "Oh you can say that again. That's my bundle of joy. I'm telling you."

She says placing her hands right to her chest where

she can feel her heartbeat.

MELISSA: "How long have you guys been together

again?"

THANDO: "Two and a half years..."

She says then takes away break from her thoughts. I think
by that moment she was still trying to find the exact date they've been together.

Yeah almost two years. Five months down the line it'll be our third anniversary."

I always thought anniversaries is for married people but hey I guess it's now celebrated on relationships too.

MELISSA AND NOXOLO: "Aww!"

MELISSA: "I cherish your relationship and I do
respect it so much. You guys give me hope that true love still exists
and that I'll find it someday."

THANDO: "Sure it does. Just make sure you pick
the right one though."

NOXOLO: "Sanele has never cheated on you before?"

Okay now why is she asking that kind of a
question but to my surprise Thando answers her confidently as she twirls her
braids around with her fingers. My girl is really happy.

THANDO: "Nope. He hasn't and he'll never. He's in love with me me me and only me okay? Get that right."

NOXOLO: "Yoh okay thank you Ms. I think we should stop talking about relationships."

THANDO: "Where are you going with this? Do you know something?"

NOXOLO: "Oh no. I was just curious but we all know there are temptations right?"

She says as she continues to chew her annoying gum that dyed her mouth blue. I have no clue what she's on about.

THANDO: "Yeah but Sanele would never fall for that. He promised me that whatever it takes he won't find himself in another woman's disney land."

She says in worry. The "disney land" is the vagina.

That's how we are calling it around public. We don't want people to think we're weird.

NOXOLO: "But be careful though. Men can't be trusted. Trust me I know."

For that moment my phone beeps and as I take a look. I come across Russ text message. Finally he thought of texting me. I cover

my mouth with my hands as my eyes go wide open in disbelief.

THANDO: "Okay? What is it?"

MELISSA: "Nothing. I'm just minding my own business.

You guys can continue talking. Don't mind me."

THANDO: "Oh no girl. That look on your face means there's something. You can talk and I'm listening."

She won't stop nagging me until I tell her. I

take a deep sigh and I can't help but to smile at the thought of him texting me.

MELISSA: "Well there's this guy on facebook. His name is Russ and believe me when I say the guy is stunningly hot."

Someone would swear I'm in a relationship with

him already the way I talk about him. I keep telling them about him where his from

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relating on

what I found written on his personal details and how he is such a great charmer. After

they ask for his photos and I show them.

MELISSA: "There."

I hand them my phone and they keep scrolling on to the next.

NOXOLO: "He's a total snack. Oh Jesus! Who knew people in him still exist in this planet?"

THANDO: "He's the one. I can feel it running
through my veins."

MELISSA: "Haibo! That's way too early to tell."

NOXOLO: "Yeah yoh it's too early. Maybe you should
wait and see if he really is the one."

Ugh I knew she'd say that and maybe she's
targeting him already.

THANDO: "But I'm telling you though he is. I
mean look at him properly..."

She says with a smile on her face while showing
me a picture of his in a suit. A message notification pops up once again.

And you should respond to his message. Don't keep the

poor guy waiting.”

I snatch my phone from her.

MELISSA: “Okay but I’m nervous though. What am I going to say?”

I won’t lie. His handsomeness just makes it hard

for me to even send a lousy text back but I’m glad he made the first move. I reply back with a simple greeting.

Hey.

I return back to my friends whom I find in a middle of a discussion.

NOXOLO: “So were you actually going to do it?”

MELISSA: “Do what?”

I ask back with confusion written all over my face.

NOXOLO: “The surgery duh.”

MELISSA: “I was but not anymore. I don’t think I need it. I’m perfectly fine just the way I am.”

NOXOLO: "Are you sure? I wouldn't be surprised if you still consider it."

MELISSA: "I won't. A wise friend talked some sense in me and her advices are always the best."

I reach for Thando's hand and she smiles back at me.

NOXOLO: "But you know that if something doesn't keep you happy then you won't be happy for the rest of your life until you make things happen."

She says as if she doesn't care and I wonder what she's on about? Does she want me to do this surgery?

THANDO: "Will you please stop Noxolo. What's wrong with you today? You've been nothing but negative njalo nje." (You've been negative every time.)

She says in annoyance.

NOXOLO: "Well sorry and yeah Melissa you did a good job by developing the self love again. Good job."

All that sounded super fake. I just can't read

her facial expression but I don't care. Her opinions don't matter to me. Thando stands up and packs her belongings.

THANDO: "It's almost time to attend another class. Lunch break is over. See you guys later."

She's always punctual but I don't blame her. She has been taught morals by her family to always be on time on everything. I stand up fixing my myself.

NOXOLO: "You too?"

MELISSA: "What does it look like I'm doing?"

That comes out harsh but it doesn't matter. I pack my belongings and leave her hanging alone. The day kept on going and going until it was time to go home.

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RUSS.

I wake up in the morning to prepare myself for work. I take a warm shower and wear my hazel brown tight suit and black shoes to complete the whole look. At work you are forced to wear formal. My dad used to advice me to always look formal so I can look like a professional. I quickly rush off to work. I arrive five minutes late and the receptionist hands me all the messages she received from different companies we need to supply our newspapers to.

Before I can thank her she informs me about someone waiting for me in my office. I take the elevator and drops me to my office. To my surprise I find my ex-girlfriend sitting on one of the guest chairs looking at the window. Without even wasting my time to greet her I just ask her what she is doing in my office.

EX: "Hey baby. I almost thought you'll be absent from work today but I was gonna come to your house anyway."

RUSS: "I asked you a question and I'll ask it again. What do you want?"

I ask in frustration. What makes me even angrier is the word "babe". After all this time she comes back in here and pretends like nothing happened between us.

EX: "That's not the right way to greet your soon-to-be

Mrs. Skyline.”

RUSS: ”Soon-to-be? Don’t flatter yourself because what we had is over...

She stands up and covers her hands around my shoulders seductively.

What’s all this? You left me penniless went out clubbing. Now you’re here because of what? You ran out of money?.....

I take her hands off me and create a short distance between us.

In fact where's the money you stole from me. Mhh is it finished? And you’re here to take some more from me? Forget it. You ain’t getting nothing from me.”

She keeps quiet for a while and she slowly returned back to her seat and double cross her legs.

EX: ”Wow that was a bit too harsh. I'm not here for that. I'm here to ask for a job. I have nowhere else to go and you’re the person I could think of that can help me.”

She says with a sad tone and I go to her. I take a sit at the edge of my desk. Her jackets opens slightly I notice what seems to be a baby bump

but she quickly hides it with by bringing her hands together.

RUSS: "So you pregnant as well?"

EX: "Yes. I'm six months."

She says in disappointment and looks embarrassed. She twists her hand and let's go.

RUSS: "Well congratulations. Mind if I ask who's the father?"

EX: "It was a one night stand. I really don't recall much of what happened that night."

What the fuck did she just say to me? So she fucked someone and doesn't know who made her pregnant?

RUSS: "Angela you got to be kidding me."

That's her name Angela. She is twenty- three years old and we dated when she was eighteen. I know she was still young at that time and age is nothing but a number. She loved me and I loved her too.

She starts to cry and all I can hear is sobs and she brings her hands to her face. I decide to hand her a box of tissues.

ANGELA: "I think I was drugged or something because I do remember a guy who offered me a drink and he took me out of the bar to this creepy room. Then the guys came flooding in. Even though it was hard to recognize them but through the blur I saw movements happening around. I felt hands touching me in different ways. Others were rough and others were soft until I felt pain in between my legs and I figured that I was getting raped. I couldn't scream or shout. I tried to fight back but they were too much...

I am in shock and hurt at the same time. How can people be so cruel? Women are not supposed be treated like that and someone must have taken advantage of her. She didn't deserve anything like that. She tells me from the beginning what happened and how she landed home later that night.

I don't know who requested Uber for me but I found myself in my house. All tucked in nicely inside the bed and changed me to my pajamas."

As she keeps on talking I can just picture everything that was happening to her with those dudes. I brush it off and told her I'll let her know when job positions are available. We're occupied at the moment and she agreed then left.

My day went long and tiring until I decide to login to my Facebook account. I liked and commented to the posts I like. Then I saw a “accept” that was sent fifteen hours ago by a chick named Melissa Rodriguez. She is so beautiful with her brown eyes. I am seeking to know more about her but what turned me off was the distance. She's from South Africa and I'm here in Nigeria but it's not like I wouldn't meet her after all and so I add her back and sent a message first. That's what most woman would prefer.

Hey there.

And she replies after a while.

HER:

Hey.

How are you my lady?

HER:

I'm doing fantastic but school is my worst enemy right now.

Oh so you're currently studying?

A FEW MINUTES LATER.

HER: Yep and I believe you do too?

I do study but
at the same time I run a family business.

HER:

Oh nice but isn't that overwhelming for
you? Handling everything at once?

Not really. I
have time to go to school and study then I also provide time for business.

HER: So what do you study for exactly?

Being a medical doctor .That's what I practically wanna do and it's something that I'm passionate
about.

HER: Wow! From my side I study fashion. I love clothing alot and I see
myself opening a fashion industry one day. I
know there's so mich work to be done but I'm ready to face the consequences that life throws at me.

I like

how goal driven she is. She doesn't rely on anyone but through herself and her upcoming business. These are the type of woman I want. A businessman and a businesswoman? Great combo there.

Wow. Keep it that energy.

HER: Thank you.

I love this conversation to go on but I'd love to know your age.

HER: Hahaha does it even matter?

Yes.

HER: Okay I'm 21 and you must be 24?

That's a surprise. Has she been stocking on my profile?

And how do you know my age?

HER: Don't worry about it. Uhm I really have to go. Bye.

Wait your phone numbers Ms.?

I wait for the next ten minutes and no respond.

I guess I'm too late but she'll see my text eventually and I hope she gives me her personal numbers so I can contact her.

I put aside my laptop and start working on delivering orders to certain retail shops and companies. I hear a knock coming from the wooden door.

RUSS: "Get in."

I see the receptionist Natasha gets in as she gives me paperwork to sign and a piece of paper.

NATASHA: "These are more orders from the Lola Design company and Keep Hair Fresh Salon. They need these orders by Friday."

I take a black pen from my left bottom drawer and she indicates with her finger to places where I can sign. She later takes the signed paperwork from the table and puts them inside a file and leaves my office.

I let out a huge sigh and all of a sudden I think of a conversation I had earlier on with Melissa. She's interesting she has a good sense of humanity and she seems like a very nice person. She's kind but bold too and fearless. A woman with such characteristics is very rare to find and I'm lucky to be friends with her. Even though we haven't agreed on that but I know she wouldn't turn down my friendship proposal.

INSERT 5.

NOXOLO.

As soon as I was left alone by myself I went to class and all I could think of is that Russ dude. He's way too good for Melissa and she is way out of his league. She has big boobs an her body is deformed body. There's a huge comparison between us. I'm slim

thick right amount of boobs with slim waist as a cherry on top and she's just nothing.

I take my phone and search for him but I can't find his profile. Then I search to Melissa's friends list and bam! I find his profile. I sent him a private message on the messenger app.

Hey lover
boy. Here's my number 064 985 **** . Text me as soon as you get this message.

After few hours which is makes it afterschool I sit in the class and wait for Thando and Melissa to leave so that they cannot find out I went behind Melissa's back and sneaked on Russ. Instead of receiving a text message I get a call from the unknown caller ID and I pick it up.

NOXOLO: "Noxolo's phone hello??"

"Do I know you?"

How rude is this person? He calls my number and asks who am I. He doesn't even greet me for that matter.

NOXOLO: "Who am I talking to?"

The ascent sounds different but I keep on
talking to this weirdo.

“You recently send me a text of your numbers on
Facebook and here I am. What do you want?”

Then I remember the lover boy Russ. I smile at
the thought and blush like a teenager who got a call from her crush.

NOXOLO: “Oh it’s me darling. Noxolo and you must
be Russ?”

RUSS: “Yes this is him but how do you know me?”

NOXOLO: “Lets just say from a mutual friend Melissa?
Do you by chance familiarize yourself with her?”

RUSS: I know her. We spoke on the phone few
hours ago. Where is she by the way?”

Geez! Why the hell is he asking me about her?

This was supposed to me and him. Not Melissa. I try to stay put and fake a voice to make it seem as I'm
calm as possible.

NOXOLO: “She’s around. Why?”

RUSS: "She left me hanging. Please tell her to text me back or you can do me a favor and send me her numbers.

What the hell? Nah I'm not stupid enough to do that. I didn't call him to them together with Melissa.

NOXOLO: "I don't have her numbers. Sorry.

I hang up the call and click my tongue in anger.

This guy is seriously asking me about Melissa? What a nerve. As soon as I walk out of the class the school was already empty.

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THANDO.

It is time to go home but I can't seem to find Noxolo. She's suppose to meet up with me to the bus stop and she's nowhere to be found. I impatiently wait for her hoping she'll pull through and there's no sign of her. I catch a bus without her and go home.

Minutes later I make it home and I come across Sanele. His car is parked few inches away from my house. My mood suddenly changes to happiness right away. I run to where he is leaning behind his car

and I find myself in his strong arms. I kiss him and pull away from the kiss then he gives me the puppy sad eyes.

SANELE: "Why did you stop? Come baby kiss me a little bit more."

I giggle.

THANDO: "Okay come here."

I pull his face and start kissing his soft lips letting our tongues swirl and twirl together in a slow pace. By doing that automatically gives me shivers down my spine. I break the kiss before things spice up.

THANDO: "Hold it babe. My lips even hurt..."

I hold my lips and the minute I start to place my finger on them I can feel a sharp pain and they feel swollen.

I can use a vaseline right now."

SANELE: "Ah stop exaggerating. Your lips are not even that bad. You know I could have went an extra mile with that kiss so that is just nothing...."

He says with a grin on his face and he reaches for something in his his pockets and gives me a green zambuk instead. I snatch it and roll my eyes at him playfully then he holds me by my hand and gently gets me inside the car. We keep talking while listening to our favorite track list. We made our very own track list the first year we started dating. Who knew we'd like the same genre of music and fall in love for the same artists? Wow he's indeed something special. I wouldn't trade him for anything.

So babe? Have you thought about that proposal?"

I have thought about it and I know for sure my parents won't allow me to move in with him. He wants me to stay with him in his new apartments he bought for himself on his birthday as a gift. He's been begging me for months now and I kept telling him the same thing. It's way too early for a woman at my age to move in with a man.

THANDO: "Yes I have but my mom won't allow me to move in with you and you know that my dad is more into tradition. He'll want us to get married first then we can live together."

SANELE: "But I can marry you. I will pay for the lobola(dowry)if I have to."

What? His got to be kidding me. I know we've known each other for a year and be dated for two and a half years but that doesn't mean I know him to that extent of having to fully commit myself to him. Three is years is still not enough. I need more.

THANDO: "No baby that's way too early for us to get married. We're both young and we still need time focus on working for our future. We need to take things slow. I'm sure you still need time to hangout with the boys. Now imagine all of that would be gone

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baby that's way too early for us to get married. We're both young and we still need time focus on working for our future. We need to take things slow. I'm sure you still need time to hangout with the boys. Now imagine all of that would be gone because you'll be forced to be home early and spend more time with me than anyone else."

He is in deep thoughts and brushes his beard.

SANELE: "I can deal with that. I want to do that with with for the rest of my life but hey I'm not rushing you to all of this. I'll give us more time to work things out but remember time is running out."

He leans on to me and we share a kiss.

THANDO: "I know baby. We'll make this work soon."

We continue to talk and my stomach starts growling. Normally I don't ask him for anything. I don't want him to think I'm in this relationship for him to take responsibility in me. I love him genuinely regardless of his money or the materialistic things.

SANELE: "Someone is feeling hungry. How about we go and grab something to eat?"

THANDO: "Uhm yeah sure."

I say in embarrassment and my face is looking down on the floor. He cups my face with his free hand while the other is on the steering wheel. He looks at him and smiles.

SANELE: "McDonald's?"

THANDO: "Yeah. That will do."

I smile back and we both have our seatbelt for safety measures and we go to grab ourselves food.

Meet my boyfriend Sanele. Not only my boyfriend but my best friend partner and my husband. He's twenty-six years old and runs a cleaning company. He never wanted to be employed and work under someone else but it all began from that. He finished his higher grade and he immediately went to look for a job. He did minor jobs and earning less money. He never gave up and continued to work hard to make his life better. My man was clever enough to save some money from his earnings and three years down the line he started making his own business. He built this huge hall and turned it into a cleaning company. He bought all the necessary machinery and hired people to work for him. He advertised himself to small and big companies and he got very good paying clients. People loved his work and his company became popular. The company grew bigger and better.

He's tall like a height of basketball player. He's 6 feet and 8 inches (203cm) and darker from my complexion. He is well proportioned and has tattoos in his left and to his chest. Our height is almost the same but he's eight centimeters shorter than him. He is so well-spoken and respected by a lot of people. He has short dreadlocks and a cute trimmed mustache. He was the most wanted by girls instead he chose to be with me. I live in an apartment that is allocated at Gardenia Park with my parents and he stays alone at Brandwag which is few kilometers from each other. He lives in a four room flat. It has a bedroom bathroom a kitchen a sitting room and a front balcony that gives the best views for sunsets and sunrise. The furniture is not too expensive but it makes his place a spot on. They offer free parking too which makes it safer for me to park my car there whenever I come to visit.

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SANELE.

As I'm driving to McDonald's and grab my baby

girl food warms my heart. I don't want her to starve. Not when I'm around.

The thought of her not wanting to marry me

bothers me. We've been talking about marriage and she would agree. Now all of a sudden she's changed. She has different views now. She doesn't even want to move in with me. I don't know why she

thinks it's too early for us to be married. Yes I know she's still studying and

I'm running a business but I still want to make her my wife and live together.

I'm not rushing to making family but I want her by my side and wake up next to

her everyday. I'm really getting tired of missing her every time she visits me

then leaves. The time we spend together is not enough. I need to wake up next

to her every morning eat breakfast with her while we sit on the same table

cuddle with her when I need to hold her waits when she cook meals for us but

I guess things won't happen the way I had visioned them.

I'm dead in love with her and I see myself spending the rest of my life with her but why wouldn't she allow me to show her how much I'm serious about her? Good thing is I met her family after we've dated for at least six months. Her mom was impressed and she loved me from the onset and my family loved her too. That should mean something but I guess there's nothing more I can do to change her mind. I respect my baby girl's decisions and I won't rush her. I don't want her to feel pressured and I'm not willing to lose her. I will give her all the time she needs in the world. We finally make it to McDonald's drive thru and stop by.

MACHINE: "Welcome to McDonald's and may I take your order?"

SANELE: "I would like to have two large McFeast Deluxe meals and two McFizz strawberry flavored drinks."

She interrupts.

THANDO: "McFlurry for dessert babe."

Oh man I forgot how bad she's in love with the McDonald's ice-cream.

MACHINE: "Anything else?"

SANELE: "And two McFlurry ice-cream that'll be all."

MACHINE: "Okay that'll be R280.90. Please
drive through and fetch your order to the next window. Thank you."

I proceed to drive to then collect my order and
pay cash. After we drive around find a very chilled spot around the park. She doesn't wait for me to park
the car and she begins take
out everything inside the bag and gives me my food. She takes hers and folds

the brown McDonald's bag and place it to the backseat. She opens her burger and pours chicken fries to the empty front space of the box. What a funny way of eating food. She starts with the fries and ends with her burger.

The spot is perfect. There are no cars passing by. It's just us and the sound from the trees as they're blown by wind and the shining stars from the sky making that moments to be sweet memories.

INSERT 6.

CANDICE.

CANDICE: "I miss you too girl! You should come visit me sometime."

I say as I talk to my best friend Melissa.

MELISSA: "I will. The problem is that I'm caught up with so much workload of assignments."

CANDICE: "Aww I'm sorry my love. This is so going to be a long journey. Trust me."

MELISSA: "Yeah I know but at least I'm left with two years. Then I'll be finally done with school and be ready to move on to something better."

I sound sorrowful but I don't expect her to feel pity for herself.

CANDICE: "Let me guess? Starting your own business of fashion?"

MELISSA: "Yes. Starting my own business is my ideal plan but having a capital would be an issue."

CANDICE: "You can borrow loan from the banks?"

MELISSA: "I need to find a business partner so that we can build and grow this business together. That will help to pay half of the interest."

As I'm talking to her I'm in the kitchen preparing a meal for my husband. Yes I know you must be asking whether I'm married or not and to take you out of that curiosity I am married to the most adorable and admirable husband ever. My friendship with Melissa has been great. We've been friends for three years and she's been nothing but a good friend to me. She respects me despite of the age difference. She never belittles me and I just fucken love her.

I'm Candice twenty-four years old of age a soon-to-be mom and I'm a housewife. Without my husband's acknowledgement I decided to secretly run a business of producing hair and skincare products for both males and females and that makes me a manager of Care For Me production. We live in Omonde view estate in Nasrec Aeroton Johannesburg. Paying rent every month is not an issue but we want to have a place to call home. We spoke to the top agenices to help us find what we're looking for as we're about to have to be a family. I was tiny in size but now that I'm pregnant I'm thicker. I have thick brown and beautiful thighs. I'm lighter and I have mid-length weight but I put on hair extensions to make it longer. My husband doesn't want me to work because of this pregnancy and he's afraid I might overwork myself and get hurt at some point but during my free days I pay all my attention to my business and make money.

MELISSA: "Are you cooking or something?"

CANDICE: "Yeah preparing dinner for my husband. He'll come here walking like a zombie asking me to make him food before he eats me to alive..."

We both share a laugh. I haven't got time to talk one on one with my friend. After she left me to another another province my heart sank. The distance took me away from her and none of us had time to visit other. I always knew things won't be the same. We barely talk about anything but I don't blame her. She has school and I have a husband to take care off.

So after your break-up with Josh you haven't been eyeing on someone else?"

MELISSA: "It's James and I really wish there was someone but there's a guy I've been talking to this morning. We're not dating though. We're still getting to know each other."

CANDICE: "Who is this mysterious guy?"

MELISSA: "Russ Skyline."

I lower the heat stove and take a seat on a bar

chair that is next to the kitchen counter.

CANDICE: "Foreigner?"

MELISSA: "Yean. From Nigeria. He's not bad though."

That doesn't make me how I feel about Nigerian man. I keep hearing stories about them selling drugs to people and do human-trafficking to turn people to sex slaves so their background is just scary and it creeps me but I can't judge him. Maybe he doesn't fall to the side of the bad guys.

CANDICE: "How did you guys meet? I mean you're here in South Africa and he's out there in Nigeria?"

MELISSA: "We never met in person. It all started on Facebook."

I don't trust Facebook too. People do catfish and others are bloody scammers. The Facebook app has never been good.

CANDICE: "Have you done facetime with him? Just to make sure you're talking to the same guy on the pictures?"

MELISSA: "We've been only the texting but only for those few minutes. We're not into deep conversations yet."

CANDICE: "You know when they say it's love at first sight so do you like him?"

MELISSA: "What? No. He's just a good friend. Nothing more than that. The feelings are mutual."

I let out a deep breath.

CANDICE: "Okay if you say so but if you fall for him just get to know him first. I don't trust social media mtase (sis)"

MELISSA: "I will... Someone's calling me and I have to take this."

CANDICE: "It's okay. Bye."

We make the kissing sounds to each other and I hang up. I return back to the kitchen to finish off cooking and turn off the stove. I wash the dishes and go take a quick nap to the dining area. Gosh this pregnancy is tiring and I'm only just seven months but still this baby is making my life miserable.

As I wait for my husband I end up falling asleep until I am waken up by a bold male voice. I am still sleepy but I can see my husband making his way towards me. I can feel him picking me up from the couch and takes me to our bedroom. He gently lays me on the bed and adjust my head properly on the pillow.

He take his time to undress my tops and the bottoms. He walks over to the toiletry section that is by the wardrobe and takes out the oil and cream lotions that help reduce the itchiness from the stretch marks. He applies it very gentle with his warm hands and it's his first time doing it. I hope he doesn't press hard on me. He surprised me and he's he's but good. You'd swear he has done done before. The way he swifts his hands around my belly is just amazing. He tucks me inside the bedsheets then places a soft kiss on my forehead.

Chris makes his way back to the kitchen and eats the food his wife made for him. He pulls out one iced cold beer from the fridge to complete his dish. He heats his food and goes to the dining area. He switches on the TV but still keeps the lights off. Few minutes later he finishes eating and burbs from eating a pile of food. He places his dish inside a washing machine and goes to bed then sleeps.

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MELISSA.

“Unknown? Who is this?”

For a second

I try to think who it might be but no one pops up in my head. I first ignored it but after the second call I answer it.

MELISSA: "Hello?"

"Hey. Melissa it's me."

The voice just sounds good and new to my ears
too. It's not too deep

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but it was alright. But then I'm still wondering who
this is.

MELISSA: "You who?"

"I figured you wouldn't recognize my voice. I'm
Russ. The guy you left hanging while he was talking to you."

I freeze for a second. I keep quiet and say
nothing for a while. It is like a cat just bite my tongue. It is so is so hard
to continue to say anything further to him.

RUSS: "Hello? You're still there?..."

I keep quiet again.

Hello? Melissa?...

I want to say something but I'm afraid it might come out wrong.

Oh I guess it's the network. Let me just drop the call."

He say to himself. Before he can hang up I clear my throat.

MELISSA: "No don't. I'm here."

RUSS: "Did I say anything wrong?"

MELISSA: "No I was just busy with something."

I had to lie for some reason. I thought he'll be annoyed for the fact I keep him waiting but he didn't.

RUSS: " I can leave and call you back later."

MELISSA: "No I'm done..."

And something comes in mind which I've been
longing to ask.

Where did you get my numbers?"

RUSS: "I thought you'd never ask."

MELISSA: "I don't remember giving you my numbers."

RUSS: I
asked for your numbers and you went offline
just like that."

MELISSA: "I had to rush to class. I was late."

RUSS: "I understand...."

Meanwhile we were talking I walk to my wardrobe
to look for my pajamas. Once I find them I change from my causal clothes and put
on my warm and comfy two-piece set. The weather is not looking good and it looks like we're about to
approach winter soon. I didn't hear a
word from what Russ was saying until he came to the ending.

Yeah so please don't be mad at her."

Don't be mad at who? These are the results I get for

not paying attention when someone talks to me.

MELISSA: "Mad at who?"

RUSS: "You weren't listening to me this whole time?"

MELISSA: "I'm sorry. I was changing my clothes to something warm. I thought I was going to handle it while I'm talking to you but I'm failing."

RUSS: "It must be cold that side."

MELISSA: "Yes and it's almost midnight."

RUSS: "I don't want to look like a creep. I got them from your friend. No something."

I can see he's struggling to come up with the name and I think of a friend related to the first two alphabets and it is it no one else but Noxolo. I click my tongue lightly for him not hear me.

MELISSA: "You mean Noxolo?"

RUSS: "Yeah yeah yeah that's her. I got your numbers from Noxolo so I'm asking you not to be mad at her. She never wanted to give me your numbers from the first place and I begged her annoyingly until she couldn't handle it anymore but I just had to. I'm sorry."

I laugh. I wonder how she was at that moment.

MELISSA: "What is it that you want so bad from me that makes you to go an extra mile asking my numbers to someone else?"

I don't know

if I said it wrong but I'm not liking what he did at all. He is acting really weird. No one has ever done that for me. He makes a huge sigh.

RUSS: "Why would I want something from you? I just want to be your friend. I find it amazing talking to you. You're amazing Melissa and if you don't mind will you be friends with me?"

Nobody

has ever said anything positive to me. Especially with the guys. They'll discriminate my looks and say something negative about my body. Seconds later I come back to my senses. It wouldn't hurt to be friends with him right? I hope not.

MELISSA: "Sure but how can we be friends when I haven't met you? I don't know if I ever will."

RUSS: "Soon enough that friend you'll meet him in person. Just wait until next month."

What? He's coming here? A smile creeps on my face.

MELISSA: "Visiting family and friends?"

RUSS: "No. I have no one but at least I have you..."

Oh my gosh this guy. Is he flirting with me? I'm loving this already. It feels brand new to talk with a guy for this long.

I want to build my own pharmacy soon and live my life. I'm tired of relying to my mother for everything."

So he lives with his mom? It brings one question

if he's married because if he is why would he still be living with his mother? Is he a baby's momma?

MELISSA: "Are you coming with your wife?"

I ask

that on purpose. I know it's not my business but I'm just being silly and I need to know.

RUSS: "I don't have a wife. I'm a single dude. I have my mom and siblings."

What? How can a snack like him be single? What's worse he's not even married? Wow. One thing I should know is to never judge a book by it's cover.

MELISSA: "So it'll just be you and the new city?"

RUSS: "Me and the new city baby girl."

I check time on my phone and it's already

02:00am. I wrap up the conversation with Russ and we say our goodbyesthen I go to sleep.

Hours felt like days and days felt like weeks and

its almost the end of May. The winter is about to approach and I wont lie. I

don't like this season at all. If you're a girl who struggles with period pains like me then you know what I'm referring to.

I've been preparing for tests and it's been

nothing but stressful. I do everything extra. I study extra and I

barely make time for my friends. They have been paying me visits here and

there but this afternoon we plan to have grab brunch at the Pizza Hut restaurant.

MELISSA: "So tell me why did you give Russ my numbers

without my concern?...

Noxolo and Thando give me a surprise look as if I said something crazy. I stare back to Noxolo.

I'm talking to you."

NOXOLO: "I don't know what you're talking."

MELISSA: "Oh really? Russ phone called me last night and to my surprise I asked him where did he get my numbers from. Oh shame the poor guy couldn't pronounce your name. Why mara? Since when do we give out numbers to people without asking for permission? That's disrespect."

I say raising my hands at them. Then Thando interferes.

THANDO: "You don't look happy."

MELISSA: "I thought we're still sticking to that rule of not sharing our numbers when someone asks for them. Unless one of us agrees and acknowledges that first and she broke the rule. I wouldn't do that to her."

I say in an outrageous tone.

NOXOLO: "I never thought it'll be a problem since you've already spoken to him. All I did was to help a desperate friend and he

thanked me.”

She shrugs her shoulders as if she doesn't give a fuck and takes a bite from her slice of pizza.

MELISSA: “Don't do that again. That was not a cool move.”

What makes me to be mad is how the hell did she manage to be in contact with Russ? I knew him before her and all of a sudden she has her numbers. I don't recall anything about giving anyone his facebook username.

THANDO: “Okay I apologize on her behalf. She won't repeat that mistake. Now let's forget about this and enjoy our lunch.”

She brings Noxolo's hand closer with mine.

NOXOLO: “What are you doing?”

She asks her the same question I had in mind.

THANDO: “Its called truce. Which means making peace. Now hold each others hands and say truce.”

Noxolo gives me the apologetic stare and a smile creeps on our face. Gosh this girl is so good at pretending but anyway I'll play by her rules. I'm sure there's an evil glare on my face right now.

MELISSA: "Sure. Truce."

NOXOLO: "Truce."

This thing of her being in contact with Russ eats me deep inside. I don't know if I should call it jealousy or what but somehow it makes me really upset. I feel like taking her and delete his number.

MELISSA: "Wait a minute....."

I say raising my left hand in the air and the one is hold on tight to my waist.

How did you get in contact with Russ?"

I couldn't help but to ask.

NOXOLO: "I did what anybody else can do?"

I looked for him and I found him."

She shrugs her shoulders and she takes out her phone from her bag. I'm not surprised she snooped into his profile. She does this whenever she meets someone she likes. Now I see why girls hate her. She just can't keep her claws to herself.

MELISSA: "You know what? I can tell you like him. Hamba kuye. (Go to him) Plus you can have him all to yourself and prepare yourself 'cause he's coming tomorrow."

What is happening with me? Where is all this talking coming from?

NOXOLO AND THANDO: "What!?"

They both ask in shock.

MELISSA: "Yes. Now that you know go for him sisi uyeke ngombhedo wakho." (Go for him and stop with your nonsense.)

Noxolo keeps quiet until it is time for us to leave. We pay for our meals and leave the resurant. Everyday after class Thando and I go for a jog like we always do in the evening. She came with the idea of jogging and I thought it's not a bad idea to loose few kilos.

I felt like I needed to do something with my weight and she asked me join in but we won't be doing that for long. We're planning to register to a gym and do effective workouts.

After the lunch at Pizza Hut I go home to

freshen up and wear a black tight dress and a yellow cardigan with white All

Star.

"This shall do."

I quickly get dressed and wait for Thando to come pick me up. While I'm waiting for her I decide to catch up on the series The Heist. It's been a while since I watched the last episode. I grab a packet of vinegar and salted flavored jumping jacks popcorn and pour myself a big glass of sparkling water.

INSERT 7.

THANDO.

I rush home and redo my makeup. I change from my previous outfit to the most comfortable clothes. A sky blue silky neckline dress and black pumps. I take my purse and by a minute I look through the window. My eyes land to Sanele's car pulling over to my house. He gives me a call to notify me he's outside and I immediately grab my side bag and my phone then I leave the house. I walk inside the car and give him a kiss on his lips.

SANELE: "You ready?"

We put our seatbelts on.

THANDO: "Yes but we should fetch Melissa."

His smile drops and gives me a weird expression.

I can't tell if he's upset or disappointed.

SANELE: "I thought it'll just be us. Not anyone or your friends."

One thing I forgot to do earlier today was to let him know what my plans are and why he is tagged along. All we need is a ride. We could've used my car but I ran out of petrol.

THANDO: "I called you over so you can give us a lift to the mall."

SANELE: "When you say "us" you refer to you and who?"

THANDO: "Me and Melissa."

SANELE: "Haw babe. I thought we'll go to my house watch Netflix and chill. I even bought snacks for us along the way."

I take a look at the backseat and I come across a bunch of grocery plastics.

THANDO: "Are these for us?"

SANELE: "I have all your favorites."

Now I'm second guessing whether I should cancel everything with Melissa and chill with my baby boo but at the same time I can't. Once I have the energy of wanting to do things then I better go for it or else I'll laze around and stop doing it entirely.

THANDO: "Okay baby. How about we fetch Melissa and go to the store to get whatever we want. It's nothing much. Just workout outfits and we're out."

SANELE: "Since when do you care about going to the gym?"

Normally I don't attend the gym but after the incident with the dress I saw a need to get my body to exercise and i want to fit in my old clothes back. I'm tired of opening the wardrobe and not knowing what outfit to wear 'cause they're all small. It's only my luck to find clothes are are still able to fit me.

By the way I was a size thirty but now I'm a size thirty-four. I'm short in height and I'm strictly Xhosa. I fall between Indian and Black so I have a touch of the Indian looks and the features. My hair is naturally curly. My dad is Indian and my mom is Xhosa. My color complexion is not so light but it's a shade of brown. Everything in my face looks average and I was born with dimples. The name Thando was given by dad. He gave to me due to the meaning behind it. It means love. Ever since I was born I bought love and happiness to my mom and to his life.

I look at my boyfriend who looks confused about the gym issue. I tell him the whole issue that happened yesterday and a smirk appears on his face.

SANELE: "Oh mama! I saw improvement on that ass..."

He starts to lick his lips sexually and his lips look shiny from the saliva. Not in a disgusting way though.

My baby be getting thick. Mhh how appetizing.”

He gives me the evil grin and leans on to me. I share a laugh and push him playfully back to his seat.

THANDO: ”Ahh you should hold it right there. We’re not doing this now and we have to go.”

This hot headed doesn't obey my orders. He keeps on leaning closer to me. The next thing I know I pushed him to lean back to where he was and I’m now on top of him. I want him in me.

SANELE: ”Oh chill baddie. No need to be aggressive. I’m all yours.”

He smart talks me sexually and pulls his seat backwards. I can see his hard dick print from his grey sweat pants.

THANDO: ”Ugh shut up!”

I giggle. I find myself untying his pants and my hand starts slipping in his underwear. Mhh I love doing that and he

enjoys it too. On the other hand he unbuckles my bra underneath my dress and shifts my underwear to the side and I moan. It's been a while since my pussy felt the touch from daddy. As my boobs are exposed to his face he tilt the dress to the left so he can have full access to my left boob. My nipples are so hard and that drives him madly insane. He cups it and sucks on it gently. The goodness from that tingling sensation makes my eyeballs roll at the back of my head.

My babe finds his way with his hands inside my panties and starts to slowly rub my clit and a moan escapes from my mouth. He first started play with my clit just to give me a little tease and he further went to inserting two full fingers in my slippery pussy. Things are starting to heat up but he immediately breaks from the kiss.

SANELE: "Fuck baby. You wet."

I can feel his dick getting harder. I can feel myself getting wetter the minute he plays and squeezes my other nipple while the other is on his mouth. I begin to remove his pants and underwear down to his feet. He did things quite fast and I can feel him inserting his dick inside me.

THANDO: "Fuccckkk Sanele!"

I cried. I can just tell he's impatiently waiting to get inside me. He pushed me deeper and deeper to his dick. He keeps on groaning by my earlobe and that is mad sexy. I use my grinding skills on him and I don't hesitate to give him a break.

The more I grind on him the more sloppy it gets.

SANELE: "Right there baby."

He starts moving me up and down shoving it deep. All of a sudden I feel a sharp pain to my womb. It feels as if I'm experiencing menstrual cramps again.

THANDO: "Ouch! Baby wait."

I try to get away from him but he stops me before I can pull his dick out.

SANELE: "Calm down. Just breathe in. We had sex in a while and I should have taken it easy on you. I'm sorry baby...."

I keep closing my eyes trying to consume the pain.

I have lubricant. We can use it if you want.....

He cups my face and I nod. I slowly remove myself away from him and his dick fall out. He reaches out to his bag from the backseat and takes out the lubricant then opens the lid.

Here. Do you want me to do it or you'll do it?....

I reach out my hand for the lubricant and I

pour it to his dick. I rub halfway round. It's moist and ready to do the job. I give it a try and it just slides in. I grind on him but slowly this time. I keep going with the same pace and I feel the pain eases down time to time. I don't know where the heck the pain was coming from but that hurt extremely bad.

Maybe he inserted his dick too deep.

I move the pace to speed. I'm getting tired of slow motions. I don't see a need to go slower anymore. For a proper balance he adjusts his seat and I stretch my legs while I lift both my hands up to the roof of the car and hold on tight.

Babe! I'm about to cum."

THANDO: "Me too!.....

He holds my

waist. I'm close to reach my orgasm but he does it again and stops me. I thought I was doing so well but maybe it's just trash.

What's wrong? Am I not doing it right?"

SANELE: "You are incredibly amazing baby. Don't doubt thatbut I don't have a condom on and you're not on birth control. We don't want to make a baby here."

He says breathing heavily. He makes sense but did he have to say it now? I

don't to make a baby in a car either and I don't think any of us is ready to be a

parent.

THANDO: "Oh yeah. I understand. Let me grab my clothes."

I go back to

my seat and grab the tissue to wipe off the lubricant that is left dripping in my pussy and he does the same on him. Both of us put our clothes back on and he opens

up the windows to fill in the fresh air. I check my phone and its 05:30pm. I was supposed to give Melissa a call earlier to let her know we're on our way but I

had a little business meeting to attend to and it delayed us but I'll give her a call and check her out.

SANELE: "What's wrong?"

THANDO: "I stood her up and I know she's upset. We need hurry."

SANELE: "Let's just head to the mall and you can grab whatever you want. We'll deliver hers straight to her house."

Sounds like a great idea. However I wanted her to tag along. He starts the engine and in less than an hour we arrive to the mall.

Sanele parks his GTI golf to the parking lot. I immediately rush to Sportscene. As soon as I get there I buy myself a pair

of black and grey nike leggings sneakers and a nike black and white sports

bra. I've been into nike brand ever since I was a toddler and its doing well for me. Now I'm

stuck because I don't know what is Melissa likes and prefers. I thought of getting her a bigger size for her boobs but I don't want to make her feel

uncomfortable or humiliated so I decide to phone call her and after the third

ring she answers sounding sleepily.

THANDO: "Wakey wakey sleepy head."

MELISSA: "Geez what time is it?"

THANDO: "Time for you to wake up."

Then I hear her panicking.

MELISSA: "Oh no no no I'm sorry. I didn't realize I fell asleep but what took you so long?"

I want to tell her I didn't make it to her

house but since she has no clue that I wasn't there I decide to let it slide.

THANDO: "Don't worry about it."

MELISSA: "Okay where are you now?"

THANDO: "At Sportscene. I want to ask what size are

you at the bottom and the top?"

MELISSA: "I thought we'll just get the simple outfits at affordable prices. Not the expensive ones. You know I can't afford sportscene."

I forgot how she can be like sometimes. She always settles for less. Not that she can't afford to but she's just keeping it simple and calls it "savings". Even if it's something that is worth hundred bucks it's still expensive to her. Her go-to store is always Mr Price.

THANDO: "Well it's price per size so for your big size it may be mo..."

I hold back my words as I realize I mentioned the word big. I know for sure she's fiesty and pissed wherever she is. She doesn't like it when someone refers to her size big. She gets offended very easily so you need to be careful when you talk to her.

I meant I'm in need of..."

Before I can finish my sentence she interrupts me.

MELISSA: "It's fine Thando. Just get me an outfit to MrPrice Sport."

She stays in a low tone. Just know when she calls you by name it's not good.

THANDO: "I'm sorry. I'll get you something to Mr Price.

She didn't say anything for a while until I make

a promise to bring her favorite diddle daddle caramel flavored popcorn and KFC dunked chicken wings. Those are her two favorite things.

MELISSA: "Are you serious?"

THANDO: "Deadly serious my love. Just hold on there and I'll be there before you know it."

I can tell by the sound of her sweet laugh she's happy. Gosh

this girl is something special but why is everybody not seeing that? Hayy this

world. Only the bad is recognized and all they know is to judge someone before

they even know them.

I pay for my stuff and head to Mr Price Sport. She

told me her bra size which is XXL and medium sized black pair of leggings. As soon as I'm done with everything. I make my way

to KFC and join a queue. After what seems like five minutes Sanele calls.

SANELE: "How many more minutes do you want?"

THANDO: "I'm almost done. Just give me ten minutes and I'll be there."

SANELE: "You better make it snappy. I'm bored here and Its kinda depressing when you aren't here with me."

THANDO: "Aww baby I'm coming okay? Just hang in there."

The queue begins to move faster than I thought.

My order is ready and I exit to the mall. Sanele spots me approaching to him and he moves his car to my direction and pulls over.

SANELE: "So much stuff? I thought what I bought for us was enough."

I take my bags ask him to unlock the boot. He does that I place the bags inside and lock it back back again.

THANDO: "No some belong to me then the rest are for Melissa."

He starts to ease down and I get inside the passenger seat. He adjusts his seatbelt.

He connects his phone by the Bluetooth and plays one of Ella Mai's songs Boo'd

Up.

SANELE: "Oh I see and that KFC meal is hers too?"

He says staring at the box and looks back at me.

THANDO: "Don't even think about it. I'm giving you none."

SANELE: "I don't care but just know that you'll prepare dinner tonight. I didn't buy any takeaway."

He says with a smirk.

THANDO: "I don't mind."

He drives off and after thirty minutes we make
it to Melissa's front gate.

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RUSS.

“SURPRI
SE !!!”

I see my colleagues standing there with gifts. There’s music and drinks. Wow they did all this for me? Is this some kind of a goodbye celebration ceremony?

RUSS: “What’s all this?”

My colleague Elizabeth approaches to my direction and walks me to the crowd.

ELIZABETH: “Don’t worry about it. Just have fun and

enjoy your last day with us.”

RUSS: “Last day?”

ELIZABETH: “Yes. We know you won’t be with us
for long. Everybody knows you’re going to South Africa.”

I can’t believe they managed to pull this. I almost have teary eyes but I keep my cool and hold it back in.
I don’t want my colleagues
to see my soft spot.

RUSS: “Wow thank you but how did you manage to do
all this?”

ELIZABETH: “Your receptionist did. She gave us
the access to your office and I had enough time to set everything up.”

I laugh.

RUSS: “Oh Natasha. I can’t believe she did that
but I’m not mad at her. This is amazing.”

I join the crowd and everyone is enjoying
themselves dancing playing office board games. I receive gifts from most of
them and nice little appreciative speeches from those who couldn’t get me
something but it doesn’t matter. Every little thing matters to me. I walk to

the front and ring a glass with a spoon to gather everyone's attention.

RUSS: "Good day everyone. I know I won't spend much time in the office or ever see me around. I'll be leaving tomorrow. I want to take this opportunity and thank each and every one of you. You guys have done so much work in raising the Skyline News. It became so much popular to a point where it has reached to certain countries. It prints so many newspapers and that has raised our profit. I've never been this happy in my life and you guys are the best thing I can ever ask for. You bring so much joy in me. I wish you guys to do well as I won't be around anymore and before I end the speech I'd like to announce something. You guys will be going on a business trip to Ghana. I've booked all the hotels for each and every one of you. Food will be served and many other things will be there too but don't forget you'll be still on duty. I thank you."

Everyone claps their hands in excitement and some will come to me and personally thank me for this business vacation. The day continued to do well until I said my last goodbyes and on my way home to pack my stuff.

I'm in the middle of the road and I grab my phone to call Melissa but it goes through voicemail. I try for the second time and it does that again. Maybe the signal is not too good in this place.

"Where the hell is she?"

I finally make it back home then went inside
the house. I find my mom on the floor blasting in tears.

RUSS: "No mom what's wrong?...."

I ask in a sad tone as I walk towards her and
kneel besides her. I reach to her and she's holding a family photo album.

No please don't cry...

She keeps sobbing and ever since I'm here she's been facing her head to the ground. I rush to the
bathroom and bring her a tissue
roll.

I think you may
need this."

She takes the tissue and wipes her eyes with it. She starts to talk to me.

MOM: "I can't believe the day is finally here. You'll
be gone."

RUSS: "Is this about me leaving the country?"

She nods and says..

MOM: "I'm not saying you should stay but I'm worried.

You'll be alone in that country and there's no one you can call for help when you need one."

I bring her head to my chest and she takes a deep breath.

RUSS: "Mom don't worry about that. That shouldn't stress you. I'll be fine."

MOM: "I'll feel free when you ask your younger sister Trisha to come and live with you."

I would love to bring her with me but I'm okay.

I can handle things on my own and besides what difference will it make? She's younger than me. Its not like she'll be my shield that will protect me from the worst. Unless she'll be my security guard to report to my mom if something bad happens but I don't need that. I'm a grown-up now. I can make own choices and I know what's right for me. All of a sudden I remembered Melissa. I can use her as my escape goat.

RUSS: "Uhm mom I think there is someone I know. Even though we haven't met in person but she's been friends with me foe quite sometime now."

She removes her eyes from folding her used

tissue and looks at me. She wants to talk and say something but the hiccups disturb her the minute she tries to opens her mouth.

MOM: "She? And who will that be?"

RUSS: "Her name is Melissa."

MOM: "She has a nice name but how do you know her?"

RUSS: "I know this not something from your expectations but we met on online. She's good. I promise you.

She says nothing for about a minute.

MOM: "Social media is not my thing and you know that."

Yeah but it to me it is. We're two different people hello! I believe what I believe in.

RUSS: "What's wrong with meeting people from social media?"

MOM: "People are fake. They fake their looks and everything just to easily attract people like you. They pretend to be someone they're not. I don't want you to end up getting hurt son."

She's right but I don't think Melissa is one of those fake people.

RUSS: "But mom not everyone is like that. Others stay true to themselves and that's Melissa."

It's funny how I defend her. Someone would swear I knew her for a very long time and its only been a month but I put my trust in her. I don't think she'll ever turn me down.

MOM: "This still doesn't sound right but if you truly trust her then I can't convince you enough to leave her."

I though she'll be happy for me about Melissa but clearly she's not. She knows how I am when I like someone. I don't need to say it but my actions can speak for themselves. She just needs to trust me on this one. I'm not planning to date her immediately but I'm in a mission to build a good friendship with her. I hug her once again and head to my room to pack all my belongings to my three big black suitcases.

I pack my clothes not the entire wardrobe. I don't want her to think I'm disowning her and I'm still going to come back for

visit. I take my school books too and any other necessities including my shoes in a separate suitcase. All three

suitcases are fully packed and I'm ready for the road.

Before I can leave I review my bedroom one more time with sympathy and sadness. It looks empty and lonely. All my good and bad memories are left here. A minute with my room is over and I close the door behind me. I walk to the living room which is not far from my bedroom. I find my mom sitting in a sofa watching TV. She hears my footsteps approaching and stands up to look at my direction. She comes to me with a brown envelope in her hands.

MOM: "Here. Don't misuse it."

She gives me the envelope and I take a look inside.

My jaws drop and look at her in disbelief . My eyes are flashed with a stacks of money.

RUSS: "What's this?"

I know exactly what that is but I need her to give me some explanation.

MOM: "Money. For starters. It's not much but that should last your for a month."

Why is she giving me all this money whereas she

can use it on herself?

RUSS: "No mom I can't have this."

MOM: "I said take it. Don't make me repeat myself..."

She gives me a warm smile. I sigh and tuck the money inside my black mini side bag that matches with my suitcases.

You can always come back and ask for more."

RUSS: "You know I wouldn't do that."

One thing that I can't do in life is to ask for someone for something. Even though I would get the permission from them to feel free and ask but it's still hard and it's all took place from my childhood.

Being raised by a well-financed family is not as sweet like honey. My parents would face financial crisis at times or not make money if they

were not making enough sales so during those times it was hard to ask for as little

as five-hundred naira (Eighteen rands and nineteen cents). I wasn't like my siblings to ask money from them. I was understanding and very considerate. I would

prefer them to be the ones who'll voluntarily give it to me.

I share a

laugh with her and opens her arms for a hug. I lean on and wraps her arms all round to my waist. Her height is short so she can't put her arms on shoulders. I plant a kiss on her forehead and lean softly my head on top of her head.

MOM: "I love you baby. Please take good care of you."

RUSS: "I will mom."

She breaks the hug and takes a deep sigh. I walk to the kitchen and take a banana from the fridge to keep me good for the next few minutes. I haven't eaten anything sold after I left the party but I'll stop to any food drive-thru restaurant if I get hungry. She walks to the door and hugs me once again but this time it's longer than the previous one.

MOM: "Take care."

She stiffens the hug and I can tell she doesn't want to let me go but later we break the hug and I step out of the house. She leans on the door frame and sees me walking to my car. I look at her with a smile on my face and wave goodbye. She waves back and sends endless blow kisses. I get in my car and immediately take the route that will take straight to the airport.

INSERT 8.

MELISSA.

I am waken up by Thando through a phone call asking me about what size I wear. I don't realize I was sleeping and I guess I must have drugged myself with this series. I switch off the computer and grab my phone underneath the pillow. I find two missed calls from Russ and I remembered he promised to call me later today. I curse while jumping from my bed. I try to dial his number but it just rings couple of times with no answer. I check my phone battery and it's about to die soon so I reach for a charger and a two-in plug from my drawer and connect it to wallet socket. I let it charge and go to the kitchen. I meet up with my sister who is talking loudly over the phone. She looks like she just came back from work and she still has her work outfit on.

FIONA: "Right!? Ayy she's not even that attractive."

I stare at her as she walks pass me and ignore her. I make myself a chicken mayo sandwich. My chicken was already boiled and ready to be made into pieces. I grab a bowl and dice it there then I grab a butter knife from the cutlery drawer and spread mayonnaise on my bread. As I'm still concentrating on my bread a knock on the door disturbs me.

I wipe my hands with a paper towel since I'm stuffed with mayonnaise and I'm too lazy to reach for a damp dish cloth from the sink. Once my hands are clean enough I open the door and find Thando holding plastic bags.

MELISSA: "Okay. The what's with the extra bags?"

She gives me the plastics and I let her in. I place the plastic on the kitchen counter and go through to each while she drags a chair and sits next to me.

THANDO: "Girl I'm so tired. I just came to drop off your things and probably Sanele is annoyed with me right now but he'll have to wait."

MELLISA: "He actually took you there?"

THANDO: "Yes and I did not enjoy my shopping. I still wanted more time to roam around the mall but he was already calling me and I didn't get a chance. He just rushed me to come back."

I share a small laugh. I know how guys can be.
Shopping is their least favorite thing to do.

MELISSA: "Ugh shame. Don't worry we'll make our own shopping date. Let's wait until I have money."

THANDO: "That will be better."

I separate my gym outfit to a different paper bag. I don't want stains from the KFC chicken grease so I place it alone in inside a different plastic with my goodies.

MELISSA: "Thank you for all of this so how much do I have to repay you?"

She doesn't say a word but I go upstairs along with my belongings and I take out my purse that has the last five-hundred rands. That's the money I've been saving. I take it downstairs with me and give it to her but she returns the two-hundred note back.

MELISSA: " It pays both for food and the outfit."

I realize my money is enough to pay for everything.

THANDO :“Don’t worry about it. I just bought you that food so that’s on me.”

I hug her and throw her with many kisses all over her face.

THANDO: “Will you stop?!”

She says as she tries to cover her face with her hands.

MELISSA: “Make me.”

I say with a smirk on my face.

THANDO: “Don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

She rises from her chair and she somehow she gains the energy to uplift my arm and tickle me on my armpits.

MELISSA: “Okay stop! I’m sorry....”

I say as I’m laughing my ass out. She stops then

tells me it is time for her to leave.

Okay I'll see you at school. Apologize to Sanele for me please."

THANDO: "Uzoba strong." (He'll be alright)

She says her goodbyes and leaves. Fiona comes downstairs from her room without her being on the phone this time.

FIONA: "I heard someone talking about food."

MELISSA: "My friend came by to deliver food for me."

FIONA: "My beautiful sister. The one and only who defeats them all. The one"

She talks politely and approaches me from my behind. I know she's up to something and I learned her moves from my youngest age.

MELISSA: "What do you want?"

FIONA: "It's not always a bad thing to share you know that right?"

I saw

this coming. She's being so nice to me for food. It's not that she was never nice to me but she can be stingy with her things sometimes.

MELISSA: "Oh please now you want my things?"

FIONA: "I'm sorry for being a jerk then."

MELISSA: "Say that again."

She frowns.

FIONA: "Are you fucken kidding me?"

MELISSA: "Ah yeka keh.... (Lets leave it then)

I take my

sandwich and head to my bedroom. After a while I hear a knock on my doorstep.

Come in."

I find Fiona peeking in and she gets in and stands

by the door. She starts to roll her eyes

and takes a deep breath.

FIONA: "Okay I'm sorry for being a jerk. I know I don't share my things with you but nawe (you) at times you ask for too much."

MELISSA: "Apology accepted. Now come here and join me for snacks."

I pat the left side of the bed signaling her to come and sit. She joins me then we share each snack fairly and equal to separate bowls.

Its already 08:00pm when I get a call back from Russ. I don't know whether to answer it or ignore it but I choose not to answer it. if I do my sister will interrogate me with so many questions so I leave it ringing until she notices.

FIONA: "Feel free to answer it. I'll be minding my own business..."

Really? I don't buy her story.

I won't disturb you unless you want me to leave alone so you can answer your call comfortably."

MELISSA: "Oh no you can stay. Just don't make any

noise.”

I say with pleading eyes.

FIONA: “I promise.”

She says in a whispery voice as she grabs a bowl of popcorns to herself. She places it in between her thigh and pays full focus to the movie. We’re watching The Pitch Perfect 2.

I take a deep breath before I can answer his call.

RUSS: “Hey beautiful.”

Beautiful? Is he referring that to me? Hee this guy is maybe he’s just trying to be funny.

MELISSA: “Um hey.”

I think that came out in a blushing tone but I don’t care.

RUSS: “I like how you just said that “hey” right there. It came out pure and innocent.”

Blushing keeps creeping in and I can't hold it
any longer to showcase my smile I turn to Fiona and her eyes are glued to me.
She shakes her head and I give her the "what" look.

MELISSA: "Pshhh why you calling me in this late
hour?"

I ask him on purpose. Even though I know the
reason why he's calling but I just need to keep the conversation going.

RUSS: "I just landed to the airport and I'm on my
way to catch a bus to Northcliff.....

What the heck? Why is he there? Is he going to
stay there?

I can't wait to see you."

I can tell he sounds excited but from my side
I'm not happy. I was so excited to hear the good news that he'll be here but
he'll be staying far from me and its sucks to think of the distance.

MELISSA: "I'm afraid you won't."

I can feel his mood slows down.

RUSS: "I thought you wanted to me too but I guess I brought that up too early."

MELISSA: "I'm in Free State. That's far from Johannesburg."

Fiona gives me a stare then focuses back on to the movie. On the other hand I can feel Russ spirit crushes down the minute I said that.

RUSS: "So I'm guessing I'll never see you?"

My heart breaks into pieces but why am I feeling like this? I shouldn't be this miserable and I should be okay with it. He means nothing to me and I mean nothing to him. We're just strangers who keep talking on the phone.

MELISSA: "I'm sorry Russ."

FIONA: "Russ?"

MELISSA: "Shhh Fiona."

I shoot her and give her the deadliest look. I

dare her to talk and I swear to kick her out of my room.

RUSS: "And who was that?"

I didn't realize my speaker was not covered this whole time so he basically heard someone talking from the background.

MELISSA: "My sister."

FIONA: "Yes that's me."

She brings her mouth to the phone speaker and I pull my face back from her.

MELISSA: "Uhm

Sponsored

excuse me for a minute. I'll be right back."

I bring the phone closely to the palm of my hand to prevent Russ from hearing a conversation with my sister.

MELISSA: "Didn't I ask you to keep your mouth shut?
Can't you just do that for at least five minutes?!"

FIONA: "So Russ is a guy huh?"

MELISSA: "It doesn't matter. You know what? Just leave."

I point out to the door. She grabs the entire
packet of sweet chili tortilla maize snack.

FIONA: "This movie is boring anyway."

She gets off the bed and puts back on her
sleepers. Meanwhile she prepares to leave I bring the phone back to my ears.

MELISSA: "I'm sorry about that."

RUSS: "I hope I'm not getting you into trouble."

After she heads to the door and looks back at me
as if there's something she wants to say. I look back at her too and signaling
her with my head to leave.

FIONA: "Bye Mrs. Russ!!"

What the hell? No she did not just call me that. She says that loud and on purpose. Then she laugh and closes the door on her way out.

MELISSA: "That's his name you idiot!"

I shout back at her and return back to the call. I hope he didn't hear anything.

MELISSA: "Sorry my sister is just annoying."

I fake a laugh to hide out the embarrassment feeling. I'm sure he must be must be sick and tired of hearing my endless "sorry's".

RUSS: "It must be fun having a some company around?"

MELISSA: "With my sister is just the worst nightmare I will never wake up from."

RUSS: "I can relate to that with my brothers and sisters."

MELISSA: "You have siblings too?..."

He tells explains to that they're five and he's

the third child in his family. I've always a big family too and not just me and Fiona but I guess things happen for a reason. Maybe my parents are okay with having two children.

RUSS: "It's not a train smash. You'll grow up and have your own big family."

I smile at the thought of being a mom with four kids. I don't know if I'll manage to bring four babies to life but this has been a dream to have more than just two babies and I need them to be boys only. I feel like they are less complicated than girls and they'll bring in wives and outgrow the family's surname. While we're still on the line I can tell by the sound of cars from the background and air blocking through the speakers that he's probably somewhere outside the streets.

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CANDICE.

My life has been nothing but tiring. All I do is to just go to sleep and wake up then go back to sleep again and wake up again. That is just my everyday routine. I go to pee almost every thirty

minutes and that's the most dragging part with pregnancy. I've been cramping experiencing false contractions and I barely crave a lot. I've never experience something this painful but I was slowly getting used to this pain. It's been a while since I went out with friends and do some shopping. Not even my husband himself is struggling to take me out on dates like we used to before I could fall pregnant. We used to travel together and be adventurous but now I'm stuck at home and I can't stand with my legs for more than ten to fifteen minutes because I could feel the weight of the baby. I'm already seven months pregnant and the baby bump is growing bigger and bigger to each and every week passing by.

Apart from anything else I've fallen in love with my pregnancy. I'm in love with this human-being growing inside me and it feels really amazing that I'll be a mom soon. The feeling makes me happy and gives me goosebumps.

Currently I'm here in the hospital to finally know the gender of the baby. I know you must be wondering why now but my husband thought it'll be a good idea to find know about it now.

AT THE HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM.

HUSBAND: "Feeling excited?"

CANDICE: "Yeah but nervous too."

He holds my hand and that brings comfort in me.

HUSBAND: "Don't worry. I got you."

He kisses my

forehead. Damn my husband is the best comforting pillar. He knows tricks to do that will keep me relaxed. We wait in the waiting

area for the doctor to come and attends us. After what seems like an hour the

doctor finally comes in and leads me to the checkup room. She takes a look at

my file meanwhile I try to get myself on the bed. I don't know if it's me but

the hospital bed are not so comfortable. It's like I'm laying on the bed made

out of bricks but I continue to stay still as the doctor runs the tests of me

and the baby. She firstly starts to run my blood tests.

DOCTOR: "Well your immune system is great. No acidic

drinks and caffeine from coffee."

CANDICE: " My husband right here has been taking good

care of me and the baby."

I say with laughter and I look up to face him as

he stands beside me with our hands holding each other. His name is Chris and he's twenty-six years

old. He's very good looking and that's how I portray him. Nobody has seen their partner ugly. I don't even know what others think of him but he's great. Very loving and respectful. He works in a building construction company called Barlett constructio and he works under the projecting management. Body wise he is tall and dark skinned. Not just any dark skin but it has a mixture of light color and that just brings out the whole look of his brown eyes. He has a nicely shaped beard too that turned me off the day first day I met him but I realized he always keeps it clean and I grew love to it.

He smiles back at me and looks back at the doctor.

CHRIS: "Yeah but she's so demanding. She wants to eat almost everything but I try to keep her in my tracks and give her healthy meals."

We all share a laugh. She puts on something like a strap around my round belly to determine the baby's heartbeat. I won't lie the first moment she wrap it all around my belly I felt nothing until I stay a little longer and it become a little bit uncomfortable. It is starting to feel tighter and I can't possibly breathe with that thing. I almost feel like my baby is getting suffocated.

DOCTOR: "What a strong baby you have in there. The baby's heartbeat is doing pretty fine. I don't find any difficulties or any

complications about the baby's breathing at all."

After she's done examining everything she takes it off she encloses it and I put back on my T-shirt.

DOCTOR:

"So you haven't been getting any cravings ever since this pregnancy?"

CANDICE: "I have during my first trimester but as soon as I entered my second trimester I haven't experienced any. I was hoping I could get at least one more craving but I didn't. The only symptoms I get is the ugly sense of smell and my morning sickness are still troubling me."

DOCTOR: "Oh I see but it happens to four out of ten woman who don't experience any cravings. Others experience new cravings as soon as they enter to each and every trimester up until they give birth and with that sense of doggy smell it's perfectly normal. Now for the exciting moment let's find the gender of your baby."

The Doc uplifts my t-shirt and pours something that looks like a jelly directly on my belly. That gives me shivers down my spine but I ignore it.

DOCTOR: "Mr. Tucker come with me for a second."

Okay? What's happening now? What's all this? Where
is she taking my husband? Chris excuses himself as they both leave me by myself in
the room.

INSERT 9.

CHRIS

The Doctor calls me aside. and before I can
close the door behind me I come across a confused expression on my wife's
face. I just hope she doesn't think anything crazy.

DOCTOR:

"I got a call from your mother."

Emily is our family doctor so she has access to
every family members cellphone.

CHRIS: "And?"

DR.EMILY: "She wanted the baby gender reveal to be a surprise for your wife and you of course."

I ask in confusion.

CHRIS: "Did she say why?"

DR.EMILY: "She said Candice never had a baby shower celebration before so your mom and your sister thought it'll be a good idea to surprise her with a gender reveal ceremony."

Well it sounds like a good idea but I don't think Candice will accept it. Not after we've waited for so long to know the gender of our baby. I don't think she'll wait for another week to know the gender her baby.

CHRIS: "Does my family know the gender already?"

DR.EMILY: "No. No one does except me obviously."

I see a smile on her face.

CHRIS: "Phew okay that's better...."

I say in relief as I share a laughter with her.

So you'll be the one who reveals the gender of the baby?"

DR.EMILY: "Yes. I'll announce it in front of everyone."

CHRIS: "But aren't you going to be at work on that day?"

DR.EMILY: "I have that all sorted Mr. Tucker."

CHRIS: "Oh okay."

DR.EMILY: "So I'm about to get in there to your wife and lie to her about the scanner. I'll just say anything that comes to my mind."

CHRIS: "Lets hope it sounds realistic but I'll try to convince her too."

DR.EMILY: "Okay. Lets go back inside."

We get in and I find my wife talking to her

belly and that is cute but we disturb her after she hears the door opens. She didn't continue her conversation she had with the baby.

CANDICE: "You guys are back. Is there anything wrong?"

She asks in worry and she adjust her position from laying down to sitting up straight on the bed.

DR.EMILY: "Oh no. Everything is fine Mrs. Tucker. You need to lay back and relax."

I can see relief in her eyes and lies back easily on the bed. Dr. Emily applies the gel once again because the previous has dried up to her skin and she shivers once again.

CHRIS: "Cold?"

She nods.

CANDICE: "Yeah."

Dr. Emily takes the scanner and moves it around my wife's belly. She starts to fake her facial expression just as we agreed on and I play along.

DR.EMILY: "Uhm..."

She pauses for a while as she looks at the scanning screen display.

There's your baby."

My wife jumps in excitement and hold my hand tightly.

CANDICE: "That's our baby Chris."

She points over to the screen in excitement.

CHRIS: "Yes babe. That's our little minion."

CANDICE: "Can you tell us the gender now?"

She asks and I try by all means to come up with something before I mistakenly spill the beans. I can't hide the fact that I'm happy my mom came with this plan but I'm worried to tell my wife. I don't know will she react and it scares me 'cause her impatience can get her to act a little crazy sometime.

DR.EMILY: "We might have a problem here. It doesn't look clear to me and its really hard to tell. I think we should do cancel to the next appointment."

CANDICE: "But you're wearing spectacles. Can't you make use of them?"

Here she goes. It's all getting started.

DR. EMILY: "My eyesight works perfectly with these spectacles and it's not them. It's the machine."

She says in disappointment and plays with her engagement ring.

But how come we managed to see the black little thing in there and you're telling me it's not visible enough to tell us the gender? Do you even know how to do this job?"

Doctor Emily looks at me heated. She always has been a profession to her job but she just needed this time to act a little unprofessional for making a gender reveal party a success and I can tell she can't stand my wife anymore with her reckless questions. Taking a look back at wife she begins to have teary eyes and I hate it to see her in that state. I know how long she's been waiting for this day but I have to play by the rules.

DR.EMILY: "I'm sorry Mrs. Tucker."

She humbles herself and playing innocent. Later she asks Candice to come back for the next appointment. My wife agrees and prepares herself before we can leave. Doctor Emily receives a phone call and asked to be excused. I rub her back and help put on her shoes since she cannot do it herself and we leave the hospital.

We get in and I don't know how tell her about my moms plan. I can picture her reaction already and she'll get mad at me for even agreeing to this idea from the first place. I sigh and tell her everything she needs to know.

CANDICE: "What? I've waited this whole seven months to know the person I'm carrying inside me and I still have to wait for another week to know the gender of my baby?"

I try to make her calm down and I lower my voice on her.

CHRIS: "I know babe. I was excited too but we can't go against doctor's orders. Her word is final."

She raises her right eyebrow.

CANDICE: "You don't seem bothered by this."

CHRIS: "I don't?"

CANDICE: "Do you have to tell me something?....

Must I tell her or not? My heart wants to tell her and be honest with her. Maybe in that way she'll realize Emily was only doing her job. I close my eyes and take a deep breath.

Oh so there is something then?"

CHRIS: "Yes. My mom asked her not to share the information with us."

CANDICE: "Why? This is my baby and I deserve to know everything with my pregnancy. Your mom can't just do orders around. Not with my baby."

She folds her arms and frowns. She doesn't bother to look at me and she keeps her stare to the front window.

CHRIS: "She planned a gender reveal ceremony for you."

She calms down and her facial expression

changes. I can tell she's becoming herself again. She looks at me and later smiles. Her eyes widening up in excitement.

CANDICE: "She's doing that for me?"

I nod and she jumps from the seat. Her feet keep stamping slowly to the carpet.

CANDICE: "That's a brilliant idea babe!"

CHRIS: "Really? I thought you'd go against it."

CANDICE: "Are you kidding? No! I'm grateful for this.

I thought we were never going to have any celebration ceremony judging from my past but that shouldn't stop me from doing it. I can't wait to get all the gifts from people who'll form part of the baby shower."

She says with a widest smile I've never seen for the past three years.

CHRIS: "Yeah but let's keep it a family thing though."

CANDICE: "That means I can't invite my friends?"

CHRIS: "Your friends can come. You'll need them."

CANDICE: "Sounds sweet!"

She leans on and give me a kiss on the lips and
we later drive to the mall. I leave her inside the car and rush inside to buy
her fruits and all her favorites. I make it after an hour then we drive home.
Along the way I see her yawning and I can tell she's tired. Aww my baby.

FEW MINUTES LATER.

I park my car in the garage. I take a look at my
sleepy wife and oh she looks so beautiful. Regardless of her not having makeup
on. I love her looks more when she's natural.

I gently cup her face with my hand and I watch
her sleep so peacefully. I hate to wake her up but she has to get a better sleep in our bed. I lean to her
and steal a kiss from her lips. She gently opens
her eyes and rubs them with her hands.

CANDICE: "Are we here?"

She asks in a sleepy voice and looks around to

see where we at.

CHRIS: "Yes baby we're home."

I smile at
her as she adjusts her position and sits back up. She stretches herself and starts
to look for something.

CHRIS: "What are you searching for?"

CANDICE: "My cellphone. Have you seen it somewhere?"

CHRIS: "No but I'm sure you left it in the house."

CANDICE: "Yeah probably."

She opens the door and takes the plastic bags
with her but I stop her as she reaches for another one.

CHRIS: "Don't. I'll take those."

She nods then she leaves the remaining plastic
bags behind. She starts to make her way to the house. Even though she walks
slowly but she'll make it to the door. I take the grocery plastic bags and
follow my wife from behind. She mistakenly steps on the stone and trips

but luckily she drops one of the bags to the floor and balances the empty had on wall.

CHRIS: "Watch it babe."

I walk towards her and she breaths heavily. I touch her and she's a little bit shaky. I think the thought of her falling on to the ground scared her. I ask her to not carry anything anymore. I give her the house keys from my pockets and unlocks it. We get in and I make it to the kitchen. I place the grocery bags on the table to unpack it later. Now I need to check on my wife to see if she's okay. I make her favorite apple and ginger flavored tea and take it to our bed. I make it to the door and I hear the water running from the shower in the bathroom.

I wait for her to finish taking her bath. She walks in the door room with a towel wrapped around her body. The belly is still visible but the towel manages to cover her skin. I assess her to lotion her body and she asks me to get her tracksuits from her wardrobe. I take them out for her and she puts them on. I walk her inside the bed with her one arm on my shoulders and the other on my waist. We make it to the bed and she sits down and tucks herself under the sheets. I serve her the tea and the chocolate brownies I bought earlier today at the market.

CANDICE: "My heart is still pounding. I'm scared babe.

I can't stop thinking what would've happened if I didn't act fast."

She sounds very worried and her voice keeps

breaking down every time she utters a word. The incident that happened earlier

took a toll on her. I didn't realize her eyes were red and swollen until I sat

next to her. Maybe she was crying while she was taking a shower but I refuse to let that

stress her or make her feel in any way.

CHRIS: "Lets be grateful you didn't fall and nothing

happened. You and the baby are safe...

I grab her hands and hold the both of them

tightly. I bring them to my lips and kiss them. She lets out a deep sigh and

looks at me. I bring my strong face to her but deep down guilt hits me a little bit.

If only I knew she would be like this then I would've done things differently.

Nothing will happen to you. What happened there was a

mistake and I shouldn't have allowed you to carry those bags but it's a lesson

learned. I will never let you carry anything anymore but you need to be extra

careful when you walk around."

She nods and gives me a hug. Then I bring her
face to me and we share an ultimate kiss. I leave alone in the room and go to
the next room which is my office. I get in and throw myself to the chair behind

the table and get to work. I really love my job. The more effort I put the more salary I earn. My wife thinks I'm overworking myself but she doesn't understand I'm working for us. I asked her to retire from work as soon as we found out she was pregnant. She's a woman who believes in independence but I can't allow her to bring any harm to herself and the baby. I told her she needs to enjoy the experience of her pregnancy. She doesn't have to worry about work or any money. I will provide anything for her. She didn't want to acknowledge the idea at first but she soon did. It started when I let her go to work for the whole week with her pregnancy because she was a stubborn head and within four days she was fed up. Her body was starting to act up and she couldn't take it anymore. She filed for a retirement report and ever since she's been a happy staying home wife.

I'm Chris Smith. Thirty years old. Candice is pregnant with my first child. I'm happy and excited to be a dad. It's not my first time experience to deal with babies 'cause I had to watch out for my younger sister when she was young. I was taught and learned few things about dealing with new borns. I'm a happy person I'm always reliable and thoughtful. I love making love to my wife more than anything else but that can't be discussed. I don't kiss and tell. I'm adventurous and I'm punctual. I'm 5 feet 8 inches tall (175.5 cm). I have thick eyebrows browner skin higher cheek bone prominent lower jaw and chin and lastly I have amber colored eyes. I'm not masculine or skinny but I'm athletic built. Well developed chest and shoulders that are significantly broader than my waist and hips. Overall I'm just a handsome man married to a beautiful woman.

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RUSS.

As soon as I land to the airport I switch off my airplane mode from my cellphone and messages come flooding in. I come across Melissa's missed calls and from my mom. I guess Melissa saw my missed calls from her phone and she decided to call me back but she couldn't reach out to me. I was still on the flight then my mom was probably worried about my safety and maybe she wanted to know everything was going fine.

I arrive at 09:45pm and the flight was six hours long. I notice that the time zone between South Africa and Nigeria differs with just an hour and it doesn't make much of a difference.

I feel so hungry and I don't know where I can get help. I look around me and there's so many people here but it's not easy to approach anyone. I move to the waiting area and I take a sit meanwhile I try to figure how to get food here. I think of that brown envelope my mom gave me. I search my bag and find it. I open the envelope and it has two hundred bank notes. I don't know much is in here but I hope it's plenty enough to keep me

until the month next month like she said.

I buy myself Steers burger since it's the only restaurant I'm familiar with and a can of soda. I eat up before I miss out on my bus. I manage to finish early and I wait for the bus to arrive. I take out my phone to call Melissa. She answers and keep talking on the phone. While we're on the phone I spot a white bus driving towards my direction. It stops to the bus stop sign and I get in with the other people following me from behind. The bus takes off the road and I find myself a comfortable seat. I choose to sit from the last row near the window. The bus drives in a good pace. There's RNB and soulful music playing through the speakers. Everyone is making conversations with the next person and I'm just on the phone with Melissa. We pass so many places that I don't know but they all look beautiful. I see myself staying to such nice environments. I proceed to view the city of Joburg. It looks so beautiful. There are big building and very busy streets. People keep roaming to the streets and it's packed. We pass the homeless people and my heart starts to break. It reminds me back at home where I used to see children walking barefoot and wearing torn clothes asking me money food every time I pass either one of them and I would give them something or take them to the grocery store and buy them food. It would warm my heart to see their smiles on their faces and when you do things for the homeless they won't disappoint. They appreciate every little thing you give to them and that motivates me to do even more. The bus pass a WELCOME TO NORTHCLIFF sign on the board and the driver stops to the next bus stop. I head out then I use my GPS to find the nearest hotels around me. It directs me to the roses great hotel. The distance is not far so I take a walk. Fifteen minutes later I make it inside the hotel and I walk to the receptionist. I pull my personal information

close to me just in case they require something from it. Everything looks modern just in case they require something from it. Everything looks modern just like back home. I

was expecting something that shouts South Africa. Maybe see structures of rhino or buffalo and all these wild animals but it's something different. There's plants and water sculptures but it's still not bad. I like the vibe. Then I see a group of girls making their way to the exit door. Man they look beautiful and young too by judging their physical appearance. I'm sure they're in mid nineties.

RECEPTIONIST: "Good evening and welcome to Rose's Great Hotel. How may I assist you?....."

She's pretty looking too with big bright eyes and great looking smile. She suddenly breaks my thoughts.

Uhm sir? Are you okay?"

RUSS: "Oh I'm here to book a hotel room. Can you hook me up with one?"

RECEPTIONIST: "Okay. You're here to stay in for how long?"

She looks at me and types on the computer.

RUSS: "Make it two weeks and for self-catering."

RECEPTIONIST: "Can I get your full name?"

RUSS: "Russ Skyline."

RECEPTIONIST: "Okay Mr. Skyline that will be twenty-eight thousand in total. Can I get your banking details?"

RUSS: "I'll use cash."

She gives a weird look and asks for me to give her cash. I've already had fifty- thousand with me 'cause I was getting irritated to take out this ripped envelop every time I have to pay for something. She continues to type on her computer then hands me the key to my room but it's in a card form.

RECEPTIONIST: "Your room number is 108 on the third floor on your left."

RUSS: "Thank you."

I take my luggage and take the elevator. I make it to the third floor and turn to my left. I look for room 108. I finally find it and unlock with a single wipe to the scanner and I let myself in. It looks so chilled and warm. It feels like home. I put down my luggage down and I give myself time to tour around the room. It has a kitchen area a dining area a one master bedroom a bathroom that includes both a shower and a bath tub. There's an open space too. The

usage of colors are bright and it's my kind of style. The kitchen is white in color and has brown kitchen unit with a touch of black which includes a fridge cooking gas stove and the high chairs. The entire room is grey with a touch of maroon. The dining area is peach with a touch of navy blue and white. Then the bathroom is nothing but earthy colors. It has a green leaf wall stencil and glossy nude tiles. I immediately fall in love with this place already. I decide to go to the bedroom and unpack my clothes from the suitcases. Then my mom calls me right on time.

RUSS: "Mom."

I say in a chilled voice.

MOM: "So you weren't going to give me a call at all? Not to notify me when you're there?"

She says sounding a bit angry.

RUSS: "Sorry mom. I was still settling in."

MOM: "You said you'll call me as soon as you land in the there. Not as soon as you're settled in."

RUSS: "Sorry mom. I may have forgotten but we're talking now."

MOM: "I even tried reaching out to you but your phone was off."

RUSS: "I forgot to turn off my plane mode."

MOM: "Plane mode? What's that?"

I always forget she knows nothing about the newest technology but I don't blame her. She's not used to this lifestyle.

RUSS: "To avoid losing network connection."

MOM: "When you come back you need to teach me these things. My head is aching right now. So how's South Africa so far? Loving it?"

RUSS: "Good I'm even happy with the place I found. It's nice and spacious. I'll send you pictures and take a look at yourself."

MOM: "Nice. I'm glad you like it my baby."

I can tell she is smiling from the sound of her voice.

RUSS: "How have you been doing since you're left

alone?"

She sighs.

MOM: "I've been sleeping watching TV and cleaning the house. You know doing the actual stuff. I miss you already. I just miss all my kids. I miss how we would joke around and being a one big happy family."

RUSS: "I miss you too mom but you can always come here if you change your mind."

MOM: "Don't worry I'm doing perfectly fine."

RUSS: "Uhm mom?"

This thing in me has been bothering me ever since I left. I know moving to another country calls for great opportunities but who will take care of the business when I'm gone? My mom and I haven't found the right time to set an interview and find a new manager. I always wanted it to be her but she complains about her age and that her brain cannot contain too much information and she suffers from memory loss too. She's on pills for her condition and they're helping her. I haven't got time to sit down and talk to her about this and I think it's time I ask her now.

MOM: "Yes son?"

RUSS: "Who's going to run the company now that I'm gone? I know I won't have the full time to check what's going on inside the workplace but who'll keep an eye on the workers and manage the stuff?"

MOM: "Your youngest sister has agreed to take over."

RUSS: "She did?"

I don't believe this. Not so long ago my sister told me she wants nothing to do with running the family business. She complained how it'll cause problems for her and everyone will be eyeing on her to see if she's doing the right things and not making any mistakes but she got it all wrong. I tried to convince her and tell her that nobody is going to be checking up on her like a four year old. I don't know what changed her mind but she could really use this job as a way of escaping poverty and start to build her future.

MOM: "Yes correct. Let me leave you son I want to take my night bath now."

We say our goodbyes and she hangs up. I finish unpacking my stuff and have them to their rightful places. Then I throw myself in a shower and enjoy the warm water as it pours down to my cold skin.

“This is good.”

After the shower I wrap myself with a towel. I

walk to my bedroom and moisture myself before I can put on my pajamas. It’s

only a pair of boxers and a vest. I make my way to the dining area to watch television.

Hours later my stomach started growling.

I decide to take my phone and order food from the Uber Eats App. I am in a mood for pizza with extra cheese so I place my

order and it’ll be ready and delivered to my doorstep in less than thirty

minutes. As I wait for my order I call one of my closest

friends Patrick. I dial his number and it rings for the first time followed by

the second time and he answers.

PATRICK: “Buddy!”

RUSS: “Broski!”(brother)

PATRICK: “How are you man?”

RUSS: “I’m good brother. What about you?”

PATRICK: “I’m good. Hey long time no see man. Where

you hiding yourself?”

I haven’t told him I’ll be leaving to another

country. Maybe I was just too busy on my work to even share news to my friend.

RUSS: "Man I've been around but now I moved to South Africa."

PATRICK: " And you didn't tell me about this? Are you running away or something?...."

He thinks everyone is like him. My friend had a bad history with the law. He was caught drunk while driving found stolen goods on him by his house and I would bail him out from jail he would try to rob the stores and steal anything from them. He wasn't employed and for him to hustle was to commit robbery and crime but all of that came to change. He improved his life and done something better for him. He fixed himself and his father talked some sense in him while he was in jail. He took his words of advice and start applying for jobs. He got rejected many times but he never lost hope from the support of his father and mine. He became encouraged and motivated and two years ago his CV was approved and got a job. He became dedicated too his work and got a promotion this year. He is now a business analyst at the Zenith Bank.

But that's good man. I heard that's one of greatest countries in Africa bro."

RUSS: "So far I can say it is but I can't really tell. I just moved in today and there's so much I have to explore."

PATRICK: "Oh I thought you'll mention like a month

or something.”

RUSS: “I think I have two hours since I laid my ass in here.”

PATRICK: “You’ll finally get rid of the boring life and join the strip clubs. Now you’re far from mom and nobody will judge you for things you’ll do.”

Oh wow this dude never changes to something better. He is one of my corrupt friends and he just wants everybody to be like him. He knows I’m too stubborn to let him change me from the strict person I was in life to an out freely going person. I laugh at his comment.

RUSS: “Oh no. I’m very much disciplined. With or without my moms presence. I don’t need to be ruled around. I can do things on my own but I’m not doing things like you.”

PARTRICK: “Live life man. Check I met this new chick and her name is Patricia. Do you get the idea man? Patrick and Patricia?”

He says in excitement and I let him speak.

RUSS: “Where did you guys meet? Don’t tell me to a strip club?”

PARTICK: "Exactly my bro! See you're a genius. You smart."

I shake my head in disbelief. Patrick doesn't really care about his reputation. He doesn't care what people say behind his back. He knows how to handle it and he's been like this since the longest years I've known him. He hasn't been in any serious relationship mainly because he thinks that there is nothing like true love and that all women are the same. This one day he paid me a visit to work and said to me he would rather play girls than let them play him like a basketball. That's the mind of a damaged dude.

RUSS: "And where's Keisha?"

His high school crush who turn out to have made her his so-called "girlfriend" but they didn't last. The girl wanted someone different than Patrick. He wanted romance and love but my friend played by his rules and broke her heart then she called it quits between them.

PATRICK: "Oh her. She's around. That bitch ain't going nowhere. I knew she was going to come back to daddy and get her favorite dick."

I can feel him beating his chest and saying everything confidently. I was told by the one of his side chicks that his dick is

irresistible and no girl will want to leave his side after that first around. I failed to believe her but I don't believe my ears right now. Keisha went back to date him.

RUSS: "How do you manage the both of them?"

PATRICK: "Simple. I set a date in some nearest restaurant around the hood and I phone called the both of them to meet up with me. After some time ago they did pull through but Keisha came in first then Patricia came next. Man you know how girls can be sometimes they both fought and they were capable of throwing claws to each other but I don't know how did I try to calm them both down. I talked to them individually. They agreed to share me and I made a promise to share my time and attention and to spend money on them equally. They shook hands and we had drinks. We got drunk that night and I took the both with me to the rest rooms behind the clubhouse and we had a mind blowing threesome sex."

He says in confidence.

RUSS: "Nigga you sick."

PATRICK: "I know right? And you'll be surprised if I tell you they became friends the next day. They do things together and I asked them to move in with me. We're now a happy family of three."

RUSS: "Wow. No you win. I raise a glass for you."

PATRICK : "I think I deserve that. Thank you very much."

We share a laugh.

PATRICK: "Man I should come over and pay you a visit."

RUSS: "You should but don't bring girls to my place please."

Then I hear a knock on the door.

PATRICK: "Who you with there?"

RUSS: "I have to go dude. I'll call you later."

PATRICK: "Wait wait wait...."

Before he can continue I hang up the call and head to the door. I can't miss my order because of his non stop conversation.

DELIVERY GUY: "Your order sir."

RUSS: "Thank you."

I have cash with me already and I give it to

him. He gives me the box and it feels hot underneath. I close the door behind me. I return back to my couch and I pour myself wine I bought earlier today on a mug since I don't have any wine glass and eat my supper.

INSERT 10.

MELISSA .

I need to be honest as possible with myself. I don't

know if I've developed any feelings or what but talking with Russ over the phone brings so much joy and happiness in me. I can't stop but to be in need to keep on talking to him almost every hour and every second. He is all I can ever wish for in a guy. He's simple different and very much easy to understand. I'm sure ladies were drooling over him back there in his country and what worse could happen if he's now here. Girls are going to go crazy and it's going to be hard to watch him talking to his go-for types. It's not all about the good stuff he does but it still brings so much doubt about his relationship status. Why a man like him is still single? Was he lying to me to make me fall for his words or was he really telling the truth? After the call with Russ I login to WhatsApp to video call Thando and Noxolo to share them the news. These are my friends and I think they deserve to know too.

MELISSA: "Girls?!"

I say with a smile on my face.

THANDO: "What's with that smile on your face?"

MELISSA: "I have good news for you guys."

My smile
starts to widen up

NOXOLO: "Don't keep us waiting. Just talk we're listening."

MELISSA: "Russ just got off of his plane."

They both spread their eyes wide open in shock.

THANDO: "What?! You're joking right?"

NOXOLO: "She has to be fooling us. There's no way he could be here."

MELISSA: "I wish I was but I'm telling you the truth. He called me to let me know."

THANDO: "Wow! Friend. Finally you guys can meet up in person and talk more you know?"

She says with a smile but Noxolo doesn't show any expression at all. I can't tell if she's mad or upset. Maybe she was expecting me to talk about something else and not this.

MELISSA: "Yeah. I'm happy but sad at the same time."

I say with a long face.

THANDO: "What's wrong?"

MELISSA: "Did I tell you guys about his location?"

NOXOLO: "I think you did but I don't recall."

THANDO: "Me either."

I take a deep breath and say ..

MELISSA: "He'll be staying in Randburg. Can you imagine how far is that?"

NOXOLO: "What?! Why did he choose to stay that far?"

MELISSA: "I don't know. Maybe it is the only place he's familiar with."

NOXOLO: "So did he give you his address?"

This girl is digging me some information about

Russ whereabouts and I won't give her any. I know nothing too and even if I

knew something I wouldn't want her anyway. What the hell is happening with me? Don't tell me my heart is already jealous about him.

MELISSA: " I don't think it's my place to ask him where he lives."

She nods in understanding.

NOXOLO: "It's not a bad thing to ask if you wanna know.?"

THANDO: "Noxolo please. Yini uzifunela yena manje?"(Do you want him to yourself now?)

Then she surprises herself.

NOXOLO: "Me? Oh no no no. He may be good looking but he's not my type sweetie. I do abo darkie mina." (I do dark skin guys.)

Oh please. We both know she wants him. She's just playing a hard to get right now and I'm not buying her story. She has dated a couple of dark guys but her aim is the light skin dudes since they can compliment her skin tone.

THANDO: "Then stay out of it."

NOXOLO: "Whatever. You should call us for something better wena next time. Not this crap."

She excludes herself from the video call and now it's just me and Thando.

MELISSA: "And what's her problem?"

THANDO: "I don't know. She just hasn't been herself lately."

MELISSA: "Do you think it has anything to do with Russ?"

I ask in worry.

THANDO: "I think so. Ever since you introduced Russ to us she's been acting really weird. You should hang on tight to your guy."

MELISSA: "I don't if I should be worried."

THANDO: "Ugh don't mind her. Russ is basically into people more like you and not fake looking people like her....."

What makes her to say that? ? Is she saying I'm too simple or I'm too ugly? She reads through to my confused facial reaction.

Oh don't get me wrong. You're pretty and Noxolo is just too much. She applies makeup on her face daily with fake hair and fake nails. Her relationships don't last because how she can easily get tempted by other guys. I don't know if I should blame it on their looks or if she loves them for money or she's most probably doing that just to "brag" about them on social media and show people that her beauty can get her to date her any guy she wants. She doesn't realize that she's humiliating herself."

She says as she rolls her eyes. I can tell she's annoyed but then I laugh off to her statement.

MELISSA: "I wonder if she has ever been in a serious relationship before."

THANDO: "She hasn't. Her relationships last for only a month or two. Nobody will want to date a woman who can't hold herself when she's around guys. It's like *liyamshisa igazi*." (It's like the blood is burning in her.)

MELISSA: "Why isn't she giving up on love? Can't she see that love is not meant for her? How many more times is she going to keep changing men like she's changing her underwear?"

THANDO: "I don't know but she just can't stay single. If it didn't work from the last relationship she simply moves on to the next one and there's nothing you can do to stop her."

I shake my head as I think how hard it must be for her. Her desperate times can lead her to even giving herself too much on guys and who knows what might happen to her? Will she be used and fall pregnant? Will she contract all these sicknesses and catch HIV and that's none of my business. Every little thing you do comes with consequences.

MELISSA: "Enough about Noxolo. How are you and Sanele?"

THANDO: "We're okay. We spend so much time together he continues to respect me and he's the best. He even takes me out on cute dates like our last time together was when he took me out for mountain climbing and horse riding."

She stays in excitement.

MELISSA: "Aww. That's so beautiful."

THANDO: "Don't worry Your man is here and all you gotta do is to go there and fetch him before someone else does."

MELISSA: I have no one and you know that."

THANDO: "Isn't it obvious? When are you going to

stop doubting yourself? This man came here for you.”

She says roll her eyes. I know whom is she referring to but my heart is failing admit he’s for me. I don’t believe in love at first sight and that’s what my friend is making me believe that he is here for me.

MELISSA: “What?”

THANDO: “I’m talking about Russ. I know he likes you and I know you like him too. He doesn’t have to tell you but he can show you. All you have to do is to look at the signs.”

MELISSA: “Oh no. Definitely not him. No man would leave his country for love and I’m his friend for goodness sake! Just don’t push it. If he wants me he’ll tell me. Right now I’m not sticking that bullshit inside my head.”

THANDO: “ I thought you liked him. What was the point of sending him a request?”

MELISSA: “To make a friend abd he turns out to be a good one.”

THANDO: “Friend? You’re now giving it a label without

giving yourselves a chance?”

MELISSA: “Look at me. I'm not his type and I'm sure he's not into me or foresees me in that way. I respect our friendship very much so please don't try and ruin that for me?”

THANDO: You'll never know until you let loose of your emotions and learn to love.”

MELISSA: “How do you expect me to make that when he's far from me? This is already a sign for us to stay out of this and let me be my lonely self.”

I say in low tone as I shrug my shoulders.

THANDO: “The distance? That can be fixed. I think I have an idea....

She says in a happiest voice and she quickly thinks of something. I can tell its just some stupid idea.

How about you ask your parents to move in with your aunt? I don't think they'll have a problem with that.”

MELISSA: “Oh no my friend that's a bad idea. My

dad knows I don't like that place. She'll rule me around and she won't treat me like an adult."

My aunt is not the worst to live with but she's too strict and I can't be myself around her. Sometimes she wakes up in a very good mood then the next day she's just somebody else. I really enjoy it when she's always happy because she makes things easier for me to get closer to her and to be comfortable around her but I doubt she notices that her behavior is the one that pushes me away. Her parental control is way too much. Even though she doesn't have kids but she takes my sister and I as her own and she's overprotective against everything. She wouldn't let us go and hang out with out friends or let us use our cellphones after 10pm or to even stay up late and watch something on TV so can you imagine how my life will be miserable to live with that woman?

THANDO: "But you can adapt to that and live by her own rules if you really want to see Russ."

Why must I compromise my happiness for Russ?

This person doesn't know me and already my friend is feeding me with all this love stories about him in my head. She sounds so positive about him and I don't know why she's acting like this.

Normally she wouldn't want me to date a guy without knowing them for a week or two and now she's acting crazy about binding me together with Russ. How sure

is she that this person is safe and if he's not some heartbreaker guy. What's even crazier she sends me to Johannesburg. I don't know how to feel

about this. I didn't tell Russ about it and now if I tell him about my trip to his area

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he'll think I'm obsessed over him and I'm a desperate girl
seeking for love to a stranger.

MELISSA: "I need time to think about this. I need
to know am I going to convince my parents about this and make them believe me.
What am I even going to with school? I can miss out on that."

THANDO: You'll
get a transfer letter to another school. Then with your parents you'll have to
dig deeper and lie to them or something."

MELISSA: "Aren't you going to help me with that?
This was your whole idea."

THANDO: "Okay okay I'll think of something. Just
give me today and tomorrow. I have to go now. Talk later my love."

We say our goodbyes and I prepare myself to
sleep. While I'm busy doing that my mind goes wild. I know it sounds good that

Russ is finally here and I have all the time in this world to see him but the fact that I have to move away from home and go to the another place for just a guy I met monthd ago is madness. Yes I have my aunt who lives there but she's not the person I can consider to live with. Not that she mistreats me but she just won't make things easy for me to live my life there.

I desperately want to see Russ but I feel like I'm rushing it. I really need time to think about this thoroughly and to be sure if this is what I want to do. Right now I feel forced and pressured by my friend and I need to talk to her. If she's onto something then she has to tell me because I don't understand the reason of her pushing me to be with this guy. I try to brush off my thoughts and put on my night gown. I tie my hair into a messy bun and cover my hair with a bonnet and tuck myself in bed.

THE NEXT DAY.

I'm waken up by the alarm clock at 08:30am. Before I can go to the bathroom I firstly prepare my bed and iron my clothes. Honestly I do iron and wear so don't judge me. After preparing my outfit for the day which is the black sweat pants a regular white t-shirt with a black hoodie and

plain black Vans sneakers. I head downstairs to the bathroom to take a shower

then I come across my mom in the kitchen doing breakfast. She turns around from the stove and opens her

arms wide for a hug.

MOM: "Come here."

She says with a smiley face.

MELISSA: "But mom I just woke up and I haven't bathed yet."

MOM: "So you're afraid I might catch a bad smell that'll be coming out of that mouth?"

MELISSA: "Of course. Morning breaths smell horrible."

MOM: "It's not like I asked for a kiss. I just asked for a simple morning hug."

She says as she grabs me by her arm and hugs me forcefully and we laugh while we're in each other's arms. I really appreciate the kind of love my mom gives to me. It's really out of this world and no one will ever replace her in my heart. She's my number one fan.

MELISSA: "Okay mom. Now let go off me."

I try to

remove myself away from her but she squeeze me tight. I can barely breathe and she's doing it on purpose.

MOM: "Just a few more minutes."

MELISSA: "Ah mom! I'll be late for school."

She breaks the kiss and shares a laugh.

MOM: "Okay but don't forget you still owe me that hug when you come back."

MELISSA: "I'll put that on my list."

I say as I head to the bathroom. I use my favorite berry bubble bath. I love the smell of mixture of berries used. Sometimes I wish to just drink the whole bottle because of the irresistible smell. As soon as I'm done I wrap the towel around me and head to my room. I apply the lotion and blow dry my damp hair then get dressed. I grab my bag pack and head out to catch a taxi from the nearest taxi rank. It drops me to school.

After few minutes standing alone by the school

front gate I see Thando coming out from

Sanele's car. She leans on to the open window and gives him a kiss then walks to me. She's in her heels and she's struggling to make it faster to me but she finally makes it.

THANDO: "Hey you!"

She says with a smile.

MELISSA: "Someone's in a good mood. What's popping?"

THANDO: "Ugh don't mind me. So about yesterday's issue did you manage to come up with something?"

MELISSA: "Dude you said you'll figure something out today."

THANDO: "I thought I wasn't in this alone. You were supposed to at least come up with something then we'll combine the ideas together and come up with good from it."

MELISSA: "Okay you're right but I'm not sure about this Thando. This doesn't feel right. This is not me to desperately follow a man behind and make him to love me. What if I scare him away?"

THANDO: "I had something in mind but hey you don't

have to do this. We'll discuss this later during lunch or right after the school's out."

We get inside the school premises and we both part ways since we do different courses. I study for Arts and Fashion Thando studies B-Com Accounting and Economics then Noxolo chose to study Law.

I go to class and everything is just as normal like any other day. It is finally the last class for the day and I take out my phone to play my favorite game called Candy Crush Saga. Playing it makes things easy for me to forget the boredom happening in this room. I get disturbed when someone pokes my left shoulder and I lift up my eyes to see who is it and it's the professor staring at me annoyed.

PROFESSOR: "So this is what you've been doing throughout the entire class?"

MELISSA: "I was just replying a text from my parents."

I say mumbling and the mysterious male voice from the game betrays me. She clicks her tongue.

PROFESSOR:" You think I'm a fool? Just take your bags and leave my class. It's clear

you don't want to be here with everyone of us."

MELISSA: "I promise to behave from now on."

I say with pleading eyes.

PROFESSOR: "You can stay but only on one condition."

She points to the writing board.

PROFESSOR: "I need you to answer one of those questions from the work I gave you earlier this morning."

She hands me a white chalk.

MELISSA: "But..."

I say in low tone voice.

PROFESSOR: "Uh-uh no buts..."

I take the chalk and head straight to the board.

The only one thing I can remember was a question about the famous clothing designer in South Africa. I write it straight away. She walks backwards facing me and walks over to the board to rectify my answer.

Hmm very good....

She turns back at me.

I'm glad you have been participating

in my class. Now you can go back to your seat and take that phone away before I

throw you out of my class and I mean it this time."

I walk back to my seat and take out my books and pay all my attention to the professor until it was finally school's out. This varsity will be the death of me. They operate as if we're still in high school. I thought things were going to be different but it's all just the same.

INSERT 11.

THANDO.

Dude where are you? Meet me at the park.

After sending a text to Melissa. I put my phone bag and head to the girl's toilet to freshen up and put my makeup on. It's quiet and it freaks me out. As I make my way out I bump to someone her books kiss the floor.

“Geez watch your step.”

THANDO: “I’m sorry.”

I help her to pick her books up and she looks at me.

“Oh its you. I never thought I’ll hear from you again.”

THANDO: “What makes you to say that?”

“I know you guys must think I’m after something but I’m not. You’ve been saying nothing to me and it hurts.”

After picking the last book we both stand on our feet.

THANDO: “Noxolo I really don’t know what you’re talking about.”

NOXOLO: “You guys literally distanced yourselves away from me ever since that call.”

THANDO: "I thought you're the one who does that because we can barely see you around here. You don't share a table with us anymore."

NOXOLO: "Anyway what where you doing here?"

THANDO: "What else can I possibly do? I'm refreshing my makeup."

NOXOLO: "Oh going somewhere?"

THANDO: "I'm meeting up with Melissa for a little discussion."

I get a beep from my phone and Melissa tells me she's already at the park waiting for me.

NOXOLO: "Can I come with you?"

THANDO: "Sure but just promise me you'll act appropriate around Melissa please? I don't want drama today."

I ask her with pleading eyes and the only thing she does is to shrug her shoulders. That's not convincing.

NOXOLO: "But I said nothing wrong. She was just

overreacting.”

THANDO: “Yes but just keep your words to yourself and don’t say anything.”

NOXOLO: “Okay. Deal.”

We head outside the school gate and rush to the park that’s almost few kilometers away from school. As we arrive there and I spot Melissa sitting under the tree and Noxolo's reaction changes to bitterness.

THANDO: “Act cool...”

We walk to her and she gives me a warm hug. I was expecting her to hug Noxolo too but they did a handshake awkwardly. I guess she’s still a little upset about the Russ issue.

Missed me?”

I say with a smirk.

MELISSA: “Oh please. I talk to you almost everyday.”

We share a laugh and Noxolo stands stiff like a statue and says nothing but glance at Melissa disgustingly. I don't know why she wanted to come from the first place.

THANDO: "So have you thought about it? Are you changing your mind or we're still doing this?"

MELISSA: "But why are pushing me to date him? We don't know the guy that we'll and already you want me to move in a different place just for him? Don't you think that's too much?"

THANDO: "It's not. If you love someone go fetch them.

I know how bad you want to give love a second chance and Russ is that chance. I

don't know him as much as you do but it's not a bad idea to meet and interact

with other people. You've always wanted to learn to socialize and make friends so use Russ as one of those people."

She sighs and smiles.

MELISSA: "I guess it's worth a try but if things don't work out between us it's all on you."

THANDO: "I'll take the blame bur right now I need to sit my ass down..."

I've been standing on my toes for so long and I

can't take it anymore. I bend down a sit to an empty bench that was under the tree.

So I did think about it and I think you should tell

your parents about staying at your aunt's house but but won't be going there. Now the problem is where are you going to find

a place to stay?

I take a moment to think of something that is

not too crazy or else she'll lose it.

You can ask Russ to give you a place to stay. Maybe if

you tell him that you're coming over he might provide something for you."

NOXOLO: "What!?! Nah I don't think he'll do that. I

mean this poor dude has only been here for few days and you're already planning

to ask for him money? Wow that's so low of you guys."

She snaps and I'm siding with her on that part.

MELISSA: "I agree with Noxolo. It was moving out here

to meet him and now it's his money? He'll take me as if I'm a desperate gold

digger."

She says in a cracking voice. I can see how

worried she is but I don't think Russ is that bad.

THANDO: "Oh please. We're doing this for him..."

I say rolling my eyes and you can tell by

Melissa's facial expression that she is not satisfied with my opinion but that's all I can come up with and she should be grateful.

Yes it might sound wrong but if he wants to see you then he'll make sure he finds you have a place to stay."

MELISSA: "But all this feels so wrong. I don't know if I have the guts do that. You know that!"

NOXOLO: "This whole thing is just a bad idea. I'd advice not to do this."

THANDO: "Will you shut up?....

I say looking at her annoyed and turn to face Melissa who looks worried.

Listen baby I know it's not easy but at least consider staying with your aunt for few months so you can get to know Russ better in person and now you'll have to compromise. I myself to come think of this idea it might turn out really bad and I don't want you to feel humiliated or embarrassed in front of him so the only thing for you to do is to hold on to your aunt until you're done with school."

NOXOLO: "Exactly. Are you really that desperate to see him? You're leaving your family behind for him? That

is taking a big step honestly. You rushing things.”

I get irritated.

THANDO: “Take your negativity with you and leave us alone. Just do the honors and leave because you ain’t helping here.”

NOXOLO: “I’m going nowhere and no I’m not going to contribute any ideas to this. This is crazy.”

She says folding her arms.

THANDO: “Then shut up if you don’t have anything much better to say.”

NOXOLO: “Okay okay then. I’m quiet but don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

MELISSA: “You two are funny.”

She says laughing and cross folding her arms.

THANDO: “She can be annoying. Nothing good comes from her mouth.”

MELISSA: “She’ll get it to say things right next

time.”

NOXOLO: “I’m still here and I can hear you.”

I laugh and pull my hands to myself.

THANDO: “But honestly babe please think about it. Who knows? It might be worth it.”

She sighs heavily.

MELISSA: “Yeah I will.”

Then I remember something.

THANDO: “When is our gym session?”

MELISSA: “I’ve been waiting for you to tell me. You’re the one with all the connections.”

NOXOLO: “You got to be kidding me? The both of you? Going to the gym? Since when?”

THANDO: “It doesn’t matter.”

NOXOLO: "Melissa never cared

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but since Russ is now in

the picture she wants to gym? It's true when they say wanders never ceases."

MELISSA: "How's that your problem? This
is about me."

NOXOLO: "If you say so but all of this to me it's just
weird. It doesn't make any sense at all."

THANDO: "Let it be that way then. It doesn't have to
make sense to you but I guess you'll understand sooner or later..."

Noxolo looks away and takes out her phone to try
to avoid our conversation.

Let's start tomorrow after class. It'll be a Friday."

MELISSA: "Sounds good but are we going to do it by

your house?"

THANDO: "We're going to the gym. My place is occupied."

MELISSA: "Yeah and what about you Noxolo? Will you be joining us?"

NOXOLO: "Oh hell no. My body is perfectly fine sweetie."

She keeps staring her phone non stop.

THANDO: "Ugh whatever. We'll build be owning our curvaceous body soon."

MELISSA: "That's the spirit!"

She says as we share a high five each other. We continue to stay in the park until it is already 6am. We all go back to our homes and was Noxolo quiet the whole day. I get home and open the shower. Before I can hop in my phone rings and Sanele video calls me via whatsapp video call and I answer.

SANELE: "Hey baby...."

Before I can say anything he notices I'm wearing
a towel.

Let me see what you're hiding there."

He says in excitement.

THANDO: "Ugh please stop it..."

We both laugh.

What's with the call?"

SANELE: "Well I miss my other half and I thought
it'll good idea to call her and I caught her in the right moment."

He says licking this lips.

THANDO: "It's funny how you do that and you can't see
anything behind this towel."

SANELE: "But I can see your butt cheeks from here."

THANDO: "Want me to take the towel off?"

I say with a smirk.

SANELE: "Yes yes yes! Show me baby..."

I slowly untie the towel that is wrapped around my body then my boob almost pop out but I immediately stop to see his reaction and I can tell he wasn't expecting any of that. He needed more of me and I can see it in his eyes.

Nah baby why did you stop? Continue please?"

THANDO: "Oh no baby. That was it. The show is done."

I say teasingly and I wrap tight the towel around me.

SANELE: "C'mon babe. Don't do this to me."

THANDO: "No baby. I don't want to get carried away."

I say with a smile.

SANELE: "So you're actually teasing me?"

THANDO: "Something like that."

I say as I bite my lower lip.

SANELE: "Mhh you look sexy when you do that. Damn why can't I resist you?"

THANDO: "You don't know how bad I want you to be here
and just hop inside the shower with me but awukho.(but you're not here.)"

SANELE: " Lets just shower together while we're still
on the call."

THANDO: "You're not serious..."

He takes his clothes off and I meet up with this
sexy body in front of my screen.

Now you sexier than me."

He blushes and gets inside the bathroom. He
opens the shower to let out the cold water run out first then hops in.

SANELE: "Lets bath."

I take my
towel off and put my shower cap on. I get in the shower. I place my phone

inside the bath rack to prevent my phone from getting wet and I won't lie showering with my boyfriend over the phone is not too bad.

THE FOLLOWING DAY.

It's a Friday beautiful morning and I'm waken up by the sun flash on my skin that appears through the windows. I drag myself to bed and head to the shower. I didn't last long enough because I know for a fact I'll be sweating when I return back from the gym so it will just be a waste. I just bath with warm water put on my gym sweat spray to prevent me from any sunburn and from sweating too much. As I'm about to put on my nike gym outfit my phone rings and it's Melissa. She approaches me energetically.

MELISSA: "You should be done by now."

THANDO: "Yeah I'm almost done but I just need few more minutes. I'll text you when I'm ready."

MELISSA: "Ahh don't tell me you'll have to put your makeup on"

I laugh. I love how my friends have got used to me. They tried to encourage me to stop using makeup as it'll result to skin

damage and breakdown but only cheap makeup can do that to your skin. The Estee
Lauder Double Water stay-in makeup is the best and goes for all skin types.

THANDO: "You know for sure I won't go anywhere without
pampering my face."

I can tell she's waiting impatiently for me to
be done on time.

MELISSA: "Please hurry. If you take long I'll go back home."

THANDO: "Geez okay wait..."

I quickly put on my grey nike leggings and a white
sports bra. I grab my phone and place it on the ear. I balance it with my
shoulder.

Meet me out the shopping mall."

That's the nearest gym closet to the mall and
very much affordable.

MELISSA: "Just don't be late."

We hang up then I put on my white nike running shoes and grab my bag pack that is stuffed with fruits and a fresh mint bubblegum and lemon flavored cold water bottle. I catch a taxi and drops me to the mall.

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RUSS.

Its feels odd to wake up in the morning without being greeted with a warm cup of black coffee or coming across to a beautiful face of my moms. Man I miss that woman but at least I've been getting in contact with her to check if she's doing alright and talk about work related issues. On this lovely Friday I try by all means to roll myself over the bed and rush to the bathroom to take a shower. I grab my casual clothes the grey sweat pants and a back vest with black reebok matching

sneakers. Afterwards I do my bed. Few seconds later the cleaners pull through from my doorstep and start to doing my laundry and mop the floor.

Honestly this thing of being alone really sucks.

I'm all by myself in this lonely hotel and it doesn't feel like I'm even existing myself. I keep wondering when will this loneliness go away. I know I've been really hurt and I had bad experiences from my previous relationships but I can't keep on like this. I need a woman in my life. I need someone who can make me happy and nourish me with her tender love and care. I'm willing to let go of the past and start something brand new with someone else.

Lately I've been contacting Melissa. We talk over the phone here and there but it just doesn't feel enough. I would really appreciate it if she lives near my neighborhood so I can get to see and spend more time with her every single day. Her personality attracts me to learn more about her. It's sad that she lives far away from me and there's nothing I can do about it. I brush off my thoughts and I grab my phone from the bed. I request an uber ride to drop me off to the nearest barbershop to get a fresh haircut. My hair looks very terrible and it's been weeks not getting giving my hair some treatment. Few minutes later it arrives and I get in. He takes the steering wheel and we arrive to the destination.

DRIVER: "We're here."

RUSS: "Thank you."

I pay the driver and I get inside. One of the
hairstylist welcomes me in and he leads to me to one of the customer's chairs.

HAIRSTYLIST: "So what do we have here?"

He says as he drools over to my hair. He runs
his hands over to my sculp.

RUSS: "I would be glad if you can just give me a
haircut. Nothing much."

HAIRSTYLIST: "Your hair still looks fresh though and
clean too so you've just made my work easier already."

RUSS: "Just do what you have to do but don't put any
chemicals."

We share a short laugh. I don't know how they
operate in here but I'm in hope for the best. He starts to comb my hair to get
rid of the knots. Then he takes me to a separate place were he starts to sits
me down on a chair and pulls my head back and pours a shampoo in my hair and

rubs it in. He later walks me to another area to blow dry my hair and cuts it. The hairstylist continues to do my hair and while he is busy doing my

thoughts draw me back to Melissa. I grab my phone from my right side pocket and dial her number. It rings a couple of few times and no answer. I guess she's probably busy. I'll just give her a call later. I don't know why I feel a little disappointed for not being able to reach out to her but I really need to make sure I talk to her by the end of today.

HAIRSTYLIST: "And that will be it sir."

He breaks me from my thoughts.

RUSS: "Uhm you done?"

HAIRSTYLIST: "Yeah. I even told you the price."

RUSS: "Sorry my mind was somewhere else. How much do I have to pay?"

HAIRSTYLIST: "That'll be two-hundred and fifty."

I take out my wallet from the back pocket of my pants and hand it to him. He finishes me off with few touch ups in terms of applying hairspray and dust all the remaining pieces of hair from my face. He thanks me and asks me to come again. I assured him that I will and leave the salon.

Few hours later I decide to go to the mall to buy grocery and my toiletry because I didn't get chance to buy myself those stuff. I don't see a need to buy so much groceries since I live alone. I think I should keep things simple and buy the basics.

INSERT 12.

MELLISA.

I'm at the mall and I've been waiting and waiting for Thando to show up but there's no sign of her. She asked me to meet up with her at the mall but I can't seem to spot her anywhere. I'm sure people are looking at me like I'm a crazy person who stands by herself. I look at my watch it's already 09:15am and she promised to be here exactly by 09:00am. I am starting to lose my patience and I grab my phone from my mini bag. As I'm about to call her I see someone like her stepping out from

the taxi.

"Finally!"

I say out loud throwing my hands up in the air. She starts to make her way towards me and hugs me.

THANDO: "Sorry I'm late."

MELISSA: "I was about to take my ass home and leave this place."

I say with an annoyed face.

THANDO: "I'll make it up to you then. Just allow me to buy you lunch today."

She says with pleading eyes. I don't know why she has to buy my apology with food. I'm not complaining but she has to stop doing this. I don't want to be fed with all this junk.

MELISSA: "Fine but I swear once you keep operating like this I'll go to the gym by my own."

THANDO: "Okay I'm sorry. Lets go..."

She takes the lead and walks me inside the mall.

The place is fully packed. You can't tell what is happening here. Many people are roaming around back and forth. There's a mixture of music coming from different shops and it's too loud. As we're standing trying to figure out which direction to use that can take us to the gym we meet a group of people wearing the "ByeFAT!" labeled gym outfit walking pass us. Thando pats me on my shoulder.

We should follow these people."

MELISSA: "We all attend the same gym?"

THANDO: "Yes that's where we're going."

I didn't know there's another gym company called like that. Maybe it was long popular and I didn't know about it like my friend does.

MELISSA: "But we don't have the same outfit as theirs."

THANDO: "We're still new to the club. We just need to earn the membership card and we can be like them. I'll explain everything to you later. Let's go."

We quickly rush to find them and we join the

crew. Some are friendly enough to greet us and we greet back. We all continue to walk until we enter Virgin Active. Now I'm confused. I lean closer to Thando to whisper something in her ear. I don't want these guys to hear me.

MELISSA: "What are we doing here?"

THANDO: "What does it look like to you? We're at the gym."

She whispers back.

MELISSA: "Yeah but are you sure we're at the right gym?"

THANDO: "Yes."

MELISSA: "What about their t-shirts? They look different."

She turns her face and looks at me.

THANDO: "It's a sponsorship. Don't worry about it. I wouldn't get us lost."

We get in and register with our personal details and we're now officially the virgin active gym junior members. I didn't want to

bother Thando with my endless questions so I asked the receptionist about this ByeFAT! label and she explains it to me. She said the Virgin Active was sponsored by that company and they're promoting it. We walk around and the place looks huge and amazing. It is categorized into different sections for different body goals then there's a room filled with different types of workout machines and you can exercise by yourself without getting the help from the instructor. Since we're beginners the receptionist leads us to a personal trainer who does the basics and not hard training. I didn't expect to have a trainer but it's even better than to gym just only as individuals.

RECEPTIONIST:

"Here we are. This will be your trainer Peter. He looks harsh but don't worry he's harmless."

We all shared a laugh.

PETER: "Alright alright now kindly leave us and ladies please join us...."

The receptionist leaves the room and we all exchange names before the training can begin.

Okay nice meeting you all and they've already told you my name but I'll introduce myself properly....

He does the silence breath in and out exercise.

He looks a little nervous but he shouldn't be. He's probably used to work with a small portion of people and not this big crowd.

I'm Peter but you can call me Pete. I'm the virgin active trainer for beginners and I'm pretty sure all of you here have never attended a gym ever before but that's not a problem. I won't go hard on you. I will just do things easier then as soon as your body adapts from being active we'll move on the next level. I'd like you to put away your bags over to the shelves to begin with then spread yourselves in this room."

We follow his instructions and do exactly what he says. People move around and others not knowing where to be.

THANDO: "Enjoy."

She whispers in my ears and shifts away to my space. I worn my black ordinary tights and black sports bra but I have a vest on too because my boobs will look hilarious and be exposed to everyone. I don't like to catch people's attention. It just doesn't make me feel comfortable.

PETE: "Now everyone follow my lead and please if you miss a step don't wait but try by all means to keep up with me and last but not least try to feel free and let loose. Okay?...."

We all nod. Pete starts to do the warm ups. We did the stretch legging and bending over with our hands going all the way down to our toes. We begin with simple cardio exercises that include the jumping jacks planks squats wall push-ups and sit-ups. Everything is going smooth. I do exactly what he's doing. Some workouts defeated me but I let my fears down and continue to push. Pete claps his hands loudly and clears his throat.

Let's pair in groups of two. Come on now people keep it moving."

He doesn't give us a break and I start to feel very uneasy by the thought of being in pairs with someone I barely know so I quickly rush to Thando as I see her roaming her eyes around to look for a partner. I make it to her before someone snatches her from me.

THANDO: "Thank God you came to me. I don't want any of these weirdos."

MELISSA: "Weirdos? You got to be kidding me. I mean look at these people surrounding us..."

I keep looking around.

These are nothing but hotties my friend. Just accept the fact that you don't feel comfortable to pair up with someone."

She rolls her eyes and laughs.

THANDO: "Whatever. My man is still the hottest."

As people are getting into groups I can tell

Pete is in deep thoughts as he sees our movements and who we pair up with until he finally says.

PETE: "I know this might sound crazy but it'll
benefit both of y'all."

THANDO: "What is he talking about?"

She whispers and I shrug my shoulders.

MELISSA: "I don't know either."

PETE: "Guys stand aside and girls please choose a guy
whom you'll feel comfortable to be your gym partner. I'm not saying you should
team up to date. I need you to use your strengths against each other. I'm
giving you only a minute to decide."

MELISSA: "Is this dude serious right now?"

THANDO: "I don't think Sanele will like any of what's

about to happen here.”

MELISSA: “This is not in my comfort zone friend. I swear. Maybe I should go and tell him about my insecurities.”

That’s ridiculous! I can’t tell anyone what I’m going through. Before Thando can say anything Pete clears his throat loudly and face his direction towards us.

PETE: “Ladies? We’re waiting for you so we can started with this whole process....

He looks annoyed and irritated. I stand there in middle of the hall looking for someone I can pair up with. Thando walks over to this guy and he takes her hand with a smile on his face. He must be happy to be partnering with her. Now I’m alone and I don’t know what to do. My legs are shaking and my hand are sweating.

You two have already wasted so much time yet you’re still operating at your own pace. If you don’t want to do exactly as I say then leave the room. We don’t have all day long you guys. Melissa there’s your partner. Go to him...

He points out the guy who looks more like a snob.

He has his spectacle and braces on. He has the features of a snob and the way

he reacts towards things but I find him quite easy to team up with. I put my fears aside and walk to him.

Thank you. Now can we start?...

We nod.

So since you guys are paired up it'll be easy for each and everyone of you to get a support structure from your gym partner. Your partner will motivate and push you from working hard and obtaining your body goal. However if you face challenges you who to reach out to....

I take a look at my gym partner one more time and our eyes meet. I pull away immediately and I can hear him chuckle from under his breathe.

I'll give you guys two minutes to introduce yourselves to each other so we can try to break the stranger vibe feeling and meantime I'll just grab bottles of water to cool us down because a lot is about to happen."

He walks off and closes the door behind him.

STRANGER GUY: "Hi."

MELISSA: "Hey."

STRANGER GUY: "I'm Musawenkosi but you can call me
Musa to shorten it. What's your name beautiful?"

Beautiful? Is he trying to make his move on me?

Oh no he better not. I'm not falling for such words anymore. My ex's used to
call me that and where are they now? They all left me for better people. His
voice strangles me. Not in a bad but in a good way. I continue to keep
myself a smile on my face.

MELISSA: "I'm...I'm....Melissa."

MUSA: "A beautiful lady with a beautiful name.
Impressive."

MELISSA: "Thank you. Yours too."

I blush until I couldn't face him anymore. I
face my head down and play with my hands.

MUSA: "I hope we make a great team until our time
together is over."

MELISSA: "Of course. We're working as a team."

I didn't have much words to say to him. It is like a cat just bite my tongue and his snobbish looks are nothing compared to his voice. He sounds very deep and attractive too. I try to keep myself together and Pete comes in with a tray of water bottles. He hands everyone a bottle each.

PETE: "I think I gave you guys enough time. Now let's get into business..."

He takes a big gulp of water from his bottle and puts it away on the floor.

Now ladies do the sit ups and the guys will put pressure on your legs. Do this for thirty seconds."

I take my gym carpet and lay it down on the floor. I lay myself on the ground and start doing the sit ups. I manage to do a few until my body gives up on me.

MUSA: "You are doing so well. Keep up."

He shares a smile.

MELISSA: "I don't think I can Musa. This is hard."

MUSA: "I trust you....

I push myself to do a few more until time runs
out.

That was good baby girl."

MELISSA: "Baby girl?"

I ask breathing heavily and wiping off my sweat
with the bottom of my vest.

MUSA: "No don't take it in a wrong. It was friendly
gesture."

MELISSA: "Yeah

Sponsored

baby girl."

MELISSA: "Baby girl?"

I ask breathing heavily and wiping off my sweat
with the bottom of my vest.

MUSA: "No don't take it in a wrong. It was friendly
gesture."

MELISSA: "Yeah right."

I say in a lower voice and continue to wipe the
remaining sweat but with the back of my hands.

MUSA: "Uhm do you need a towel?"

MELISSA: "Yes please and another bottle of water."

MUSA: "Be my guest..."

He brings me towel from the open shelves and a
bottle of water.

Here."

MELISSA: "Thank you..."

I take the towel and wipe myself all the way

down to my neck. Mistakenly so I reach down to my chest and I hook my vest

with my nail. My cleavage appears to Musa's face and he can't help but to stare. He doesn't notice I'm looking at him until I clear my throat uncomfortably

Sorry about that."

He apologize and I cover myself quickly. I wonder how long has he been looking at them.

MUSA: "Forgive me if I made you uncomfortable."

MELISSA: "Just don't do that again."

MUSA: "Ngiyakuthembisa. (I promise you.)

This guy sounds like one of those boys with

innocent looks but they have a very dirty and naughty side in them.

MELISSA: "Let's just forget about it and move on."

Everything got awkward silence between us. I

can't face him longer than the way I used to or to even put my focus to what I'm

doing but the day continues to be great. We both co-operated until it was time

to leave.

PETE: "Thank you so much guys. I really had a nice day

with y'all. I'm hoping we can be like this until the we're done with the

program.”

THE 1st FEMALE: “Yes! We promise to make the good out of it.”

THE 2nd FEMALE: “I totally agree with her. We'll continue to do our best and put more efforts.”

We clap hands and we all say our goodbyes to each other. To my surprise I find other pairs exchanging numbers. Maybe it's not what I think it is. Thando and I walk outside the mall and catch a taxi. We occupy the two empty spaces from the backseat.

THANDO: “Okay the guy is nice. What's his name?”

MELISSA: “Seriously now? You once did this with Russ and now this new guy?”

I giggle.

THANDO: “Just a name. Not that I asked for his home address or the size of his underwear.”

She laughs and rolls her eyes.

MELISSA: "Wow! You went pretty much far from what I had expected for you to say."

THANDO: "Are you going to tell me or what?"

MELISSA: "His name is Musa. Musawenkosi."

THANDO: "He has a cool name but how's working with him? Supportive enough?"

MELISSA: "Very much. We did exactly what we were told and we would switch positions. Next minute he takes charge then the next its me. What about you?"

THANDO: "Heee! Thatha elakho girl! (You go girl!) We're good. We haven't been talking to each other. The guy was just weird."

MELISSA: "Ahh I know your mind is going somewhere else with this."

THANDO: "What? Never."

She laughs. I know her mentally can create sexual thoughts sometime. I arrive home around 7pm afternoon. I walk inside the kitchen and I'm welcomed by a home cooked meal and a hug from my mom.

MELISSA: "Smells good in here."

MOM: "I cooked your favorite."

MELISSA: "What's the catch?"

MOM: "Nothing. I was just making dinner which is what any mom would do for their daughter from having a long day."

MELISSA: "You're the best mom. Let me take a shower real fast. I'll catch you guys later for dinner."

I go to the bathroom and take a shower. I put my old off color red t-shirt and black leggings. I go through my phone and come across Russ missed calls. He called me while I was still at the gym. I throw myself in bed and dial his number. I don't know if he's asleep but I hope he answers.

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RUSS.

I'm laying in bed watching eTV news until I feel my phone vibrates from my lap. I check the caller ID and its Melissa.

RUSS: "Hey pretty."

MELISSA :“Oh please stop. We both know I don’t like compliments.”

I don’t know why she keeps letting herself down.

She’s beautiful by judging by her profile. I don't know why she’s not having love for her just like everyone in this world. I’ve never dealt with such people in my life but I’m sure there’s a reason behind this and I need to find out what is it.

RUSS: “I find you beautiful and attractive. Your opinions doesn’t really matter to me.”

MELISSA: “You won’t fool me. I know me better than anyone else.”

RUSS: “I’m not fooling you. I can’t help myself but to tell you the honest truth. You're really different and that is what makes everything so special about you.”

MELISSA: “Whoa. I think you’ve said too much for the day.”

She laughs.

RUSS: “Excuse me for being uncontrollable over my emotions.”

MELISSA: "Emotions?"

RUSS: "Yes. My genuine emotions about you. I've never felt like this for anyone before."

I'm expecting her to say something but she keeps silent. I don't know if I wasn't supposed to say that but I thought it'll be better to let her know how I feel about her. Even though I didn't become specific. I don't want give her a hint as to what is going on.

MELISSA: "What are you saying to me?"

I want to tell her that I like her but I'm just afraid to push her away and see me as a bad guy. I don't expect her to like me back. I know how women can react when it comes to such. They think you want to be part of their lives for sex or play with their emotions and I'm not that kind. I'm one of those dudes who believes that If you feel a certain way about someone you should let them know then it's up to them how they feel about that.

RUSS: "I'm grateful to have met someone like you in my life Melissa. You're kind and sweet. Your personality thrills me to know you even more and not over the phone but in person. I want to see you and I know I will one day. I promise you."

MELISSA: "You've been nothing but a good friend

too for going an extra mile to check up on me. It's rare to find people who actually care these days. I think if things went different we would be on a different chapter....

I'm really happy we're on the same page. She appreciates me and I appreciate her too. The only issue I have to deal with right now is the distance. If only I had my own car I would drive to her place everyday and get her hugs. That's all I need.

Russ are you still there?"

She breaks me from my thoughts and I realize we're still on the line.

RUSS: " Sorry my mind was somewhere else. Where were we?"

MELISSA: "What? Do I bore you? I can leave you know?"

She asks in a sad tone.

RUSS: "Of course not. I just had something in my mind."

MELISSA: "What were you thinking about?"

RUSS: "Maybe I should consider coming to your area and start my life there but I can't make it work. "

MELISSA: " I can't have you compromise your life for me. It's unrealistic to think someone can do something this big for a stranger."

RUSS: "I can make things happen because I love you."

MELISSA: "What did you just say?"

RUSS: "I said I don't mind coming over."

MELISSA: "No before that."

RUSS: "I love you?"

MELISSA: "In what way?"

Man this going to get ugly. I can feel it.

RUSS: "It doesn't matter in what way. Just know that I do and I'll always will."

MELISSA: "I'm really confused. We just met a month

ago and now you love me?"

RUSS: "You don't feel the same?"

She sighs.

MELISSA: "I can't answer that. I'm going to sleep now."

RUSS: "So you do love me?"

MELISSA: "Goodnight Russ."

She hangs

up. I know she has something for me but she's afraid to tell me. Everything is clear. Our conversations are smooth and floating and it's not just conversation you can have with a friend.

THE FOLLOWING DAY.

I don't know but there's something about Melissa.

She's nothing compared to the other females I've met in my entire life. She's very caring and very sweet. Her personality is always what I've wanted in a

female version and I'm pretty sure she'll get along with my mom if only she decides to make her my wife. She is really a jackpot and I still wonder why a

girl like her is single. Girls like her are rare to find in this world.

Especially in these nowadays where you find someone who'll only love you for

what you have and not for who you are. It really hurts to love someone

wholeheartedly and only to find out they're in your life because of being

desperate and for status. Women love showing off to friends or to the public but

as for Melissa she's the one. I can already feel it in my bones for the first

moment I started talking to her over the phone. That voice of hers makes me

feel aroused sometimes. Mainly it happens when I have sexual thoughts about us

and her sweet moaning. I like that kind of feeling because she's the only

female who can put me in that spot with just the sound of her voice. I wake up and take my laptop to browse through

the website that sells houses in Braamfontein. Firstly I enter the Property24

website since it's my first and best option. I browse through it and something catches

my attention. There's a house on sale that costs 1.5 million rands. It is

spacious and has a gym area inside the house which makes me extremely happy to

move in right away. It has everything that I need and it's really worth that

money. I have to consult with the agent and let me know about the procedures

and what needs to be done. I have to set a date to view the house first and

discuss the price before I can officially make it mine. I dial the number that

was below their website and goes through voicemail. What kind of agent is this?

AGENT: "This is Chantel and I'm not available at

this moment. All you can do is to leave a message and I'll get back to you as

soon as possible. Bye."

beep

"Oh so it's a she?"

I ask myself until I realize what I said has already been recorded. I delete it quickly and send a new voice message to Chantel by sounding very politely.

RUSS: "Uhm hey Chantel. I know you barely recognize the voice but I'm a client who is very interested in buying one of your houses displayed on the Property24 so kindly back to me as soon as you get this message. Thank you."

I sound really terrible on that voice note. I woke up not so long ago and my voice is crusty. I put my phone on the side of me and close my laptop. I stretch myself and damn! You know the good feeling that comes from stretching yourself after taking a long nap and it literally just takes off everything that was weighing you? That feels amazing. Thereafter I get inside the shower feeling the warmth and the relaxation from the hot water. I have no plans so I decide to just make it long and do things on with a slow pace. The discussion I had with Melissa flashes back in my head. I hope I didn't push it too far but I'll understand if she doesn't want anything to do with me.

INSERT 13.

NOXOLO.

I don't know but Thando and Melissa have been ganging up on me. I don't know exactly where did I go wrong and they've been acting really strange to me. They don't chill with me anymore they spent less time with me and they barely count me in to their plans. I know about the whole gym adventure between the two of them and that upsets me to think that nobody decided to inform me about it. They thought of doing it now and that was too late. All these days I was hoping one of them could tag me over to join them but nobody pulled through. I don't know what's happening but I keep getting the feeling that our friendship is slowly fading away and I bet none of them can realize that. Not even Thando herself.

I'm

chilling outside the school soccer squad benches and one of the females approaches me with a smile on her face. She looks more like she's in her twenties. She's very pretty looking. She

doesn't look too light or too dark but she just falls in between those two. She's short in height and has brown afro hair. I haven't seen her around the school. Maybe she's a new student.

HER: "Do you mind?"

She says appointing the free space besides me.

NOXOLO: "Yeah sure."

HER: "Thank you."

She takes a seat. Things get awkward in silence.

I don't know how to make a conversation with her and she seems like she doesn't know how to as well. We keep quiet for another minute and this is starting to bore me.

NOXOLO: "What do you want?"

HER: "I'm new here and I was hoping maybe you can show me around."

NOXOLO: "There are so many people in this school you can ask for a tour and you choose me?"

HER: "I saw you chilling alone and I thought maybe you'd be interested but I get it if you don't want to. I'm sorry for disturbing your space."

She stands and I grab her by her wrist. This issue of my friend cutting me off to everything pains me. I feel bad for acting mean to her. She doesn't deserve my bad attitude. I should be mad at my friends and not her.

NOXOLO: "Please stay..."

She slowly sits down and I can tell she's no longer comfortable with me.

I'm sorry. I'm just not feeling okay and I shouldn't throw that at you."

HER: "It's fine. I understand. Maybe we can start afresh and introduce ourselves? What do you say?"

I smile at her and give her my hand.

NOXOLO: "I'm Noxolo."

She gives me a handshake and smiles back. I

don't know her yet but I really starting to like her. She looks like a nice person.

HER: "I'm Angela. Nice to meet you."

NOXOLO: "So what are you doing here? New student?"

She starts to loosen up and adjusts her position
from her seat and double cross her leg to the other.

ANGELA: "I'm on duty as we speak. I clean toilets and
classrooms."

My ears are deceiving me. Angela looks way too young to be employed and having a job like this.
Someone would swear she's one of the
students in campus.

NOXOLO: "I thought you're one of us."

ANGELA: "I get that a lot..."

She chuckles and shakes her head.

Life is full of wonders. I didn't choose this life
but it chose me. I didn't wish to grow up and work as a cleaner. I had big
dreams but I failed myself my parents and my boyfriend. Nobody wants anything
to do with me....

She looks up in the sky and takes a deep breath.

I'm pregnant and I'm working on my independence."

NOXOLO: "That's great news."

ANGELA: "Nobody sees it that way and that's why I'm here."

I feel sympathy for her. It's so sad to hear another woman talking like this. She had big dreams like anyone else but she couldn't fulfill them. I really wish she can tell me more about her pregnancy but I don't want to push it. I think what she has told me is enough. I look at her and she's touching her belly. She sigh and wipes tear on her left eye. I don't like seeing her hurting like this. It pains me too.

NOXOLO: "How about I give you a tour? I'll explain everything you need to know."

She looks at me and gives me a feint smile. I stand up and reach out for her hand. She holds my hand and I carefully pull her up. She groans and holds her lower back.

ANGELA: "My feet are hurting."

I look at her feet. She's wearing an old looking dress. I think she wears it for cleaning. Her belly is showing on it too.

NOXOLO: "They look a bit swollen."

ANGELA: "I just need to rest."

NOXOLO: "Okay. We can do this another day."

She nods and I help her inside the building. We go to this unknown room I've never seen before. She opens the door and there's a single bed and a table with medication. I think this was made for her if she ever needs time to lay down because she's a pregnant woman. I assist her to lay down and she points over to the table.

ANGELA: "Please grab me painkillers. You'll see them by the purple container..."

I do exactly that and give them to her with water. There's a tap nearby so I don't need to go and look for it outside. She drinks her pills.

These should help me lay down a little bit. I'll see you after school?"

I nod and

I close the door behind me. I head to class and I walk into Mrs. Masine who is halfway with her announcement to her pupils.

MRS MASINE: "What I have on my hands is a schedule of the first test. Right now I want you guys to prepare yourself ready. Read from the first module one to the third..."

She stays as she distributes the papers to everyone and I take sit to the empty chair that is next to the door entrance.

If you still need more help kindly make an appointment with me so I can be able to set a date. Good luck. Class dismissed."

The students pack their bags and I do too. I go out to look for Thando and Melissa before I can go home. I can't take this any more. This whole friendship vibe going on between them has been bothering me ever since I found out about it. I continue to look for them in and outside the school. Luckily I find Melissa sitting under the tree taking over the phone. Without even greeting her I just stand in front of her with my hands cross folded.

NOXOLO: "What's your problem?"

MELISSA: "Uhm sorry mom but I have to leave. Something just came up."

She drops the call and place the phone inside

her black mini cross leather bag.

MELISSA: "What did you say?"

NOXOLO: "I see what you're trying to do. You want to separate me from my best friend. Do you even know how long we've come this far and you're trying to ruin everything for me."

MELISSA: " Why would I do that? I respect the friendship you have with Thando and you know that."

NOXOLO: "I don't think so you tell me because clearly she's been spending more time with you than me. She's giving you all the attention and I'm getting nothing."

She tries to act surprised and she's doing this on purpose. She enjoys to see my friendship ends with Thando 'cause she wanted her to herself.

MELISSA: "I didn't do anything wrong here and you're already blaming for something I don't know about.. This is not about me. It's about you and Thando and you should talk to her. I think she has answers that you're looking for. Now if you will you excuse me I have to go home."

She passes me then leaves.

NOXOLO: "Just like that? You'll just walk away? "

She doesn't respond back to me as she keeps on proceeding to walk away. How can she? She wants everything to herself. It was Russ and now its Thando. My best friend? Oh hell no. She's not taking her away from me. I need to do something about this. I go and check on Angela. I knock and I find her packing her stuff. I assist her so we can be faster and catch a ride home. I notice she climbs a different taxi from mine. Maybe she's living in another location. I hug her goodbye and get in the taxi.

I get home and walk to my room. I bring my laptop with me and create a facetime call for the both of them.

THANDO: Ladies!?"

NOXOLO: "Hi."

I say in a low voice and Melissa decides not to say anything. I don't mind her.

THANDO: "You two don't be a bore. What's going on?

Talk to me."

NOXOLO: "Okay stop with this crap. This is not any regular call but

something has brought to my attention that you guys spend much time to yourselves. You guys push me away in everything you do. Am I not visible?"

THANDO: "What? Who said anything about pushing you away? You're the one who decided to be distant from us. We didn't do anything wrong. Don't blame us for your actions."

MELISSA: "That's what I asked her this afternoon but she couldn't understand."

THANDO: "You guys talked?"

Melissa nods and I continue to keep still.

NOXOLO: "Of course! You guys have been going to the gym. I don't know why you guys do this alone. I thought we were friends and friends do things together."

THANDO: "You never wanted to go the gym. You kept praising your "precious" body..."

She does the inverted commas with her fingers.

How do you expect us to know you want this as bad as

we do?"

NOXOLO: "You guys are so pathetic. I don't know why we keep calling each other friends."

I'm so ready to give up in this friendship. This is clear to me that she chose her over me.

THANDO: "Firstly don't be mad at us. This was your fault for not saying anything to us and secondly we did not forget about you. We're not bad people. The only thing that keeps me with Melissa is the going to the gym. We haven't done anything else besides that."

MELISSA: "Yeah that's right and you better stop confronting me behind the corners. If you have something to say that has to deal with Thando don't target me."

I keep quiet for second to keep myself down. My heart is boiling and I can sense Melissa has grown the balls now. She can talk to me anyhow and I give her the warning eyes to watch out.

NOXOLO: "You guys shouldn't have done that. You should acknowledge where you went wrong."

MELISSA: "Okay we're sorry and we won't do it again. Next week we have a session in the morning and I'd like you to be there."

I guess she said all that to make peace but I don't buy it. I'm still upset. I want to hear it from Thando.

NOXOLO: "I'll be there. I have my outfit ready."

MELISSA: "Great then. Now can we forget about this? I'm sick of it."

She frowns over the screen and pulls a drink from the back.

THANDO: "Me too. We're grown ass bitches and we act like teenagers? C'mon guys. We should stop this madness."

She calls me madness? Who the hell does she think she is? They both laugh and I don't know if I should blame it all on jealousy but these two are surely getting along for their bond grew stronger than before.

NOXOLO: "See what I'm talking about? You too have been closest than ever."

THANDO: "Stop with your nonsense haw! We're just talking and nothing else."

MELISSA: "Yeah chill out."

NOXOLO: "You better not say a word wena." (you).

MELISSA: "You better watch your tone when you speak to me. Don't talk to me like you're talking to your little sister."

NOXOLO: "You know what? Stay with this little friend of yours."

Before any of them can say anything I can
regret I hang up. I don't know if it's me having problems but I can't stand seeing
them together. That
girl Melissa tries by all means to be like one of us and she will never be. Not
even a little. She's nothing but an ugly and disgusting fat pig.

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MELISSA.

That terrible call I had with Thando and Noxolo

left me with questions. I don't know whether my friendship with Noxolo was real or it was just fake. She
actually showed me that she was pretending all along

to accept me as her friend and doing it for the sake of Thando. The first moment

we became friends I did feel something was wrong. She didn't like me. I thought as time goes by she'll get to know me well and show genuine friendship love for me but I guess I was wrong. Her actions raised red flags to me today. I don't know if I still want to be friends with her. People like her aren't really to keep because she might do anything or say anything crazy to just hurt my feelings. What surprises me till to this day is when she keeps saying I stole Thando from her. I don't know if we're still in our teenage days but she really needs to grow up. I'm too old to fight for someone's best friend. If she wants her all to herself then she can gladly to that. My intentions were pure the minute I became friends with them. When did I become this cruel to wreck people's friendship? If I wanted to end their friendship I would have done that a long time ago but I don't want to build or be surrounded by enemies. I'm trying by all means to stay at my lane and mind my own business

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or be surrounded by enemies. I'm trying by all means to stay at my lane and mind my own business but here I am in a position where I don't know if I should be friends with anyone again. I breakdown from thinking too much. Later I wipe my tears away and head downstairs to the dining area to watch TV. Something to

clear my mind a little bit.

I take a sit to the couch and scroll over to the TV channels. I just can't find anything entertaining but after some time my mom decides join me.

MOM: "Are you okay?"

I sigh. No I'm not. I'm just dealing with my emotions.

MELISSA: "Yeah."

I continue to keep my focus on the TV screen.

MOM: "I know something is up.
What's wrong?"

She rubs my feet as I'm laying them on the couch.

MELISSA: "I just made an enemy."

MOM: "An enemy?"

She asks in confusion.

MELISSA: "Yeah. An enemy from school. We broke our friendship."

MOM: "Who are you talking about?"

MELISSA: "Ugh it's nothing."

I wipe the remaining tears in my eyes and fake a smile.

MOM: "Come on baby. Don't cry. You can always talk to me."

I change my position and face her. She looks worried but I think I should come clean with her. Maybe she can advice me and tell me how to deal with such situations.

MELISSA: "Noxolo hates me. She makes assumptions that I stole her best friend from her which doesn't any sense."

MOM: "Who's Noxolo? A friend of who's that girl again?"

She says trying to remember her name.

MELISSA: "Thando. Noxolo is friends with Thando. She introduced me to her but Noxolo never liked me. I tried to be good to her but it's all the same."

MOM: "I see but did you tell Noxolo what was going on?"

MELISSA: "Yes I did. I explained everything to her mom but that made her to be upset even worse."

I explain to my mom what happened the other day.
She shook her head and holds my hand that is laying in between my legs.

MOM: "Maybe she needs time. She'll come through."

MELISSA: "But mom do you really think we're that bad friends to do that? She didn't want to join the gym from the onset and now she's making it our fault. What's she's doing is not fair."

MOM: "I warned you about friends remember? In fact I warned you about having too many friends. Candice is good for you. She's fine alone but what did you do? You chose not to listen to me."

MELISSA: "I couldn't help it. I felt so lonely

and Candice wasn't around to keep me company for as long as I needed so Thando seemed very friendly but the problem is her friend. She just doesn't like me and she never did."

MOM: "Then stop interfering yourself into their friendship. She won't stop hating you until you leave her friend alone."

Wow. My mom is sounding so unbelievable right now. She wants me to cut ties with my friend because of some stupid jealousy built in Noxolo's heart? Never. She needs to learn how to keep it together and see things differently.

MELISSA: "But now I have to distance myself away from Thando because of her and her stupid assumptions? No. She's also my friend mama. I need her in my life as much as she does."

MOM: "For your own sake yes. I know she's your friend but look what it's causing. Do you want keep things like this between you and her or you want to make peace and move on?"

Wow this sounds wrong but at the same time it does sound right because it might be a good way to put me and Noxolo in good terms again. Not that I want her friendship but I'm just avoiding hatred from her.

MELISSA: "Okay mom but I need time. I can't just

ghost her.”

MOM: “Yes. You’ll have to tell Thando the matter and make her understand.”

MELISSA: “Sure....

I say as I keep my cool while she cups my face with her hand and smiles at me. We both continue to watch TV. My mind is literally thinking a lot of stuff and it comes to my conclusion that this is the right moment to ask my mom about moving to Joburg with my aunt. I’ve been thinking about Russ and I want to see him. It seemed weird the first time I thought about this whole moving trip but I noticed I like him and it wouldn’t hurt to move in to the new city.

Mom?”

I ask in a polite voice.

MOM: “Yes baby?”

I’m really afraid to tell her. I know for sure she’ll ask me questions and I’m not down to answer any. Especially when the issue with Noxolo ruined my day. All I want her to do is to make things easy for me and just agree to everything I’m about to say to her.

MELISSA: "Okay.. So uhm... I don't know how to say this
but..

Honestly words couldn't come out of my mouth but
finally I take my fears aside and just blur it out. If she lashes out at me
then it's fine. I'll take it. At least I know I've tried.

I want to move back to Joburg."

MOM: "Excuse me?"

She changes from her seat position and looks at
me in confusion.

MELISSA: "I asked if can I go back
to Joburg."

MOM: "But
why? Aren't you happy here? Or is it about the matter between you and your
friends?"

MELISSA: "No mom. It's not about that. I just miss
my aunt. "

MOM: "Your aunt? The one you've been

complaining about? The one who you said you don't want to be around her anymore?
Now all of a sudden you want to move in with her? My ears have got to be
deceiving me right now."

She raises her hands in the sky and cross folds
them in disbelief.

MELISSA: "Yeah. I really missed her. I'm sure
she'll be pleasant to see me."

MOM: "This is all funny and surprising
to me. Years ago you wanted nothing to do with your aunt but now you want to
move in with her? Just like that?"

MELISSA: "Well I understand why she was acting
like that towards me. She wanted to me to be more responsible and to
be able to take good care of myself."

MOM: "Oh wow. This is new..."

She says laughing and clapping her hands on disbelief.

You are really something else. From being abused to
being taught how to be responsible?"

MELISSA: "I've grown up ma and I'm matured now. I understand that she did not only taught me responsibilities but she showed me love. If it wasn't for her attitude towards me I don't think I could've made it this far by doing my own laundry and knpw how to cook."

MOM: "Your father needs to hear this."

MELISSA: "So please mommy? Please let me move in with her?"

MOM: "But what about school?"

MELISSA: "I can get a transfer to another school. It shouldn't take time."

MOM: "Heeh I wonder what changed."

MELISSA: "Its nothing mom. Besides I miss Candice. I'm sure she'll appreciate it to have me around."

She ignores me and no longer pays attention to what I was saying.

MOM: "Oh my sweet darling. Where is she anyways?"

MELISSA: "She's around and the baby is okay too."

MOM: "Do you think know they know the baby's gender yet?"

MELISSA: "No she hasn't. I could've been the first person to know."

MOM: "Yeah. Maybe she's planning to make it a surprise."

MELISSA: "Yeah. So do I take it as a yes?"

MOM: "I don't know. I still have to confirm with your aunt about this. Then I'll have to discuss this with your dad too and see what he has to say but I don't know how to feel about this. I don't know why you want to leave."

MELISSA: "There's nothing to worry about mama.

I just want to be with her that's all."

I go straight to her and give me a big warm hug.

MOM: "Okay enough."

We both giggle and she tries by all means to tickle me so that she can have the access to easily break away from the hug. She manages to do that then heads to the kitchen.

MELISSA: "Don't forget to ask dad."

I remind her.

MOM: "Okay. How about you join in me kitchen and prepare your dad's favorite meal?"

MELISSA: "Sure."

I stand up and fold my blanket that I was using to watch TV. My mom takes me to the kitchen and gives me a knife to peel off the vegetables. I don't know what is happening with me but I'm feeling a bit odd and happy at the same time. I'm worried that my dad will reject my request to move in to Joburg because he knows very well I forbid living in the same roof with his sister. I'm just hoping he'll allow me to so that I can be able to see Russ. The man I've been pleading and longing to see. The thought of him makes me shiver a little bit and I'm not aware that there's a huge smile on my face.

MOM: "What are you smiling for?"

She asks as she gives me a bowl of more potatoes
to peel.

MELISSA: "I'm just happy."

MOM: "Happy huh?"

She smirks.

MELISSA: "Yes. Can't a girl be happy on her own?"

MOM: "It's just surprising to see you this way. I'm
not used to this."

I'm not a happy person. Not that I'm grumpy or
always sad but I always keep quiet. I don't talk or laugh about anything
unless it's necessary. I was born this way and my family has adopted the way I
am. She continues not to ask me any more questions
and changes the subject. We talk about something different while we are cooking
until we wrap everything up. We firstly start off by doing
the dishes and mopping the floor.

INSERT 14.

ANGELA.

I'm in this lonely house sitting all by myself
as I wait for my friend who left an hour ago to Starbucks to get us something
to eat. I am really starving and this baby makes it
even worse so meanwhile she's gone I head to the kitchen and boil water from
the kettle to make myself a nice cup of tea served with the Good Morning Berry
flavored biscuits by Bakers. Honestly I'm not the type of person who eats
anything with berries but ever since I fell pregnant I've been eating them
like crazy. What's even weird is the combination of food I've been making
lately. When cravings hit hard I just eat whatever I'm in the mood for hoping
the cravings will go away and they wouldn't but sometimes they really do.

This is my first pregnancy and I didn't expect
myself to become a mom at the age of twenty-two. This whole pregnancy has done
nothing but destroyed my life. My life was planned perfectly fine until I got

raped five months ago. I started to experience symptoms of pregnancy such as feeling nauseous having abdominal sharp pain back pains and vomiting constantly. My family especially with mom got suspicious but she kept quiet and didn't say anything. Maybe she was waiting for me to tell her but she couldn't give me time. This one evening I left to school. She entered my room and came across a positive pregnancy test that was thrown inside the bin. I hid it in there hoping no one would find it. As I was preparing myself to go home I received a text message from my mom that was hurtfully written as follows:

I am very disappointed in you Angela. I thought you understood the situation we're living in and you decided to just bring another human-being to this life. I don't know why you doing this to me knowing very well that I try by all means to get you to the best school so you can have a bright future for yourself but you just threw that on my face and made me a laughing stock to the community. I had protected you when everyone had jealousy as to how good you excel to your studies and others had a wish for you to fall pregnant and I really thought you'll prove them wrong. I guess I was fooling myself and all my money I had spent on you just went to waste.

After going through her message fear kicked in.

I didn't know what to do and I was afraid to go back home but at the same time I figured it'll be a good idea to just let her know what happened the other night I went out with friends. It's better to be thrown to the streets for a reason rather than throwing myself out without telling the truth. Even though I would tell her the whole story but I'll still be found at fault because I had

disobeyed her rules and that was the night I fell pregnant. When I got back home that afternoon she immediately shouted at me. Not to even greet me and ask me how was my day at school but she couldn't keep her anger within herself anymore. Her blood was already boiling and she slapped me real hard. I felt the eager to hit her back but I remembered this person was still my mother and I have to respect her. She went further and told the entire family about my situation. The next day I was called to a family meeting to discuss about finding a solution for this pregnancy. I had explained everything to them that I escaped the house that night to go party out with friends until a guy came to me. I didn't know him and he seemed like he didn't know me either but it was not so long ago when I fell for his trap. He had already seemed to have planned to make me his target as soon as he saw me. He said he wanted to be friends with me but it was a lie. He just wanted to sleep with me forcefully along with his friends. I got raped by several men and I kept quiet about it. I had to live with this for the rest of my life because if I did this to myself. I didn't want anyone to feel sympathy for me for something I shouldn't have done from the first place. Then it was reached to a conclusion that I should terminate the pregnancy but I refused because I don't want to cause a sin. I'm a Christian and I believe killing someone is counted as making a sin to Jesus Christ so I just decided to keep the pregnancy whether they liked it or not. Little did I know that the day after I'll be kicked out off the house because I was told my baby will be a burden to my mom since she is earning an income that can only take care of the basic things needed in the house. To see that she didn't care about this pregnancy she didn't even give me few days to get at least get a job and a place to stay for me and the baby or not to even realize that it wasn't my plan to be raped. I had to ask for a place to stay at my one of my friend's house Rebecca. She let me stay with her

until I'm financially sorted but things weren't going great. I had struggles to find a job. At times I would be called for a job interview but the location for that job was too far and I had troubles with finding money for taxi fare or money to get myself nice clothes so I can look presentable. My friend volunteered to help but I couldn't let her take care off me. She had a five month old baby to look after and I couldn't afford to see her spend more than her actual budget so I thought I should do something about it and continue to look for a job as fast as I could.

A week after finding out about the pregnancy I went to the nearest clinic to test for HIV. It was nerve wrecking to undergo this procedure because I didn't know from those guys who can possibly affect me with it. I had space for disappointments just in case the results come back positive. I told myself I would go for treatment and live a normal life like every infected person. Testing for HIV took me only few hours. The test came back and it was negative. I felt the burden being lifted off my shoulders. Then I went to one of my ex's workplace at Skyline News to get a job. At first I was afraid he'll notice the baby bump and judge me but he didn't. Instead he gave me his ear and I explained everything to him. He was the only person who listened to me. I told him the purpose why I was there. He said they were still occupied so he'll let me know once they're in need of staff members. I waited for about a month but I never got any feedback from him until I decided to leave Nigeria and move in to South Africa where jobs are created and easy to find but things were not coated by jelly and custard. Things were harder than I thought especially when you're from a different country. I've applied for jobs there too but

nothing. Luckily

my friend Lucia also moved in to South Africa three ago but it was only to accomplish her studies. She is now working as a qualified nurse. She has an apartment of her own and she's happily living her best life at the age of twenty-five. She allowed me to crash at her place

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until I'm able to stand on my feet and be financially stable.

As I started living with her this one day she came with a poster from the University of Free State(UFS) that needed a temporary cleaner. I thought it was a good idea to take the job while I'm still active enough to do anything with this pregnancy. I've applied for the job and I got in. My working hours are good and acceptable. I work from 8 o'clock in the morning to 3 o'clock in the afternoon. My salary agreement to be received every week is amounted to one-thousand rands. It's not really much but it's better than nothing. At least I can use it to maintain my cravings and get myself the things that I want.

As I am enjoy eating my biscuits I hear the door slam very hard and I freak out. I know it's only the two of us who live in this house but anything is possible. Someone may find a way to break-in and kill me.

ANGELA: "Lucia is that you?"

LUCIA: "Yes honey. Sorry I scared you."

She says with bags full on her hands and makes her way to the kitchen. Her apartment is not that big and her furniture separates different rooms.

ANGELA: "The door got jammed again?"

LUCIA: "Yeah. I should go to cashbuild and buy a new door before it gets worse and I need to make it fast before we approach winter."

I've always wanted to get her a new door and surprise her but the money that I earn is not enough. She takes a seat and takes off her boots and a jacket.

ANGELA: "Is it really that cold for you to even wear

those?"

I say as I share a short laugh.

LUICA: "Girl it's freezing cold out there."

She says in an exaggerated voice.

ANGELA: "I'm sure it's not even that bad and I see you have my doughnuts."

I take a sneak peek to the plastic that is on the table.

LUCIA: "Yeah. I have all your favorites but I didn't get you coffee so I got you vanilla milkshake. I hope you and the baby will like it."

I take the plastic and take out a brown packaging of Starbucks and return back to the couch.

ANGELA: "I'm so starving and this baby makes it two times worse."

LUCIA: "Aww I understand. Don't keep the baby waiting

then.”

ANGELA: ”Sure.”

We both chuckle and begin digging to our food. She treats herself with ice tea and a caramel swiss roll.

LUCIA: ”So? Are you happy with being a cleaner? Is it treating you good?”

I sigh.

ANGELA: ”Well I don’t have any choice. I can’t expect to have a high paying job because I don’t have any good qualifications. Not to forget that I haven’t completed my studies.”

LUCIA: ”So that’s it? You'll just give up in life because of what? This pregnancy and silly qualifications?”

ANGELA: ”This pregnancy did nothing but to close lifetime opportunities for me. It even made a separation between me and my loved ones. Right now nobody wants me...

I can feel the tears are near from coming out.

It pains my heart to think that I’m a nobody to my family.

I have no one but except you friend. You're here for me and I appreciate it but I really have to face the consequences that life throws at me. I have to learn to be responsible for this pregnancy. I don't blame the baby but I blame the person who brought this baby to this world. What hurts the most is not knowing the baby's father."

LUCIA: "Oh yeah. I didn't think of it like that but you can still take care of the baby with or without the father. You don't need him. You both don't."

ANGELA: "That's correct and I totally agree with you but what will I say to the baby when he or she grows up? Do you know how awful it sounds to know that you're brought into this world by rape and not in a normal "parental" way."

I do the inverted commas with my fingers.

LUCIA: " I know that sounds bad but once it reaches to that certain stage for you to tell your baby then you have no choice but to tell the truth. Yes it might hurt but everyone deserves to know the truth at the end of the day. You can't keep this as secret forever. Now that the baby is not born yet let's focus on the positive energy. The negativity will be dealt with later."

She notices I haven't looked at her for a bit. She cups my face with both of her hands and lifts my face to meet with hers.

ANGELA: "Yeah I guess. I'll put my main focus on my baby and to myself too. I don't want to build unnecessary stress for me."

LUCIA: "And I know you'll make a perfect mom."

ANGELA: "I will try make the best living as possible for the both of us."

I chuckle softly as I gently rub my belly and I find Lucia giving me a pouting face.

LUCIA: "This is cute you know? I can tell you are connected to this baby already."

ANGELA: "I surely did and I think I felt the connection with the baby from the first moment I got introduced to motherhood."

LUCIA: "Aww I think I'm gonna cry."

She starts to fake cry and wipes off the unseen tears.

Then I giggle.

ANGELA: "Okay hold it in. I don't carry a tissue with me so you better not."

LUCIA: "I can't help it. It's just so beautiful and I'm really proud of you friend. I'm proud that you saved someone's life meanwhile your family wanted you to do an abortion."

ANGELA: " I wouldn't feel good about it. I was going to live with guilt for the rest of my life."

My heart starts to recover from all the pains I've been through and decided to bring myself together. As a woman you need to cry until you're enough then you work on building yourself again and move on with life. It's hard to move on from my family but I need to get my life together and be strong for my baby.

LUCIA: "Enough about heartbreaking stories. Have you found out the baby's gender yet? Because I noticed we keep referring the baby as a him and her."

ANGELA: "Not yet but I'm willing to go as soon as I get a day off from work."

LUCIA: "Can I come with you?"

ANGELA: "Sure but wouldn't you busy? You've been a workaholic these days."

LUCIA: "Ugh yeah. I just hope I get a day off or something but don't worry about it. I'll come and be

there with you.”

ANGELA: “I’ll get a feedback from you then and please don’t delay me. I need to get this over and done with.”

LUCIA: “You haven’t told me how months are you?”

ANGELA: “I’m almost six months.”

LUCIA: “Wow. This human-being is developing real fast...

She shares a huge smile with me. I can really tell she’s happy about my pregnancy. She hasn’t judged me and she’s been supportive. I like her for that. She’s indeed a genuine friend I’ve ever had.

Do you mind?”

She lifts her hand to reach out to my tummy and she looks nervous too. Maybe it’s her first to touch a belly of a pregnant woman. I nod and she brings her hand closely to my tummy.

ANGELA: “Can you feel anything?”

LUCIA: “Not really but your tummy is harder than the usual belly. How do you cope with such?”

I laugh.

ANGELA: "That's because I'm pregnant silly."

LUCIA: "Duh I know."

She keeps her hands on my belly until we both feel a little movement. She keeps her hand on my belly and the baby kicks. It always overwhelms with joy to feel the baby moving inside me. It shows the baby is healthy and happy. A few seconds later the baby decides to give us a big shot this time.

LUCIA: "Felt that?"

ANGELA: "Yeah. That was a strong one."

LUCIA: "Did it hurt?"

She looks at me as if she's the one who feels the baby kicks.

ANGELA: "No. Not at all."

LUCIA: "And does this belly feel heavy on you?"

I laugh loudly. What the hell is going on with these questions. She's a nurse and I'm sure she should know this by now.

ANGELA: "No. It feels light. I mean I can even do this."

I stand both with my feet and do a gwara gwara dance. I've seen it trend a lot on the tiktok app and I give it try. I noticed it's the easiest dance style to do so I've been sticking to it ever since.

LUCIA: "Don't hurt the baby."

She keeps saying that should be careful and I assure her nothing bad will happen. We haven't touched our food ever since. We both have our first bites. I test my doughnuts with a slight dip from my pinky finger and it's cold. The cheese is not slimy anymore. She bites her sausages and they don't look good by judging from her disgusted facial expression. She puts them aside and eats her swiss roll.

LUCIA: "I think it needs to be reheated. Want me to do yours too?"

ANGELA: "Yes please."

She takes my food and goes to the kitchen.

ANGELA: "Please add extra cream cheese on my doughnuts!?"

I shout to her and she shouts back.

LUCIA: "I got you!"

Honestly the talk with Lucia helped a lot. I realized that I can do so much more in life after the pregnancy and it shouldn't determine who I want to be in life. I should make my own decisions and set goals for myself. This cleaning job is not something I'll rely on but in the long run I'll get something better for myself and for my baby.

INSERT 15.

RUSS.

CHANTEL: "Okay I can just send you the location and you'll meet me there."

RUSS: "I'm sorry but what will you be wearing?"

CHANTEL: "I have a red tight dress with stiletto black high heels and I have a blond hair."

RUSS: "Okay. I will see you in a minute then."

I bathed a long time ago waiting for any plans to come out and luckily Chantel reached out to me after hours. After the call she sends me the location that is only few blocks away from the hotel. It's not a place to conduct business deals but I can't judge her. Everyone has a way of doing things. I take my car keys and head to the restaurant. I sit next to the table behind the door entrance. That will make it easier for me to spot her. I order a black coffee bean and a blueberry muffin to start my day.

WAITER: "Anything else?"

She says scribbling down in her note book.

RUSS: "No. That'll be it..."

She leaves and I wait for Chantel. After a few minutes a lady that matches the same description as hers walks through the door and damn she looks beautiful. She goes to make her order and as she's done she begins to look around as if she's looking for someone and I walk away from my seat to her.

You must be looking for me?

I ask from her behind and she takes a turn around to face me.

CHANTEL: "Mr. Skyline?"

RUSS: "Yes that's him."

CHANTEL: "Oh its finally nice to meet you..."

She says with a smile and throws a handshake.

Shall we take a seat?"

RUSS: "Sure. Lead the way."

She goes and picks a table that is at the corner.

WAITER: "Wait sir! Your order is ready."

She says as she rushes over to me and gives me my order. I forgot about that already. I take it from her and I take a sip.

CHANTEL: "Oh you've already placed an order?"

RUSS: "Yeah. I'm sorry I ordered before you. I couldn't wait any longer."

CHANTEL: "Hungry?"

RUSS: "Yeah. It's something like that."

I say in embarrassment. Then we take a seat facing each other.

CHANTEL: "We would've discussed this later. I hate to see my clients starving."

RUSS: "Don't worry about it. I'm glad you made it and we can now get in the matter of purchasing the house."

CHANTEL: "Yes right...."

Her order comes in and she takes her coffee from a tray. I watch her as she takes a sip and a sweet moan escapes from her mouth. I watch her as she rolls her eyes in satisfaction. That tea must be hitting good spots.

Mmmh this is really nice. I haven't had a cup tea in years but this is amazing."

I'm lost in thoughts for a second. She uses her tongue to lick the remaining foam on her top lip.

RUSS: "Uhm yeah. It's tempting."

CHANTEL: "What?..."

She asks in confusion.

What's tempting?"

RUSS: "I uhm... I mean the tea you have is just tempting to try it out."

CHANTEL: "Oh what flavor of coffee do you have in there?"

RUSS: "Just Black Coffee Bean. I love my coffee black and strong."

CHANTEL: "I understand. Next time you should try this one. You're gonna love it..."

She says trying to look for the tag.

This is caramelized and strawberry iced tea."

RUSS: "I will."

CHANTEL: "Now let's get into business...."

She starts to take out her laptop and random files. She scrolls from her laptop and explains in details about the house that caught my attention earlier this morning.

This is the house. Everything is fixed including the sewage pipes and everything functions properly. The neighborhood is quite friendly and everyone just minds their business."

RUSS: "I'm really impressed honestly. I see myself living in that house."

CHANTEL: "But I can show you more houses. You can look through and consider which one you like."

RUSS: "Nah I think I know where my heart belongs to."

CHANTEL: "So that's it? This is your first and last option?"

RUSS: "Yes. I'm taking it."

CHANTEL: "Alright then. We still have time to go and view the house..."

She says as she checks time on her watch.

Since we both have cars you'll just follow my lead....

I nod. Later on we pay off our tab and leave the restaurant. I get in my car and follow her to each and every direction she takes. We keep turning left right left right until we come across this big gate in front of us. As we wait for it to open I see her taking out her card and swipe it for entrance. The gate automatically unlocks itself and we get in. We continue to drive and make it to the last unit of new townhouses. She parks to the parking lot and I do the same. She scrolls down the left passenger window and I scroll down the to the right window to hear what she has to say.

We're here."

RUSS: "What is this place?"

CHANTEL: "Welcome to the Enchanted Estate. These are townhouses. You are all combined in one area but you all have your own space and yard."

RUSS: "I can live here."

I say with a smile.

CHANTEL: "Come on now. Lets check the house...."

I lock my car and follow Chantel as she heads to the section that only has big houses. It's crazy how these houses are organized in sizes. There's small to big townhouses. They all look exactly the same but the size is different.

The house is in here Mr. Skyline."

RUSS: "Call me Russ."

She nods and we take a walk. We make it to this one beautiful house.

CHANTEL: "And we made it."

RUSS: "This is the house?"

CHANTEL: "Yes. Are you surprised?"

RUSS: "What? No way. You're joking right?"

CHANTEL: "I'm dead serious. I know you're fooled by the size of the house on the pictures but this is it."

I am so surprised. I bring my hands above to my shoulders in disbelief. I don't know how to feel. My emotions are mixed up

but I'm on top of the moon.

RUSS: "I love it!"

CHANTEL: "Do you mind to do the honors and open the door?...."

She hands me the keys and I nervously twist the key through the door handle and open the door. I don't exactly know what to expect but I know it's something more than I can imagine and it could be something out of this world. To my surprise I come across a passage and as I walk straight towards the light. There's this bright and beautiful kitchen. Very spacious and clean too. I view the rest of the house that has two guests bedrooms with a

bathroom in each. There's a main bathroom a dining area then a master bedroom with a walk-in closet a balcony to use to view the sunset and a personal bathroom. Chantel proceeds to take me to the ground floor and there's a man cave. That immediately takes my breath away. I see a bar area too where I can serve my guests drinks. We walk to the back yard and there's a pool by the big garden. The house looks phenomenal.

So do you love it Mr. Skyline?"

RUSS: "I told you not to call me that."

CHANTEL: "Sorry I meant Russ do you like it?"

RUSS: "Sounds better. Yes I more than like it."

CHANTEL: "So let's get into prices....."

We pull the wooden chairs outside the garden.

So the house had damages before and like I said they are all taken good care of...

She opens her file.

I'm pretty sure you saw the furniture inside the house and I'm afraid to say that if you want to buy the house with fully furniture like that it'll cost you a lot than when you buy it without furniture."

RUSS: "So what are the prices for both?"

CHANTEL: "The house with no further it'll cost you 1.5 million rand and with furniture it'll be 2.8 million rand."

RUSS: "Sheesh. That's tough."

CHANTEL: "I can give you a day to sleep on it then the next day you'll let me know your decisions. You should make it quick 'cause I need to place this house on the market again."

I'm really obsessed with this house but it's too much. The price are insane and I'm not ready to buy a house that will leave me broke.

RUSS: "Is it possible if I deselect and browse through another house? I don't think this one is going to work for me."

CHANTEL: "Of course. Here's my card and down below you'll see my personal website. You can click open it and you can get to view different houses and have various of options to choose from."

She says with a smile and gives me her card.

RUSS: "Thank you. I'll be in contact."

She starts to unpack her things from the table and put them inside her bag. She grabs her keys from the table and stands up from her seat. She carries her bag over her left shoulder and looks at me.

CHANTEL: "I have to leave and attend to other clients.

You can feel free and call me anytime you want but don't waste my time okay?"

Then her phone begins to ring. I guess that's duty calls.

CHANTEL: "Hello...Yes?...Okay I'm on my way."

RUSS: "I can tell you're one busy lady."

CHANTEL: "That's how running a business is like....

She cups my hand and gives me the house keys.

I trust you enough to leave my keys with you. You can have all the time to yourself and who knows? Maybe you can risk it all and buy the house."

She says as she walks to the front door and closes it behind her. Man I love this house it's so warm and comforting but is it really that worth that amount of money? I take my phone and dial my mom's numbers and without a minute she replies with an excitement.

MOM: "Son!"

RUSS: "Hey ma."

MOM: "I was talking to your sister in few minutes ago and she was keeping me posted about work. Everything is fine."

RUSS: "That's great! I knew she can handle it."

MOM: "I'm very proud of her."

RUSS: "Me too. I'll just give her a call by the end of today and check how she's doing and see if she needs any help."

MOM: "I'll appreciate that but I really want her to learn and work on her own...."

I love how my mom raises her children especially when it comes to my younger sisters. She doesn't want them to rely on anyone but to teach and train them to be independent so they can provide anything they want.

And why did you call? Is this a sign of missing mommy?"

RUSS: "Yeah I do miss you a lot and I love you so much. Don't forget that but I need some advice. I thought maybe you can help."

MOM: "I'm listening."

RUSS: "There's a house I saw today and it's very nice. You gonna love it as well but the price is just too much."

I further tell her in details about the house and what it consists of.

MOM: "No Russ that's bloody expensive. Why do you need a house for anyway? You can just get yourself a regular house and leave anything else behind."

RUSS: "I know but I can't help to fall in love with it. I want to make it mine ma."

MOM: "Son listen to me. You have no job yet and you're taking the routine to finish with your studies so if you buy that house you'll be left with nothing."

I sigh. She's right

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you'll be left with nothing."

I sigh. She's right but my heart is still on that house. I want to stay in that house.

RUSS: "I know mom but this house will be a lifetime investment. I won't buy any house after this unless I get married and raise my kids in a different environment."

MOM: "You don't need to buy a house worth that money my baby. Your father and I started very little so I think you should too. You don't need rush to things that are still going to take years to come. Right now you should consider yourself and your financial well-being."

Truth needs to be told and that's exactly what my mom is doing. I don't need a bigger house at the moment. I run my eyes around this house and I'm not risking to stay alone. That itself may cause depression and stress.

RUSS: "Yeah you're right. I'll see what else I can find."

MOM: "Then once you have a wife you can settle for a bigger house...."

I nod. That's fair enough.

And where's my daughter in-law? I haven't heard you talk about her."

I laugh at the thought of her referring my friend as her daughter in-law. I knew telling her about Melissa would be a problem and she's already given her a title. Maybe my mom feels like she's good for me even though they haven't met but I like it.

RUSS: "She's around but stays far from me. I can't reach out to her place."

MOM: "So you haven't met her yet. That's what you're saying?"

RUSS: "There's always a way ma. I'll meet her eventually. I just need to time pull out a plan."

She sighs.

MOM: "I just hope she's real and not a catfish."

I laugh.

RUSS: "Mom she's not. Trust me."

MOM: "Okay I should get going and thanks for calling son. It was nice hearing your voice once again."

RUSS: "Don't worry momma. I will do this more often."

We say our goodbyes and blow each kisses. After I take another look at the house and leave it locked after some time.

BACK AT THE HOTEL.

I lay my head on the couch facing upward. This house situation really stresses me out. I want to buy the house and keep it but

at the same time I don't want to leave myself broke. It's pointless since I have no one to share the apartment with and besides I'm too young to be owning that huge apartment. I guess I should really slow down on this one. I grab my phone that is on the coffee table and start to call Chantel. It rings the third time and she answers.

RUSS: "Chantel? It's me Russ."

CHANTEL: "That was quick. I didn't expect your call so soon."

RUSS: "I think I know what I'm looking for now."

CHANTEL: "Are you keeping the house?"

RUSS: "I hate to disappoint you but no I'm not. It's a little overwhelming for me."

CHANTEL: "Oh.."

She says in a low voice. She sounds really disappointed.

RUSS: "But wait I have something else in mind and I was thinking I should get like a smaller apartment than this one."

CHANTEL: "Oh okay! No problem..."

All of a sudden she enlightens.

You'll browse select which one you want then you'll let me know and prices will be written under the picture of the house.

RUSS: "Thank you."

She hangs up and I grab my laptop that is on the couch. I connect to the Wi-Fi and give myself enough time to look through Chantel's personal house website. After going through to each and every house I come across to the one that won't drain my pockets and I'm excited for it. It is suitable for a student like me. It has one bedroom suit with a bathroom a kitchen dining area and a free space just in case you want to use it for something else. It states that its fully equipped and with an affordable price. The neighborhood is different from the one I was at. It is just an ordinary neighborhood. Less friendly but less dangerous too. I want this house so bad. I'm left with two nights to leave. My two weeks is over. I check the time and it's already late but I don't care. I phone call her again.

CHANTEL: "Yes?"

Yes? That's not a good way to say "hello".

RUSS: "You don't sound okay."

CHANTEL : "It's nothing. May I help you?"

RUSS: "Yeah. I just wanted to tell you I'm down
for the house that is located in Greenstone Hill."

CHANTEL: "The one that is half a million?"

RUSS: "Yes and I was hoping if we can perhaps meet up to view the house?"

CHANTEL: "Okay. I'll give you the location and
we'll meet there...."

She hang up on me before I can say anything. I
can tell she's not in her best mood and I just wonder what bothered her. I
take my things and quickly hit the road. I drive to the location and meet
Chantel coming out from her grey Mercedes. It looks portable and good for her.

Come with me....

We enter through the gate and walk towards the
house and she unlocks the door.

Welcome in. Again"

She stands to the side to allow me to get in. As soon as I lay my foot in that house a smile sneak out on my face. She takes me throughout the whole house process and did some house tours. A five room? Not bad.

And that's it."

RUSS: "Write the house off."

CHANTEL: "Does this mean you're taking it?"

She asks in excitement and with a biggest smile I've never seen in her before.

RUSS: "Yes. It's now mine."

CHANTEL: "Okay okay let me give you the business bank details to transfer the money then do the paperwork."

RUSS: "When can I move in?"

CHANTEL: "You can move in now but as long as you won't forget to pay me...."

She gives me the banking details and I transfer money

to the business account. She then gives me few paperwork to sign and making sure the house is under my name and it will soon be written off the market.

And we're done here Mr. Skyline. The house is now officially yours....

I guess she won't stop to call me that so I'll let her be. She gives me house keys and congratulates me with a friendly hug I suppose.

I hope you enjoy your new house."

RUSS: "I will. Thank you so much for this. I wouldn't have found this place without you."

CHANTEL: "You're welcome."

She takes her bags and that rings a bell to me that she's planning to leave.

RUSS: "Are you leaving already?"

CHANTEL: "Yeah why?"

RUSS: "I thought maybe we can pop some champagne and call it for a celebration?"

CHANTEL: "Oh I would love that..."

She takes a seat on the couch then I head to the kitchen to grab two glasses and a bottle of champagne. I don't know who these belonged to but I found them inside the kitchen cabinet sealed inside the box. I rinse them with hot water in the kitchen sink for safety purposes.

Where did you get that?"

RUSS: "I don't know. I just found these from the cabinets."

CHANTEL: "I've never seen that bottle before."

I shrug my shoulders.

RUSS: "I guess it's been waiting for us to drink it..."

She laughs. I pop the champagne and pour it in the glasses. We begin to lift them up high.

Cheers?"

CHANTEL: "Cheers..."

We bring together our glasses and take a sip. We enjoy our company together until it is time for her to leave. I walk her out to the door and straight to her car.

So this is it? We're no longer going to see each other."

RUSS: "What? No. You can always come and visit me whenever you're free."

CHANTEL: "Thank you so much and I'm glad I met you."

She gives me a hug and my face meets hers. Our bodies get too attached and closer to each other and I can feel the warmth from her breath.

I...I should go."

She tries to break away from my arms and she manages to. She gets inside her car and starts the engine.

RUSS: "Sorry about that."

I shy away and the back of my neck with my hand.

CHANTEL: "Don't worry about it."

I wave my hand goodbye.

RUSS: "See you when you come back for me."

She laughs and waves her hand back and leaves. I gather myself together and get inside the house. It is very cold outside and so I can't wait any longer. I walk back inside the house.

It looks pretty empty with the missing furniture and cold again after Chantel left. I take my car keys and leave to the hotel. As soon as I walk in I grab my suitcases to pack all my clothes. I still have time to move in to my new place so I take everything that belongs to me and empty the room until it looks the way it was. I say my last goodbyes to the receptionist and I can tell she's a little bit sad to see me leave. We were getting to know each other so well. Sometimes I would stop by and get her favorite food from KFC but that will be gone now. I give her the keys that belong to my room.

RECEPTIONIST: "Thank you so much sir. Hopefully you come back again."

She says with a smile and keeps it professional.

I get inside the car and head to the grocery store to get some stuff I can use to prepare supper. I buy a two-plate stove and few cutlery. Today I'm not in the mood for junk food but home-cooked

meal is calling my name. I buy everything that'll need to make a stewing beef brown rice served with green salad and snacks for watching Netflix. As I make it to the till the fat looking old lady with too much makeup on her face and a messed up wig on her head gives me the dirty looks. I feel very uncomfortable but wait patiently for her to scan my groceries. I look at her name tag and she's Grace.

GRACE: "Do you need any plastic big boy?"

RUSS: "Yes ma'am..."

She scans the last items and one plastic bag and the packer nicely puts my groceries altogether. I give her my card and she places it aside.

What are you doing?"

GRACE: "Shh come here. Let me whisper something naughty to your ear."

RUSS: "Nah. Can I get my card back and leave."

GRACE: "Look in here. I know you won't resist this."

She leans over for me to see her cleavage and a disgusted look appears on my face. She's feeling herself as she keeps bouncing

them. I look around in embarrassment to check if someone's watching and it's only just a few people surrounding us but they're standing in different tills. I

don't love doing shopping at night but I'm forced to. I can't go to sleep with an empty stomach.

RUSS: "Look I have a wife and kids at home waiting for me. Now will you give me back my card so I can leave this place?"

GRACE: "But I don't see any ring on your finger. Are you playing me sweetheart?"

She says in her old tired granny voice. I don't know why this old woman is acting like this. I'm sure she has kids and grandchildren and I don't think they know she's sexually seducing customers during her work hours. What an disgusting thing to do as an old woman. She's really a pervert.

RUSS: "If I don't leave this place in the next five minutes I'm calling your boss...."

She sits back up from her seat and swipes my card annoyed but I don't careless.

"Thank you Grace. See? That wasn't so hard. Enjoy your day."

I say with a smirk on my face and leave her with
an angry face. I walk out the store and uber back home. I unbox the stove and
start cooking. I connect my phone from my Bluetooth speaker. I choose to play old
RNB songs and nothing beats someone who enjoys cooking while there's music
playing in the background. That hypes me up and switches my mood swiftly like
the motion the sea.

INSERT 16.

MELISSA.

School has been hectic. Especially when we're close to writing our tests. I've been spending so much time on my studies and to the gym too. I even made a time schedule that states what I should do for the day and what not. My relationship with Noxolo has never been good. We barely hang around or even talk to each other anymore. Whenever she sees me with her best friend Thando she will ignore or be mad at her for no good reason and it really bothers me that the friendship they once had is no longer the same

and that's because of me. As much as I want Noxolo to like me back but it just wouldn't work. That girl really hates me and I don't know what I've done to her. Things were great between us right before Russ came in the picture. I don't know if she likes him but if she does then she must go and express her feelings to him but it'll will not sit well with me. I think I like Russ.

Talking him every now and then makes me to desperately want to move out of my house so I can see him but I wouldn't stop Noxolo from getting Russ because he's still not mine yet. Enough about Noxolo and her boring issues and lets talk about the improvement of my body. Lately I've been noticing a huge difference with my body. Not only just me but everyone at school and my mom notices too. My boobs have grown wider and changed its shape changed from being saggy to firm and lost breast weight too! What's more exciting I lost weight to my entire body but the booty keeps getting bigger and firmer because of the squats I've been considering to do at the gym. Pete has really been a helping hand throughout this process. I've explained everything to him and he understood. He made me work my hard ass off and that completely changed everything from how people looked at me and how I can get compliments from them. The following day my mom decided to take me for shopping as she is given a day off from work.

MOM: "Are you done?"

MELISSA: "Yeah."

I take my blouse just in case the weather

changes. I grab my purse and left the house. While we're in the car my mom breaks the silence.

MOM: "Are you alright?"

MELISSA: "Yeah."

I keep my eyes glued to the window.

MOM: "You don't sound happy."

She says as she looks at me then concentrates back to the road. I sigh.

MELISSA: "At school things have been really tough. I really can't stand Noxolo with her attitude towards me."

MOM: "She still gives you the disgust looks?"

MELISSA: "Yeah and she just wouldn't stop..."

I adjust my sitting position up straight and face my mom.

She hates me to the core and what makes me to feel so

terrible about this whole thing is her trying to think I'm there to ruin their friendship."

MOM: "What? Why?"

She looks at me with worry.

MELISSA: "They don't hang around like they used to. They barely do anything the best friends would do and it's all my fault."

MOM: "Just give them time and probably she will come through her senses one day."

As if she would. That girl never comes to her senses and realize where she had gone wrong. Now how can she possibly do that?

MELISSA: "I hope so...."

She continues to drive until we make it to the mall and park the car to the parking lot.

MOM: "Let's forget about friendship problems and enjoy ourselves today!"

Oh gosh she's so full of drama and all of a sudden the attention from people that were walking to their cars is drawn to

us.

Okay let's go....

I grab her right hand and drag her inside the mall. My mom has so much energy running in her immune system. We went to each and every store shopping for the latest clothes and shoes. My mom and I are a fan of sneakers so we decided to enter to Sportscene to look out for few items that we'll somehow like.

I hope this this the last store we're getting into. I mean look at these bags."

I say as I reveal the bags to her.

MOM: "They aren't that much though but I'll take it easy on you today. We'll grab just few more items in here then we head home."

MELISSA: "I'm even hungry."

I frown playfully.

MOM: "Let's make it quick then."

We take the bags with us while we look thought

the clothes shelves and the shoe displays. I go to the Adidas brand section and see this grey two piece jumpsuit with a hoodie. It's not really my style as

I had troubles with my weight. While I'm in my thoughts I hear a voice approaching me behind my back.

FEMALE VOICE: "That is very nice..."

I can't really recognize it and so I take a turn to face the person who's talking to me. To my surprise it's just a total stranger. I don't recall who she is but she quickly recognizes me.

Hey. Do I know you from somewhere?"

MELISSA: "No you don't and I don't think we've ever met before."

She takes a while to think of something that will help me remember her I guess.

FEMALE: "No man I know you. Aren't you James ex girlfriend?"

MELISSA: "Yes this is she and who are you?"

I'm now lost and confused.

FEMALE: "I'm Regina. His new girlfriend."

She smiles and gives me a hand for a handshake but
I just look at it with disgust and refuse to touch it.

MELISSA: "You?..."

I ask in anger and pointing my finger at her
while squinting my eyes.

You're that girl who James was cheating me with while we
were still together?"

REGINA: "Woah take it easy. I can explain."

MELISSA: "What's there to explain huh?"

REGINA: " I had no idea he was seeing you."

MELISSA: "Stop lying to me. You know exactly what you
were doing."

REGINA: "Okay I may have known you by name and
everything but never in a minute or a second James told me about the relationship
you had with him. Do you really think if I knew he had a girlfriend I'd still

stay and be with him?"

MELISSA: "Well many don't mind to do that because of love. So you knew exactly he was in a relationship with me..."

And after a minute a memory hit me.

And oh wait. Remember the time he had a house party to his parents house?"

REGINA: "Yes I do."

MELISSA: "I was at the bathroom with him doing some freaky couple stuff until you barged in and disturbed us. Didn't you think I could possibly be his girlfriend?"

REGINA: "No. I honestly though you guys had nothing serious. Just friends pleasing each other and having fun. That's all..

She starts playing with her fingers and bow down her head in shame.

I'm really sorry. I didn't know you were already his and it wasn't my intentions to destroy what you guys had. If I had to reverse time I would."

I sigh.

MELISSA: "He never loved me anyways and I was clearly not his type. Look at the difference between the two of us..."

I look at her and look back at me.

Your body looks better."

REGINA: "What? No. You got to be joking. Girl you look at you!"

She says with a warm smile.

MELISSA: "Ugh don't play with me. We both know you're better looking than me."

REGINA: "Hold on a sec..."

She takes a step back and takes a look at me.

Not to sound offensive but you lost some weight."

MELISSA: "Thought you wouldn't notice."

REGINA: "I didn't and I must say you look amazing Melissa.

Your skin even glows and your body is upgrading from...

She keeps quiet to think of something more

accurate to say.

from good to better."

MELISSA: "Thank you."

I say with a smile.

REGINA: "I really like the confidence in you. It's

like you changed from a caterpillar to a butterfly."

MELISSA: "Thank you. That's really swee..."

Before I can finish my sentence a male voice

interferes.

MALE VOICE: "Babe you here?"

REGINA: "In here baby."

He follows the voice to heads to our direction

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you here?"

REGINA: "In here baby."

He follows the voice to heads to our direction

and of course it's James.

JAMES: "I've been looking for you everywhere."

He gives her a soft kiss on her left cheek.

MELISSA: "Hello to you too James."

He slowly lifts up his head from Regina's and
his eyes freeze to his long time ex Melissa.

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JAMES.

I look at Melissa in wide shock. Why the hell is she with my girlfriend in the exact same room? I thought these two were enemies.

JAMES: "Hi."

REGINA: "Babe that's too harsh. So you're just going to stand there and say hi?"

JAMES: "What else do you want me to say? Must I go that extreme and greet her with a hug?"

I say with annoyance.

REGINA: "Let me look to the other store. You'll meet me at Factory clothing and Melissa it was nice to see you again."

She smiles and gives me a kiss on the lips. She leaves and it's now myself and Melissa.

JAMES: "I see you've met my girlfriend."

MELISSA: "For the second time now. I never thought you're into blondies too."

JAMES: "I'm not but she's a different blonde."

MELISSA: "I see."

She says with a sad tone and I try to step close to her but she takes a step back. I sigh deeply. When I look at her it hurts me. I hate every little wrong things I've done to her. She never deserved anyone like me but she continued to love me for the person that I am with all my flaws and I was too late to recognize she was all I wanted in a girl.

JAMES: "I'm really sorry for everything I've done to you. I know it won't make any difference but please forgive me."

MELISSA: "When exactly were you going to apologize huh?"

JAMES: "I won't lie to you I don't know but I needed time and a chance to meet up with you and here I am now with you. Just the way I wanted it to be."

MELISSA: "What you did to me was terrible. I gave you everything. I made sure I provide birthday gifts for you and even on special occasions. I introduced you to my entire family and friends but what did you do? You went all out to cheat on me with a girl who looks nothing like me."

She starts rubbing her eyes. Is she crying?

JAMES: "I know and I'm sorry. I think I was still immature by that time and I'm sure I didn't know what love is until I became this older."

MELISSA: "Grown? No you're not. In fact you haven't grown yet because if you did you would've come by my house and asked for an apology but you did nothing. Or at least phone call me because you had my numbers."

JAMES: "I was afraid as to how your family will look at me. Especially with your mom. She loved and adored me so much. I didn't know how I was going to answer all the questions your mom would ask me and same applies to now. I don't know why I cheated on you."

MELISSA: "Let me help you out. You cheated because I wasn't good enough for you. You made fun of my boobs do you remember that? You told me how ugly I am and that nobody will ever wish to be in a relationship with me. Do you remember all that!?!?"

And she starts crying.

You never loved me yet you went on to be with me. Why didn't you at least tell me right before you attempt to sleep with me that other day?....

She tries to wipe off her tears but they keep popping out. I pull her gently to the back so that people don't see us or hear her sobs.

I kept asking you every single day if you do love me and what will be your response?"

JAMES: "That I love you."

My tone and mood just change to sadness. I can feel the pain she is going through and now I'm aware of how she really felt about me. She was genuine and I treated her like shit.

MELISSA: "See? Why were you toying with my feelings? Why couldn't you be honest?"

JAMES: "Its just that you're a great woman Melissa. You're a one kind and generous person I've ever been with in my life. You are so different

and that's very adorable but I'm really sorry. I'm sorry for my words and actions. I know I'm a jerk and you have every right to be mad at me but I'm truly sorry. I'm sorry for not being a better man and now I do realize that you deserve so much more. I'm sorry if I made you feel unwanted. Please find it in your heart to forgive me."

I find myself holding back in my tears. As hard as it is but I tried to.

MELISSA: "I forgave you a long time ago and that helped me to be at ease and to move on with my life. I thank you at some point because I don't give other dudes like you a chance to give me sleepless night or cry myself to sleep at night. You made me to fully focus on myself and to always put myself first because nobody cares. I also thank you for who you are now because I can tell your girlfriend is perfectly happy to have you in her life. You make her happy and I really hope you can keep it that way."

Her words really makes me to feel guilty for what I've done but I always loved her. Maybe not showing it to her but at least I would always let her know sometimes. Even if she thinks I didn't but I truly did love her.

JAMES: "I feel more like an idiot now. I don't know what really got in to me but truly speaking I would've done things right if I didn't get time to fool around with other people but hey I'm re..."

Before I can say anything my phone rings and
its Regina.

REGINA: "Aren't you coming?"

JAMES: "Yes I'll be there in a sec."

She hangs up. I wish I
can have a conversation with Melissa but I should go.

MELISSA: "Was that Regina?"

She wipes off her tears and fakes a smile.

JAMES: "Yeah. She's waiting for me."

MELISSA: "It was nice to see you again."

JAMES: "How about I take your numbers?...."

I give her my phone to type in her numbers and gives
it back to my hands.

Thanks. See you and take care."

I take my shopping bags and walk out of the store. It hurts to leave her standing alone and my heart want to keep eyeing on her but I can't. I must go to my Regina. My name is James Scott. I'm in love with Regina Roberts. We've been together for nearly a year. We're currently looking for a place to stay together since we want to be together. I'm 26 years and I have a job. I've been working on a farm when I was 15. My family is not so financially stable so I had to work and study at the same time so I can help provide for them. I'm skinny but a good looking dude with a honey skin tone. When people look at me they would assume I'm gay by judging my appearance. It's been bothering me but I learned to accept

it. I keep my body in shape and fit. I have natural black eyes and I'm a 6 feet 1 inches tall (185cm).

INSERT 17.

MELISSA

Nothing hurts to see your ex loving someone else the same way you had expected them to love you. It really breaks my heart to see him with someone else for over two damn years and for me it lasted just only for seven months. How pathetic is that? I brush it off in my head and take a deep breath. I don't care about his love life anymore. He decided to move and I should do that too. I look for my around the shop and I find her fitting a pair of sneakers. She searches around my hands to see if I picked out something for myself but it's got nothing. I don't feel like shopping for myself today.

MOM: "You're not getting anything for yourself?"

MELISSA: "No. I think I'm fine. I can come back later

when I want something.”

I say with my head face down. I don’t want her to look at my face. She’ll notice I was crying so I try by all means to keep my head down and glance at her at times.

MOM: “Is everything okay?”

MELISSA: “Yeah. I just need to use a bathroom.”

MOM: “Okay baby. I think I know the closest.”

She says with a polite voice and pulls me by my hand. I really love that jumpsuit but I don’t want to leave this store regretful so I grab her the wrist and she stops from moving from her tracks. I go over to that jumpsuit and show it to her as she joined in the queue.

MELISSA: “I love this but I have a feeling it’ll look uglier on me.”

MOM: “You haven’t even tried it out yet.”

MELISSA: “I’ve already judged how it’ll look on me. My extra meat will show and I don’t want that.”

MOM: "Don't be ridiculous. Just go and try on that outfit."

I get inside the fitting room and put on the jumpsuit. I won't lie it looks pretty good on me but the boob part looks bigger so I head to clothing rags again to choose a lower size. I put it on and it looks tight on me but I love it. I love how it cups my boobs and how it curves my body. I do few spins by the mirror and change to my casual clothes. I give it to my mom and she pays for it.

Later on

we go for lunch. She buys my favorite cheese burger and fries meal from McDonald's and she buys herself freshly baked rolls and full chicken meal from Nando's. I rush to the toilet and sit on the toilet seat. I can't help but to cry in tears again. This time I let them out. I'm not holding in anymore. The more I cry about something and not bottle up the more I feel better about myself. My head brings back all the memories I went through with James.

Flash back.....

What's going on? I thought he was supposed to be at school. I sent him a text to prepare himself 'cause I was on my way to fetch him. The front kitchen door was left unattended. It was wide open. My heart

skipped a beat thinking something bad had happened. I heard noises. At first I thought it was a TV but I walked to the sitting room and the TV was off. The place was empty. I thought maybe I'm starting to lose it but these noises kept becoming louder and louder. I followed the voice and the door was halfway opened. I opened it and these idiots didn't hear a crack from the door. I stood there watching this woman grinding herself on what's supposed to be mine. She rode his dick as if she's owning every piece of it. My heart broke down to see James fucking another woman. Her screams were so loud that I can feel every inch of his dick inside her. I saw James crawling his feet and groans loudly. He held her waist tightly and kept pushing her deeply in his dick. I guess he was enjoying her. My ears were filled with tears. I shut them down and clear my throat. He stops and notices my presence. He roughly threw away the girl from the other side of the bed and came rushing to me. He tried to touch me but I backed away.

JAMES: "Babe I can explain. It's not what you think it is."

MELISSA: "Of course it's what I think it is. You're butt naked and she's naked. We were supposed to be leaving for school and this is what you're doing? You cheat on me?"

I broke down and cry.

JAMES: "I'm sorry. I didn't do this intentionally and

you weren't supposed to find out this way."

MELISSA: "What are you talking about James?"

He sighs.

JAMES: "Can you let me touch you?"

MELISSA: "No. I need you tell me what's going on?"

JAMES: "I needed a better way to tell you this but since you're here I might as well just ask you to pack your things."

MELISSA: "What?"

JAMES: "I'm breaking up with you."

How can he be so heartless? He could've saved this for another day and let me digest what I just saw but I guess he didn't care about me. He just wanted to make me feel the pain two times worse. I looked at the girl hiding behind the sheets. She looked at me too and I can see her cheeks getting wide. My frustrations crew higher and I wanted to beat the hell out of her bur I'm not really a fighter. I don't know how to fight someone physically. There was a pot plant next to me and I threw it at her. James got very tight and upset with me. He threw me out of the house and I

never bothered to go back to school. I went home and cried myself to sleep. No one was home so I had all the time to heal and get better.

End of flash back.

I hear a loud bang thought the door. I pretend to get dressed and flush the toilet to make it seem like I was busy. I grab the extra tissue to wipe my tears and I unlock the door. I find this young lady standing at the door. She looks like a four year old.

YOUNG LADY: "Are you okay? I heard you cry. Do you need help? Are you also bleeding?"

What on Earth is she talking about? I laugh at that thought of bleeding.

MELISSA: "I'm just tired. I need to go back home and sleep. What's your name?"

YOUNG LADY: " Mia."

We hear a toilet flush form the next door. A

White woman comes out fastening her belt on her jeans. She looks at where Mia

and I are standing and she snaps lowly.

WOMAN: "What did I tell you about talking to strangers?"

YOUNG LADY: "But she was crying."

WOMAN: "That's not your business. Let's go."

She pulls her by the hand and looks at with disgusted looks. I don't know what's going on in this democratic country. We still have people who are racist and it really needs to come to an end. I watch her leave with Mia in her hand. She looks back at me and waves goodbye. I smile at her and do the same. I wish she doesn't grow up and be like that woman. I walk to the basin and splash water on my face numerously to help cool myself down. I grab few paperwork towels and use it to wipe my face. I look at myself in the mirror and I'm a little messed up but my mom won't notice. I rush back to her and I join her in the table.

MOM: "What took you so long?"

I can't possibly tell my mom I was crying. She would want to ask me lots of questions and I'm not in it for today.

MELISSA: "The toilets were occupied. I had to stand in the line and wait for the next person to finish her business."

MOM: "There are so many toilets in this mall. You could've checked and went to the other one."

MELISSA: "It's fine mom. I didn't want to waste more time..."

While we're eating she looks at me as if she wants to say something but she holds it back.

Why you looking at me like that?"

MOM: "I don't know but there's something I still don't understand. You've were acting all happy and excited but after a while you just went off."

MELISSA: "Like I said don't worry. I'm fine and I'm sure you can see that."

I continue to bite off my cheese burger and she's taking a bite of her fries.

MOM: "Okay I won't ask anymore but just know if something bothers you I'm here. There's no need to keep everything to yourself whereas you can find help as possible from your mom..."

She says out of concern.

I love you okay?"

And she starts to hold my hand that is laying on
the table.

MELISSA: "Me too."

I really want to tell my mom about the incident but
I know she will be not only be mad at James but mad at me too for not telling
her right on time while he was still with me in the store. I'm afraid if I tell
her she will start acting all crazy and look for him to each and every store
and I don't want her to cause a scene. I don't want to keep running behind my
ex looking for clarification of his worst mistakes. I'm better off without
those people.

MOM: "And about the issue of you moving to Joburg I
had spoken with the school and good news is that you get to be moved to a new
school but the bad news is it might take a process because they still have to
finalize a space for you."

MELISSA: "What? Mom that's great!"

I say as I jump from my chair and stepping my feet on the ground for excitement .

MOM: "Geez okay sit down!"

She laughs and I take back my seat.

MELISSA: "Mom that is great! If it takes me to wait I can gladly do that."

MOM: "Slow down. What's your problem?"

She laughs and I try by all means to bring myself together but something brings me out of curiosity. My dad.

MELISSA: "Have you spoke with dad?"

MOM: "Not yet. I'm still trying to find a way to make him accept this whole situation. I don't think he's gonna like it."

MELISSA: "But he has to understand. This is my life and I have every right to do what makes me happy.

MOM: "Okay young lady. I can see you've grown so much."

MELISSA: "I'm just standing my grounds for once in my life."

MOM: "Yeah. We should just let you guys be and live your life the way you guys want it to be. I mean look at your sister. She is a grown-up woman and we don't give her a chance to do what people at her age are doing. We want to prevent her from being exposed to toxic lifestyles and so do you."

MELISSA: "She has been talking about that and its affecting her life. She wants to be free mama just like everybody else."

MOM: "She did say that? Oh my poor baby but why isn't she talking to us?"

MELISSA: "I don't know. Maybe she's afraid to. You should talk to her but don't say you heard from me. She'll be upset."

MOM: "I think I should seriously discuss this matter with your dad and I'm praying he will visualize it the same way I do."

MELISSA: "I hope so too mama. But let's not make any assumptions so soon. If he's stubborn then I'll ask aunt Zolile to talk to him."

MOM: "Why does everything has to be dealt with your aunt? What am I here for?"

MELISSA: "She's the one my dad listens to the most."

MOM: "Oh so that means I'm not doing enough as his wife?"

She gets offended. I'm not really saying she's not doing a good job as his wife but my dad tends to listen to aunt Zolile most of the time. I don't know what talking she has on her but once she utters a word to my dad he listens and changes his mind.

MELISSA: "That's not what I said."

MOM: "Then don't worry baby. Leave this to me. I know how to handle my husband."

She winks at me and we continue to enjoy our meal
in a beautiful and lovely peace. After some time we go to Krippy Kush to grab
some donuts then left the mall as soon as we realize it's getting very late.

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REGINA.

As we continue to shop around I notice James

hasn't been himself lately after he returned back from his ex- girlfriend Melissa. I don't know if she had done something wrong to him or they've been arguing all this time but his mood literally changed to something else. Whenever I buy something and ask whether we should get it or not he just says anything and I want what is good for the both of us but he barely lays down his opinions about certain things and that really bothers me.

We are doing our final shopping to Woolworths to shop for groceries. I shop alone as usual and he pays. We walk towards the car and I'm expecting him to open the door for me like he used to but he didn't. He just got in his seat and place his head on the car seat. What the hell is wrong with him? Nevertheless I open the door for me and place the shopping bags at the backseat and turn on the air cooler.

JAMES: "No no babe please turn that off."

REGINA: "Oh babe please turn that off."

REGINA: "Oh so you're now talking to me?"

He looks at me surprised.

JAMES: "What are you talking about?"

REGINA: "You don't notice anything strange about you?"

JAMES: "No. I'm perfectly fine."

REGINA: "Stop lying to me. We both know you're not fine. Ever since you met up with Melissa you've been acting strange as hell. Did she do something?"

JAMES: "What are you on about exactly?"

REGINA: "I should be asking you what happened when I left you behind with her because clearly there going on with you two."

I fold my hands and frown.

JAMES: "Well nothing happened. We just talked and that's all."

He starts the car engine and drives off from the parking lot. Just like that. He never proceeded to say something. I have so many questions in my head and I don't even know where to start.

REGINA: "No. That's not it. You have a lot to tell me about and I'm all ears...."

He continues to drive and says nothing. I feel like I'm not existing to him anymore.

So you're just going to give me the silent treatment?"

JAMES: "I don't know what you expect me to say because I just told you nothing happened between me and Melissa. Just because I want to be quiet it doesn't mean something was going on."

He's so unbelievable right now.

REGINA: "So what? I must excuse myself and give you some time and space to yourself?"

JAMES: "Please. I'm begging you."

Wow. I swear something must be going on.

REGINA: "I can't believe you'll ask me to do that."

JAMES: "Don't take it bad but I really mean it. I would appreciate it if you leave me alone in peace."

REGINA: "Are you serious right now? You're getting rid

of me?"

I say with a sad tone.

JAMES: "No not like that ba..."

REGINA: "Just save it! And kindly do me a favor and do a turnaround because at this point I really want to go back home."

JAMES: "You won't be needing any of your stuff?"

REGINA: "No it's fine. I'll fetch them tomorrow."

He makes a U-Turn and as he keeps one hand on the starting wheel and he brings the other to my thighs. We don't talk almost the entire drive. He keeps glancing at me and I don't give him any of my attention.

JAMES: "Babe you mad at me?"

REGINA: "You expect me to be what? Happy? Excited?"

JAMES: "Just be your normal self babe. Look I'm really sorry if I've been acting weird. I really it was easy to hide my feelings for that long and make things right but I failed to do that."

REGINA: "You still have feelings for her? You regret why you left her to be with me? Is that why you're so tight?"

JAMES: "No don't say that. C'mon babe. You know I love only you."

He gently rubs my thigh but I remove it aggressively. I don't want him to touch me.

REGINA: "Just drive me off James."

I didn't want to say much but to just go home and relax and prevent myself from saying something I'll regret at the end of the day. He did exactly what I asked him to do and stops by my house. I take my purse and grab the rest of my stuff from the backseat.

JAMES: "Need a help with those?.."

I ignore him and continue to search the plastic that have my belongings and close the door. I walk towards the back door and I can hear him talking from the distance.

You're just going to leave me like that? Not even a goodbye kiss?"

Whatever James keeps saying to me it sounds like
is speaking in gibberish. I don't understand each and every word he says. I
walk to my house until I make an entrance and my dog runs to me as it sees me
approaching through the door. It starts to shake its tail and I can tell she missed
me. I keel down and gives her a rub on its puffy covered skin.

"I miss you too girl."

I had Daisy as a valentine's gift from James. He
knew how much love I have for dogs and so he thought it'll be a good idea to
get one for me. I loved the dog from the very first day it was introduced to
me. I felt the connection with it and named her Daisy because she loves being
around nature and how she loves being around the park so that's how the name
Daisy came across. She starts to lick my face and as soon as she's done I
refill her food and water inside her two separate steel bowls. I rush to
my room to take a quick shower. Then I wrap the towel around me. As I make my
way to the bedroom I hear a male voice coming from a dinning area that sounds very
familiar. I follow the sound of the voice and to my surprise I find James chit
chatting with my dog as if the dog can listen and understand everything he
says.

REGINA: "What do you want?"

I ask in disgust as I'm standing by the dining

area doorframe.

JAMES: "I want you..."

He stands up and comes to my direction.

You can't just leave like that and I can't let you go like this. You want me as much as I want you."

REGINA: "I said I'm fine. I don't know why you act like you care."

JAMES: "I want you okay? I'll be happy to see that bubbly and happy Regina again. Not the one I'm seeing right now. Look at you."

He takes a step closer and brings his hands to me.

REGINA: "No. Hold it right there. I don't want you coming near me."

He stops and gives me the sad look.

JAMES: "What on earth did I do to you that makes you to treat me like this? I realized I was wrong and I apologized."

REGINA: "How would you feel if I tell you that I'm
distracted by my ex?"

JAMES: "I'd be hurt but I didn't stay anything about
distraction. You just assumed I was because I was quiet being the whole time and
you didn't even bother to ask me what's going on."

REGINA: "I did and how would you pay attention to what
I was saying to you when you have Melissa stuck in your head?"

JAMES: "But at least give me a chance to explain before
you can say anything.

He goes and takes a seat on the couch and faces
his head down.

I'm sorry I made you to feel this way but all this
time while we're in the car I was feeling bad for mistreating Melissa. She was
a good person and I failed to even realize that back then. Comparing my old
self and now I can see the difference and it's all your hard work for changing me
into this person I am today. Now I have the idea of what real love is. I know I
barely have time to appreciate you but I've been working on that. I know I
don't talk much about the person I was because it was never that important
since that old side of me is gone but please forgive me."

I take a seat behind him. Hearing those words from him actually makes me think that there's a possibility he still has feelings for her and he's afraid to admit it but deep down he still has some love for her.

REGINA: "I see. So do you think you guys would've still been together if I wasn't in the picture?"

JAMES: "I doubt that. Wherever she is right wants nothing to do with me. She hates me and I don't blame her."

REGINA: "What else did you guys talk about?"

JAMES: "She said I should really take good care of you and I shouldn't repeat the same mistakes I did to her and do them to you."

How considerate of her. I didn't know she cared about me. That touched my heart. I honestly thought she's hurting and hates me too for cheated on her with James me but its clear she's over that now.

REGINA: "That's very sweet of her. I appreciate that."

JAMES: ".I'm really sorry if I gave you weird

intentions between her and I but I promise you that nobody will take me from you.”

REGINA: ”Its okay. I'm sorry too for making unnecessary accusations. Do you forgive me?”

I stand up from the couch and lay my ass on his lap and cover my hands around his neck.

JAMES: ”I do but just don't do that ever again. Nothing hurts to see someone getting mad at you for something you didn't do.”

REGINA: ”I promise.”

I give him a kiss and as I'm about to break the kiss he press his lips harder on mine. Our tongues are twirling and twisting on each other. He starts to pull me up and unties my towel. My boobs are expose on his face and he suck my nipples taking it all nice and slow. He gives my nipples soft bites and it gives me a shiver down my spine. I can feel my pussy tingling from the inside. As the kiss deepens he stands from the couch and carries me in a bridal style to the bedroom and lays me on the bed. My body shivers as soon as my skin hits the sheets. They feel really cold. All of the sudden James stops the kiss and looks me through my eyes.

JAMES: ”You feeling cold?...”

I nod.

Let's continue our session inside the bed shall we?"

He opens the bed for us and we went on it. We

had an amazing great sex until I couldn't feel my pussy anymore. It felt a bit numb because on the last round we went all crazy to each other until the both of us reached one heck of an amazing orgasm. After we're done we went to take a shower together and I went to the kitchen and prepared supper for us. Later on we watched movies cuddled and had the perfect night ever!

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MELISSA.

Its finally Monday and I'm starting with my

first test today. For the past few weeks I've been preparing myself and I feel

ready. I wake up pretty much early and as I check the time on my phone its

05:15am. Its still early but it's worth it to use this time and revise

everything I've learned and practiced for yesterday. I grab my laptop and start

to switch my mindset from a normal to a focus mode. I revise from my hand written notes until it was 08:00am.

My eyes feel heavy and tired. I can barely lift up my eyes but I pull myself together and pack my stuff. As I'm busy doing so my dad knocks on my door. I leave my door open at times.

MELISSA: "Come in..."

My dad gets in and brings me breakfast in bed for the first time in a longest time.

Okay what's all this?"

DAD: "Food. I thought it'll be a good idea to prepare you a breakfast meal since you're mom left for work early in the morning."

MELISSA: "You made breakfast for me?"

I give him the unreadable look.

DAD: "Yes kiddo. I know how to cook. I just didn't want to make it as a duty to cook. I'm married to your mom and its her responsibility to cook."

MELISSA: "At least you should cook once in a while for the four of us."

I say with a smile as I take my fork and knife and slice the pancake that has chocolate syrup on it. I eat the pancake and immediately melts in my mouth.

DAD: "I will baby."

He gives me a smile and covers his face with his hands. I laugh.

MELISSA: "What are you doing?"

DAD: "How did I do?"

I clap hands and give to him for a handshake.

MELISSA: " I think your cooking is better than moms but don't tell her."

He laughs.

DAD: "I know I'm the champ. Let me leave you here and me prepare myself for work. I'll see you when I return back home."

My mouth was full of pancake and so I nod. After finishing my breakfast meal I wipe my mouth with a diaper. It was deliciously good and you would swear it was made from a restaurant. My dad revealed his hidden skills and I'm still taken by surprise that he can really cook because most of the time my mom would be the one to spend her time everyday in the kitchen cooking for her us but dad would not even once help her. I guess marrying a Zulu man is that you'll get.

I wake up

from my bed and head to the straight to the kitchen to drop off my dish to the kitchen sink. I go to bathroom to take a shower. After some time I put on a Gucci jersey dress that was bought by Thando for my birthday and it's my first time wearing it because it reveals too much on my chest and curve my whole body. The weather looks chilled today and I just want to keep things simple. A dress and black leather boots. I tie my hair into two ponytails and grab my bag then walk out of the house to catch a taxi.

INSERT 18.

THANDO.

LATER AT SCHOOL.

THANDO: "I see my girl right there!"

NOXOLO: "Who?"

THANDO: "Can't you see that girl over there in a blue dress?"

NOXOLO: "Wait? Is that Melissa?"

Her eyes open wide in shock.

THANDO: "Yes!"

I jump off my seat and run to her.

NOXOLO: "Gosh couldn't you wait for her to come for

herself?"

I can tell she sounds annoyed but I don't care
about how she feels about my friend. That's her own problem and not mine.

I keep bumping into people and pushing them sideways
for me to pass through.

"Excuse me excuse
me excuse me"

Until I make it to Melissa who is looking at me
like I'm some sort of a crazy maniac. She laughs.

MELISSA: "What are you doing? I was gonna come by
myself."

THANDO: "Oh hell no! I couldn't wait any longer."

MELISSA: "For what?"

THANDO: "For you. I mean look how beautiful you are in
that dress?"

We start to walk to my table and we find Noxolo

busy with her phone.

MELISSA: "Hey Noxolo."

I can tell she is afraid of her. Her greeting is so low and her voice sounds a bit shaky.

NOXOLO: "What is she doing here? I thought I made it clear I don't her to hangout with us anymore."

She keeps her focus on the phone but Melissa keeps quiet and leaves without saying any word to her.

THANDO: "Why are you like this?"

I ask angrily.

NOXOLO: "I don't want her anywhere near us..."

She stands up and faces me.

She is no good. I hate the fact that she made me look like this terrible person to Russ. He's no longer answering any of my calls or my text messages and whose fault is that? It's Melissa's."

I knew it! Finally she admits.

THANDO: "So all this time you were building hate for
Melissa because of Russ? Are you dumb?"

NOXOLO: "What else can it be?"

THANDO: "You a psycho you know that?"

NOXOLO: "Excuse me?"

Her facial expression changes to anger.

THANDO: "Yes I said it out loud you are crazy..."

I can tell she's annoyed her to the core and I
want to keep pushing it till the limit.

You don't even know this Russ guy as yet but you be
mad at Melissa as if you have made things official with him. One more thing how
do you even know its Melissa's fault? What if Russ decided to distance himself
away from you 'cause you're friends with her?....

She keeps quiet and I can see her slowing down
her temper.

Majority of the guys find it a turn off if a lady makes a move on them first so clearly Russ may be one of those guys and the fact is that Melissa likes Russ wholeheartedly which I'm so sure that Russ has the same feelings for her too. Please don't ruin this for her. Let's give her a chance to explore what love is and we must give her the kind of support she needs if she faces some struggles here and there but I'm not saying they're in a relationship. I know your talkative self will be going to Russ and tell him things I didn't say."

She laughs.

NOXOLO: "I heard you. Very loud and clear but from what I know Russ is not into her. If he did we would be talking a different story right now. Yes I noticed that I'm wrong for blaming her with what is happening between me and him but what if she badmouthed me to him? What if she noticed that I'm falling for the same guy like her and then decided to make sure I fall under the bad books of Russ?"

I can see she's worried and it's written all over her face but why now? Why all of a sudden she has fallen deeply in love with Russ? Knowing very well she isn't the type of girl who takes relationships seriously.

THANDO: "We both realistically know that Melissa

wouldn't never bad talk anybody behind their backs. We know that Melissa is that one kind of person who cares about others so why out of all people choose to say something bad about you to another person? You see? You just built hatred towards her for nothing and I have a feeling there's more issues you have with her apart from Russ."

She looks at me and sad face creeps in but I don't buy it. My friend is too fake and I know her when she's faking it.

NOXOLO: "Okay then!....

She rolls her eyes.

Melissa is different from the girls I know. Despite the fact that she's you know? Not perfect in body shape but she's friendly to everyone and she's a people's person. Everybody likes her for her everything she has. She was never badmouthed by anybody in the school and she's not as popular like me. She minds her own business and keep herself together. Then ever since she's been going to the gym and to this facial spar that is located in Moria Mall she is becoming this new person. Her looks are changing to something phenomenal. I mean did you see her in that dress? She looks beautiful in it. Her skin gets glows every single day. I hate to admit this but she's becoming beautiful than the rest of us. Her new self is even attracting most of the guys from the school. Everybody wants to be friends with her now and every guy wants to date her which is odd because all their attention was drawn to me

and now nobody wants me but her. She took my spotlight and I want it back.”

THANDO: “So you’re jealous?”

NOXOLO: “I don’t know but I just don’t like her.”

THANDO: “Don’t be like this on her. After everything she has done for you you’re just going to throw hare on her for nothing?”

She sighs.

NOXOLO: “I guess not but I don’t now if I’ll still have the same love I had for her.”

THANDO: “Ahh I give up but don’t expect me to hate her too because I won’t. She has done nothing wrong or given me any reasons to hate her so I’m going to look for her so she can join us for lunch to this very same table. If you want to leave you can gladly do so.”

I stand from my seat and left the table. I walk around the school looking for Melissa. I search her almost every corner around the school and the last place I didn’t look at is the library. I get in there and luckily I find her sitting by herself and reading a book. I slowly talk towards her and grab a seat.

MELISSA: "Thando?"

THANDO: "Yeah hey."

She looks behind as if she's searching for something.

MELISSA: "Where's Noxolo?"

THANDO: "I left her at the cafeteria eating lunch."

MELISSA: "Oh

Sponsored

eating lunch."

MELISSA: "Oh then what brings you here?"

She takes off her reading spectacles and closes her book.

THANDO: "I came to fetch you. You're chilling with us

for lunch.”

MELISSA: “No I’m not going back there.”

THANDO: “We spoke things out and she won’t do anything mad crazy.”

MELISSA: “What did you guys talk about?”

I explain everything to her. The jealousy and about Russ. She is taken by surprise and so was I.

THANDO: “So that’s why she’s been acting this rude to you “

MELISSA: “But how can she compare me with her when she’s the one who has all the looks?”

I shrug my shoulders.

THANDO: “I don’t know but please have this lunch with me?....

She nods and gather her stuff along with her

lunch and head back to where we were seated. Noxolo left our table as I thought

she would. We continue to make it to the table and have our lunch together just like the old times. I have a slice of pizza crème soda flavored drink then Melissa has a bowl of fruits and a juice.

THANDO: "Are you on a diet?"

She laughs.

MELISSA: "I want to cut down junkies and eat more calories. It's good for your health. You should try it too."

THANDO: "I really like how you take things seriously."

MELISSA: "I'm trying to stay healthy by eating healthy."

THANDO: "Girl I can see that. Your body is changing your boobs are different and you skin is smoother than before."

MELISSA: "I have noticed the change too and it's basically everything I do works better for me. I'm wearing a bra cup sized 34 C. Can you imagine that?"

THANDO: "What!? No way! I'm very proud of you friend. Losing weight is not that easy but you manage to keep going."

MELISSA: "There were times I would want to give up but I keep telling myself to never quit. I've started this journey and I'm going to end it."

I'm out of words honestly. I don't know what else to say because my girl is really looking fire. Now as I'm sitting in front of her I can now spot the difference. She's completely a new Melissa.

THANDO: "And you gained your confidence back. That's very an important thing to accomplish."

MELISSA: "I know and its all thanks to you. If it wasn't for you to introduce me to these gym sessions I wouldn't be like this. I wouldn't have been this beautiful."

THANDO: "Ugh stop it. It wasn't much of a big deal trust me."

We both share a smile to each other.

MELISSA: "And speaking of a gym Pete has been hitting on me. Imagine."

Pete is very old for my friend and he's probably

married. I don't know why people don't go for their age groups and leave us the youngsters alone.

THANDO: "What? Oh nah don't tell me umvumile." (Don't tell me you agreed to be with him)

MELISSA: "What? No of course not. I lied to him and said I have a boyfriend."

We keep on talking until it is time for each one of us to head to class to prepare for the math test. I make it to my desk and continue to study where I left off this morning.

After an hour has passed the moderator comes in and gives us papers. She sets the timer and we begin to write. Some questions are extremely hard to answer but I do my best to answer all the questions on time. I check the watch on my wrists and time is up. I drop my pen and she starts to collect the paper from each individual. After she's done she counts the papers.

MODERATOR: "You may leave."

They released us and I left the school and made my way to the taxi rank. I get in the taxi and drops me off to my house. I rush to my bedroom and take a deep sigh.

“What have I gotten myself into?”

I ask in thoughts. I don't want to choose whom I should be friends with. I don't want to dismiss the friendship I have with the other person for someone else. This is wrong and I feel bad for Melissa. I just wonder when this tension will come to an end 'cause I'm not enjoying what's currently happening amongst my best friends and there's only one way to

end this.

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RUSS.

I'm enjoying my new apartment. So cozy and comfortable. I'm able to maintain it and it didn't really cost me that much for house repairs. I just came back from the furniture from the street sheets store to buy cushions for the couch and the cutlery for the kitchen. I put everything into places then my phone vibrates in my pocket and a smile appears on my face as I read the caller ID.

RUSS: "Hey precious lady."

MELISSA: "Hey."

That came out so low. Maybe she just had a long day at school today.

RUSS: "You don't sound okay. What's wrong?"

She sighs.

MELISSA: "Math paper drained my energy. I just
wanna go to bed and sleep but I thought I should give you a call first."

Im really flattered by what she just said. So
this means she thinks of me sometime? How sweet my baby girl is. I like girls
like her who take charge for once and call to check me out.

RUSS: "Why don't you take a long bath right now and
just relax."

MELISSA: "I will but as soon as I'm done with my
assignment."

RUSS: "What? You have an assignment to do?"

MELISSA: "Yes and the submission date is due by
next week Friday."

RUSS: "But you still have enough time to complete
it so take a day off for today. You really need it."

MELISSA: "Yeah I guess you're right..."

I can hear the sound from the background that she's busy doing something.

Okay. I've packed my books back to the shelf and I won't be doing anything for the rest of the day."

RUSS: "Perfect!"

MELISSA: "So how have you been?"

RUSS: "I've been great and I have good news to share."

MELISSA: "I'm listening."

RUSS: "I finally moved in to my new apartment. I've been staying here for a month now and it's been an amazing experience."

MELISSA: "What? Really?"

She asks in excitement.

RUSS: "Yeah. What's missing is a woman in my life. She needs to come over and stay with me."

She keeps quiet for a second and answers.

MELISSA: "You'll find her. Hopefully."

RUSS: "But I want you."

I respond in a low voice and honestly something

touched my heart. I don't see myself with anyone else but with someone like her.

I think I like her and I doubt she loves me back. I haven't asked her about her relationship status and I could

be eyeing on someone else's girl.

MELISSA: "What? What was that?"

RUSS: "I hope I find her too."

"and that's you Melissa. I can feel it." I can feel my imaginary friend talking to me. We continue to talk until it was time for her to

leave.

MELISSA: "I must get going."

RUSS: "Thank you so much for the call."

We say our goodbyes and she hang ups. I wont

lie. Nothing feels good than hearing that sweet sound of her voice and if things were possible I was going to call her all day long just to listen to her speak.

But I don't want to push her away so I'll let things be at the moment just to avoid awkward moments between us. I get in contact with the medical school and I am given the information as to how to apply the institutional fees the cost of the books for each course and the rest of the operations that take place inside the school premises like sports.

I did exactly as I was told and I registered to the Witwatersrand (WITS) University to study medicine. I applied my personal information that was needed on the form and sent it off through the email. It was kind of a huge process because I was signed off as a foreigner but after all I managed to get things done. I received an admission letter a week later and I got submitted to fulfill my study course.

INSERT 19.

MELISSA.

Talking to Russ helped a lot. He managed to distress me and I'm thankful for that. My mind was nearly in a second to explode because of studying too much. After a while I take a shower as quickly as possible and put on jeans and a simple white off shoulder top. I go to the kitchen to prepare something to eat and my mom approaches me from behind.

MOM: "Smells good in here."

MELISSA: "Want some?"

MOM: "Oh yes please. I was starving the whole day."

She walks away from me and takes a seat on a chair that was behind the table.

MELISSA: "But why?"

MOM: "I forgot to put my purse inside the bag after cleaning it up and getting rid of unnecessary stuff."

MELISSA: "But you could've used your lunch break to come home and fetched it then drive back to work. I'm pretty sure the drive was going to take you less than thirty minutes."

I check on my chicken nuggets if they are nicely done and to see how much more minutes do I have to wait for my toasted cheese and onion sandwich to be done.

MOM: "Driving from work to home its already a twenty minute. The return takes about twenty minutes and my lunch is only just for forty-five minutes so you see its not worth it? Five minutes remaining will be meaningless."

MELISSA: "Okay I understand mommy but then I'm glad you made it right on time. The food is almost ready...."

I take out the plates and dish out for the both of us.

Here you go."

I give her a plate and join her in one of the
wood bar chairs.

MOM: "This looks good baby. Are these chicken nuggets
fried?"

MELISSA: "No just baked but I can fry them for you."

MOM: "Oh no it's okay baby. I must say you've outdone
yourself with this food. It looks good. Can't wait to try it out...."

She smiles and I smile back at her. She starts
to take her first bite and she nods in excitement.

This? I'm telling you is really really good...

She points at her toasted bread. She stuff her
mouth and takes a big swallow. Then she wipes her mouth with a help of a paper
towel that is on the table.

What did you use to make this bread?"

MELISSA: "Just applied butter spread and cheese slices
with a pinch of black pepper and aromatz seasoning. I placed it in a oven for

about three to five minutes .

MOM: "I'm enjoying this. Are there any more leftovers?"

MELISSA: "It's for dad and Fiona. You can ask one of them when they come back"

She nods in understanding and we both enjoy eating our lunch without any disturbance. Once we're done mom helps me with cleaning the dishes and she leaves me to a bath while I'm busy moping the floor. After some time at 8pm in the evening my dad comes from work with Fiona holding two large boxes of pizza from Debonairs in their hands.

DAD: "Honey I'm home!..."

He shouts and gets no response . I go help him with his luggage and carry it to his bedroom.

Where's my wife?"

MELISSA: "She's asleep."

DAD: "Oh my angel. She must've been tired."

MELISSA: "Yeah she asked me to do her lunch. I even

made extras for you guys but I see you already bought food for supper."

DAD: "I wasn't aware nana but it's not a train
smash. I'll have it as my lunch box for tomorrow."

I take it to their room and my dad is following
me from behind. I open the door and I find his wife laying on the bed sleeping
peacefully. I didn't see my mom leaving the bathroom. I look at her confused.

I place my dad's stuff on his working table then leave
him alone to be with his wife. I head downstairs and Fiona is already dishes
out for herself a sandwich I made earlier this afternoon. I can tell she's
enjoying it by seeing her sucking and licking her fingers.

MELISSA: "Enjoying it?"

I catch her off-guard and she jumps in fear.

FIONA: "Don't go sneaking out on people. That's not
nice...."

She says annoyed and I walk towards to the
refrigerator and pull out a bottle of water. I open it and take a long sip.
It's been days since I haven't drank water. I don't know what changed. I used
to drink water like crazy. I would either sip a full two litres of water for

the whole day or just half a litre but now I prefer juice or a soda.

We both know cheese has always been my favorite so
you won't go wrong with that one...

She continues to eat and I close my bottle of
water. I think drinking half a bottle is enough. I walk to the refrigerator to
take out juice and pull fresh glasses from the top cabinet.

Is that apple juice?...

I nod with a smile. It's her favorite too.

Great!"

I pour us juice and we decided to chill in the
sitting room. She choose a channel to watch and she picks The Jerry Springer
Show live show.

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THE RODRIGUEZ HOUSEHOLD.

MOTHER.

I am waken up by a soft touch and as I try to
open my eyes the person close them shut with a hand.

HUSBAND: "Shh go
back to sleep baby."

HIS WIFE: "I'm already up. Just get your hands off
me."

He removes them off and I give him a smile as his
eyes are still glued to my eyes. He leans on and throws a quick kiss.

HUSBAND: "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to disturb you in
your sleep."

He whispers and I look at him awkwardly.

HIS WIFE: "Why are you talking like that?"

HUSBAND: "Like what?"

HIS WIFE: "You whispering."

He begins to laugh. I don't realize I was
whispering too. What is wrong with us?

HUSBAND: " I don't know but forgive me on that too..."

I laugh at him and he starts to flip me over to
give me a great posture. He takes a seat and brings my legs over to his legs.

I missed you."

HUSBAND: "You always miss me but I don't blame. You
and I are entitled to each other."

He leans on to me and gives me a kiss on the
lips again.

HIS WIFE: "Where are the girls?"

HUSBAND: "Downstairs probably eating or watching TV."

I check the clock and its already 9pm. I quickly
wake up from my bed and put on my push-in sleepers. I grab my red nightgown and
put it on.

HUSBAND: "What are you in a rush for? Is there an emergency?"

HIS WIFE: "We don't have food for supper. I have to go and cook or else we won't have anything to eat."

My husband comes toward me and hugs me from behind. He looks very calm and relaxed.

HUSBAND: "Relax babe. Supper is sorted. "

HIS WIFE: "You cooked?"

I ask in confusion.

HUSBAND: "I bought pizza along the way from work but it must be cold now."

HIS WIFE: "We'll put it in the oven. Thank you my sweetheart."

HUSBAND: "You stress yourself too much. Don't do that."

He places his hand on my arms and hold them
tight.

HIS WIFE: "I have kids and a husband to take care off.
I have to be worried."

HUSBAND: "Don't worry. I got you. You're my wife and I
love you and I still keep my promise to you. I will never let you do things on
your own. I won't cook but eventually I'll help you out and you should count
on me."

The sweetest thing he ever said to me. Yes he
made that promise when I got married to him and he's still keeping that
promise but it's not easy. I don't want my husband to think I'm not doing a
good job to be a good wife. I want him to look at me and admire me forever.

He continues to give me kisses only neck and in
a minute I remember a conversation I had with my daughter Melissa regarding
the issue of her moving in with her Aunt Zoleka. I'm not sure if he's gonna
like the idea but it's worth a try and I'm doing this for my daughter. If
she's happy then I'm happy. I break from the hug and I pull him back to the
bed with his hand.

HIS WIFE: "I need to talk to you."

He takes a seat and looks at me with worry.

HUSBAND: "Did I do something wrong?"

HIS WIFE: "What? No. You did nothing

Sponsored

and I pull him back to the
bed with his hand.

HIS WIFE: "I need to talk to you."

He takes a seat and looks at me with worry.

HUSBAND: "Did I do something wrong?"

HIS WIFE: "What? No. You did nothing but this has to
do with Melissa."

HUSBAND: "What is the matter? What did she do now?"

I sigh. I don't know how to approach this to him
and I need to figure a way quickly before he suspects it's something bad and I
don't want to give him that idea.

HIS WIFE: "She wanted for your permission first before
she can make any decisions by herself"

HUSBAND: "I'm listening."

HIS WIFE: "She wants to move back with Zoleka."

He gives me the weirdest look. The looks I was
expecting to see from the beginning.

HUSBAND: "Our Melissa? Wants to move in with my sister?..."

I nod.

But since when? I thought she never liked her."

HIS WIFE: "That's what I thought too but she talked
to me about it and she made it clear that she wants to live with her."

HUSBAND: "Is this a joke?"

HIS WIFE: "No. She said a lot of good things about her and you'd swear she's a different person."

HUSBAND: "I wonder what changed but we should give her what she wants and I feel she's safe with Zoleka..."

Is it me or my husband just allowed Melissa to leave us? I was expecting a complain and rejection but she's giving her away to live with his sister? I give him the unreadable look. He tries to read through me but he's not getting it and he shrugs his shoulders.

Our girls have grown up. Keeping them here with us for long is not gonna help. We've done so much in their age and we should allow them to do them same thing. They don't deserve to be treated like kids anymore but we need to teach them that every action taken has its own responsibilities. We just need to guide them so they go on the right track."

I laugh unbelievably. Is this really my husband?

HIS WIFE: "What happened to you?"

HUSBAND: "I was talking to my colleague and his daughter got pregnant at sixteen. He was just parenting like us and he told me that his too much protection led his child to have a baby and I don't want that for out

kids. I need to them to enjoy life as possibly as they can before they can make us grandparents.”

I don't know to explain how overjoyed I am. I'm really loving this him and I'm thankful to his colleague. It's said his daughter got pregnant at a young age and I hope he's coping well with her pregnancy but I'm so happy his situation finally changed my husband thoughts.

HIS WIFE: “I'm glad you changed your mind and I'm sure they'll be happy to hear about this but I need you to talk to your sister. Just to let know what's going on.”

HUSBAND: “ I can do that but what about school? I don't want a dropout child. Not after we made huge lump sum of money to get her to school.”

HIS WIFE: “Don't worry about that. It's all sorted.”

Without wasting any time he takes out his phone and dials his sister's number. It rings and she answers after the third ring.

ZOLEKA: “My brother!”

She says energetic. I guess she's in a good mood.

HUSBAND: "My favorite person in the whole wide world kunjan?" (How are you?)

Like seriously? His favorite person? I roll my eyes at him as jealousy kicks in. He puts his hand on my thighs and removes the phone from his ear and covers the speaker with his hand.

HUSBAND: "You're my most favorite and we don't have to argue about that."

He kisses me and return from his call.

ZOLEKA: "I'm good now that I got a call from you. Kutheni undifonela ebusuku kangaka?" (Why you calling me this late?)

HUSBAND: "Ncese mtaka ma. (Sorry my sister). I won't be wasting any of your time. Ngizise uMelissa. She wants to come there azohlala nawe lapho eGoli. (Melissa wants to move in to Joburg with you over there).

ZOLEKA: "Heeh ithi uyaXoka?" (Tell me you're joking?)

HUSBAND: "I wish I was but she made it clear ukuba

(that) she wants to come as soon as you allow her to.”

ZOLEKA: ”I have no problem with her. She can come at anytime but kutheni esefuna ukuzohlala nami apha?” (But why all of a sudden she wants to come and live with me?)

HUSBAND: ”Eyy I was surprised too but I guess uzakuxelela ukuba inton emziza apho.” (I guess she’ll explain herself as to why she wants to be there with you).

ZOLEKA: ”Xa efikela apha uzafunda phi? Usifumane isikolo? (So since she’ll be relocating here where is she going to continue with her studies? Has she found any school?)

HUSBAND: ”My wife has that problem solved.”

ZOLEKA: ”Oh okay. Uphi umkakho vele? Ngam’gcina k’dala.” (Where’s wife anyways? It’s been a while since I heard from her.)

I see my husband looks at me and smiles. I wonder what’s going on behind that call.

HUSBAND: ”She’s right here with me....

And all of a sudden my husband puts on loudspeaker.

She wants to talk to you.”

ZOLEKA: ”Koti!?” (Sister in-law?)

HIS WIFE: ”Hey Zoleka.”

I

fake my happiness. His sister never liked me but we're trying to work out our sisterhood friendship.

ZOLEKA: ”Kunjani mfazi?” (How are you wifey?)

HIS WIFE: ”I’m okay.”

I don’t bother to ask her back. I feel bad for not doing it but she’s okay.

ZOLEKA: ”Abantwana banjani?” (How are the kids?)

HIS WIFE: ”They’re doing fine.”

I look at my husband and signing at him to take away his phone from me and he does that.

HUSBAND: "Uhm so sisi (sister) expect Melissa on your doorstep soon."

ZOLEKA: "No problem. Wena undivakashela nini? Sekuneminyaka ungezi apha." (When are you paying me a visit? It's been years not wanting to pay me a visit.)

HUSBAND: "I don't really know but I'll make time. I promise."

ZOLEKA: "You've been saying that. After you've been in that marriage you barely check up on me or to even give me a lousy thirty seconds phone call to know how I'm coping in life."

I see my husband face reaction changes to sadness. What the hell did she say to him now?

HUSBAND: "I'm truly sorry but I promise I'll be a better brother. Just give me more time and I'll make sure during this year I'll bring my wife and Fiona to come and see you."

ZOLEKA: "That will mean so much to me. Enkosi bhuti." (Thank you brother).

HUSBAND: "Alright then let me leave you now. I'll

call you later again tomorrow.”

He hangs up and places his phone on his back pocket.

HUSBAND: “She agreed.”

I clap my hands and stamp my feet on the ground excitedly. My baby will be happy to hear the good news.

HIS WIFE: “Okay that’s great! I should go and tell Melissa.”

I hug my husband and rush downstairs. I find her watching TV with her sister. I call her out and she turns her head back to face me.

MELISSA: “Ma?”

She asks looking worried walking to my direction.

MOM: “You’re going to Joburg.”

MELISSA: “What? So dad agreed?”

I nod and she enlightens. She throws a big hug
and squeezes me tightly.

MELISSA: "I can't believe he just did that. What did
you do mama?"

MOM: "Nothing but believe it my baby. Expect yourself
to be leaving this house soon."

She hugs me again and I lay my head to her
shoulder. I'm not too happy about child leaving. No parent will be at ease to
let her child live with someone. You think a lot and you wonder what is
happening with them but like my husband said they're grown women and we need
to let them do whatever that makes them happy.

MELISSA: "But when is this?"

MOM: "After you've accomplished your tests."

MELISSA: "I'm left with few so it shouldn't take
long. Thank you so much mama."

She gives me a hug once again and after that she does some weird dance moves. I don't know why she's this excited but I guess she's happy to start new beginnings in a different environment. I heard her aunt moved to another place so it should be great to start somewhere new.

INSERT 20.

CANDICE.

CANDICE: "What do you think?"

I show my sister Kimberly the Plunging Neck Frill Ruffle Hem Chiffon black dress that I'm holding with my hand in hope to wear it when I have a dinner date with my husband's family. His mom invited me over for dinner and I didn't want to disappoint them so I agreed.

KIMBERLY: "It looks boring. How about we find something more spicy and sexy."

She goes through the clothing rags and searches each and every shelf that's in the store. My younger is three years younger than me and she forgets I can't just wear any clothes she comes across at.

CANDICE: "I'm a pregnant woman for God's sake. I can't be wearing anything that will make me look sexy when I have this big belly with me....

She doesn't pay attention to me until I wave my hands over to her face and blocking her view from the clothes.

Are you even listening to me?"

She walks pass me and moves to another spot of clothes. She pulls out a maroon dress that has a lace by the boob area and on the waist. It is very long and the fabric is very smooth too.

KIMBERLY: "Here! Take this..."

She says in excitement.

I know how much you love bright colors but for once let's try out this color and see how it looks on you. If it sucks we can go back and look for something else."

CANDICE: "I don't care much about the color but that dress is just too much. I mean look at this..."

I show her the exposed areas and she sees

nothing wrong with those.

This reveals my skin and yes its sexy but I can't be wearing this when I'll be sitting in a dinner table with my in-laws. I suggest we should find something else."

I put it back where she found it and start searching for other dresses. She sighs loudly and holds her waist.

KIMBERLY: "Are you aware we've been in this store for almost the whole day? I'm really getting tired with all of this."

CANDICE: "Yes I know and we can't leave this store without finding my perfect dress."

As we keep on searching and the shop assistant approaches us. She looks too friendly by judging her appearance.

SHOP ASSISTANT: "Uhm I'm sorry to interfere in your business but I see you're looking for something and you have struggles in finding it so I was wondering if I can help?"

KIMBERLY: "Oh yes please. This woman right here hasn't found the dress that she really wants and I've been helping her out but none of the dresses I chose impress her."

She frowns. The Shop assistant giggles and she runs her eyes on my belly. I look at her name tag and she's Mpumi.

MPUMI: "Pregnant women can be feisty and choosy some time. I really understand where she's coming from. Now let's see what we can find here....."

She goes to the very same isle where Kimberly had chosen the previous dresses from.

We better find something in here."

As she keep on searching my jaw drops as she picks out a maternity lantern sleeve lace up front white and brown Louis Vuitton dress. She pulls it out by the hanger and swirls it around.

Kimberly is the one who introduced me to Kick Pleat store that sells every brand. Everything is original but the prices are higher than the normal price because everything in here is shipped from other countries but mostly from the United States.

CANDICE: "I love it!...

Tears come running down my cheeks and I wipe them off with my hand. She hands it to me and I take a look at it one more time.

Sorry guys.”

Mpumi grabs the tissue from her pockets and gives it to me. It loos squashed but I take it anyway and use it to wipe my tears.

MPUMI: ”Its okay. I guess the emotions took over you but do you like it though?”

CANDICE: ”Like it? I love it! Kimberly what do you think?”

KIMBERLY: ”It’s beautiful but what is the price? We should know the price before anything else.”

Mpumi looks for the price tag and she couldn’t find it.

MPUMI: ”I can’t find it but let me scan it and I’ll be right back.”

She leaves us. After what seems to be an hour she comes with a scanner and she shows it to me. My heart ached so much that I wanted to cry. Who on earth will afford to buy such an expensive dress?

CANDICE: "Two-thousand three hundred? That is too much and very expensive. I don't think I can afford this."

MPUMI: "Its okay. I can help you look for other dresses."

I nod but my heart is pain. My heart desires that dress and I love it but I can't spend thousands on a maternity dress. She returns it back. We spent another hour looking for my perfect dress but we can't find anything that attracts me to it. My body starts to act up and I feel severe pain all over me.

CANDICE: "My feet hurts. I think I need to take a seat before I collapse."

I grab a seat while Mpumi keeps searching and there's no luck. I'm starting to lose hope and that's not what I wanted.

MPUMI: "I'm sorry but I can't find anything. I really wish to help you more but I have to get back to work or else I'll be fired."

KIMBERLY: "Thank you so much Mpumi but I think I can handle it from here..."

She smiles us with a smile. Her customer service is rare and I'm loving it. Kimberly kneels in front of me and gives me the worried look.

I'm afraid to say this but I have to leave you too and go to class. If we don't anything you like then you're forced to go back home. We can do this another day."

I look at my phone and its twelve in the afternoon. I really have to be fair and let her go.

CANDICE: "It's okay sis. You can leave. I'll let my feet rest until able to walk again and continue searching."

KIMBERLY: "Don't hurt yourself. Let me use this thirty minutes and try to look for something."

Kimberly stands on her feet and leaves. My phone vibrates from my purse and it's Chris. I pick up the phone after a while.

CHRIS: "Baby how far are you?"

CANDICE: " We haven't found anything yet but I'm about to leave the store anytime soon from now."

CHRIS: "Oh okay baby. Is Kimberly still there with you?"

CANDICE: "Yes she is and I'm worried she'll be late for school because of me."

CHRIS: "Then allow her to leave and you come back home. We'll shop online. I'm sure we can get you something you'd like."

I sigh. Yeah he's right. I would rather spend my time shopping at home than this tragic. I'm overheated and the body ache is making things worse. I really need to leave this place as soon as possible but my heart is still crying for that dress.

CANDICE: " Well there is something but it's not on in my budget."

CHRIS: "What is it?"

CANDICE: "A Louis Vuitton dress but it's worth a lot of money."

CHRIS: "Go and get it baby."

CANDICE: "No Chris. There's so much I can get with that money rather than spending it on just one item. We have a baby ok the way remember? We can't just spend money recklessly."

CHRIS: "Okay baby but if you change your mind just know you can get it. Before I forget I requested an Uber for you and for your sister so you guys better ready in ten minutes and please make sure your phone is near you in case you get a notification about your ride."

CANDICE: "Okay. Here comes Kimberly. I'll see you soon.

Love you...

He says it back I hang up. A smile sneaks on my face as she comes with a dress that might be what I was looking for.

This is perfect!"

KIMBERLY: "It looks simple and cute. You'll rock in this."

The dress she chose for me is an off shoulder and long ankle dress with side pockets and army green in color. I've never worn

green before and this is the first. It reveals a little bit on the chest. I take it from her and she helps me to stand up. We stand at the queue and we pay it for the dress. It's not expensive and I wasn't aware it had a 25% discount off.

CANDICE: "I'm going to pay for it and I'll see you as I get back."

We pay for the dress and she helps me to carry the rest of the shopping bags until we make it outside the mall. My plan was to get an outfit for Chris' family but I got carried away and I did buy few house décor and some toiletries. My phone beeps and a notation states a driver has reached to our location.

CANDICE: "Your driver is here to drop you off to school."

KIMBERLY: "Driver? I didn't request for a ride."

CANDICE: "Chris did it for you. He felt is much faster than to use a regular taxi."

KIMBERLY: "He didn't have to but thank you"

She gives me a kiss on the cheek and gets inside the car then it drives off. Mine arrives on the spot too and I hope inside my ride and he drives me home safe.

The driver is generous enough to help me with the grocery bags. He was already paid but I give him an extra fifty bucks for his kindest. Thereafter I unlock the door and immediately take off my boots. I can't take the feet cramps any more. I walk around the house with my socks on. I take the grocery bags to the kitchen and did the unpacking. I don't know exactly what to cook for tonight but I'm thinking to go for something light and little bit of sweetness will do. I take out ground beef meat and spaghetti and gouda cheese. Then for dessert I'll do his favorite salted caramel and apple pudding served with vanilla ice-cream.

I go to the bedroom first to change to my puffy and fluffy sleepers and the maternity button strap drawstring waist grey jumpsuit. I feel free and comfortable at last. I walk to the kitchen

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put on my

apron and begin to heat the stove and start cooking. I check the time its 3pm and my husband will arrive

home in less than hour. I let my

pots simmer for a little bit and walk to the sitting room and sit on a couch to rest my feet. I lay my head back and take deep breaths. I check on my left corner and I see a remote. I reach out for it and switch the TV on. While I'm scroll through the channels my phone vibrates and it's a call from one of my employees Katherine.

KATHERINE: "Good afternoon boss."

CANDICE: "Yes Katherine. How may I help you?"

KATHERINE: "We are having a problem with producing more than a thousand hair and skincare products. We are failing to meet the deadlines."

CANDICE: "What's the issue?"

I ask in worry. Katherine is my best employee.

We became more than friends. She's like a sister to me. She's been working for me for almost three years and she's been doing a good job. She working with elegance and determination. She's one of the people who keep my business a success.

KATHERINE: "I realized we have a shortage of workers and we don't have many resources to keep the productivity active."

CANDICE: "So does this mean we have to employ more people and supply to many to stores as possible?"

KATHERINE: "Yes. We're losing clients who are very much depending on our stock so since we produce less we are only able to service few of them. A week ago we were forced reject the orders 'cause there's were just too many of them."

Now this is really bad. At first the company was running low and not productive enough but now things have changed to worse and we need to make changes as soon as possible before we lose more clients.

CANDICE: "Okay create a valid advertisement for the job. Make it look attractive and relevant to the applicant. Try to be in contact with the YFM and Metro FM radio station to display our advertisement there too but find out how much will that cost and make sure you come back to me."

KATHERINE: "Yes boss."

CANDICE: "Anything else?"

KATHERINE: "Yes. I think we really should change the packaging too. It's two years old now and people might need something new."

We used to sell our product into transparent plastic bottles because we weren't sure if our business will grow this big and we need to do more changes.

CANDICE: "We can do that too. Ask Moses to design a logo for our brand and a slogan that will support it."

I say in excitement. Having her by my side makes things very easy. People like Katherine are hard to find especially at times like these.

KATHERINE: "Sure. I'll get on to it."

CANDICE: "Have a reproductive day. See you soon."

I hang up and I can't stop but to keep this smile on my face. I can't believe I'll find my brand will be so popular and be in this position where everyone will be interested to own one of my products. Damn I'm so happy!! I head to the kitchen and continue with my cooking.

CANDICE: "Hey Siri play Happy by Surface."

SIRI: "LOADING..."

Playing of beats and instruments

♪ Only

you can make me happy so happy

Only

you can make me happy... ♪

I dance to the sound of the beat and move my hips while I keep humming the song at the same time. I keep checking on my food to make sure it's not over or undercooked. I don't want to serve my husband nasty food. I'm done with the main meal and I start the preparation of a dessert. By any minute now I'm expecting my husband to walk through the kitchen door but time is ticking and there's no sign of him. I wait for a little bit longer but nothing. I take out my phone and call him. It rings and my heart begins to worry. He's not a person who keeps quiet and says nothing. I hope he's okay and safe wherever he is. With a third ring I see him walking through the door with a bunch of roses in his hands and bunch of other stuff in a red paper bag.

He gets in and walks over to me as he shares a smile. I keep staring at him. Admiring how good he looks in a two piece black suit. He leans on and kisses me on the lips.

CANDICE: "What took you so long?"

CHRIS: "Sorry babe. Something delayed me along the way."

CANDICE: "What is it?"

He gives me the roses wrapped beautifully in a black wrapper and he gives me a red paper bag. My heart is still racing but I try to keep calm and smile.

CHRIS: "All these had me delayed but mostly it was the flowers. I had no idea which ones you'd like and the one's you wouldn't like. Luckily an old lady who works there helped me to choose these ones. She said red roses win a woman's heart and I don't know if I just did right now."

He smirks and I laugh.

CANDICE: "Of course baby! I love them. Thank you so much."

I lean in for another kiss and he kiss me back holding my waist. We break away and he gives me a chance to smell them. They smell very good with a hint of sweetness.

CHRIS: "That paper bag you're holding has all your

favorites.”

CANDICE: “My favorites?”

CHRIS: “Take a look.”

He holds my flowers meanwhile I take a look
inside the bag and my jaws drop.

CANDICE: “No you did not.”

CHRIS: “Yes I did. I was eavesdropping you the other
day talking to your mother about your bad cravings fruits and I thought I should
spoil you. I bought you goodies too.”

Wow. This man is all I could ever ask for. He
went all out and bought me the stuff I usually eat during this pregnancy. My
man must be paying some attention then. He bought me salted peanuts nutella chocolate
spread fruits and my most favorite are the spicy chicken wings from Chicken
Licken.

CANDICE: “What would I be without you mhh?”

CHRIS: “What would you be vele?...”

I giggle and shrug my shoulder.

How's my little one? I hope he wasn't bothering you."

He places his hand on my belly and softly moves his hand in a circular motion. That feels really good.

CANDICE: "Oh no not at all. She's been making me tired and constantly filling my bladder."

He stops running his hands and gives me a "what did you say" look.

What?"

CHRIS: "You said she? I thought we both wanted a boy."

CANDICE: "You thought wrong. This baby is a girl and not a boy."

I feel like this baby is going to be a girl. I had a strong feel about it after I found out I was pregnant and my skin looks brighter than before. I don't have any dark areas on my body apart from my belly and I was told that a woman who's gonna give birth to a baby boy will give you more body changes compared to a baby girl.

CHRIS: "What? This baby is a younger version of me. He'll definitely be a daddy's little boy."

I laugh.

CANDICE: "Pssh don't flatter yourself. She won't look anything like you but she'll be a mini me. Period!"

I smile as I look at my belly and run my hands on it. I love how this baby brings so much joy in my marriage.

CHRIS: "We shall see..."

He laughs and walks from me.

Let me take these."

He takes my roses and the paper bag and puts them on the kitchen counter. He heads upstairs and leaves me alone without saying anything.

CANDICE: "Babe where you going?"

CHRIS: "To take a shower. Wanna join me?"

CANDICE: "Yeah but after I'm done with the pots. I'll be there in just a second."

He blow kisses me and leaves. I blush and finish off making the dessert then place it in the fridge to keep it cold and solid.

I can hear the water running from the shower and rush immediately the bedroom. I find her facing the mirror and shaving his beard. I walk over to the other basin and brush my teeth in meantime. Once he is done he pats dry his wet face with a towel and walks to me. My generous husband helps me to take out my dress along with my shoes. He helps me to get in the shower to avoid the slipperiness from the wet tiles. We take a shower fooling around like we always do until we're done. He helps me to put on a body lotion on the body parts I'm struggling to reach. He helps me to put on my dusty pink patch pocket knotted roll hem overall shorts and a white top underneath while on the other hand he is helping himself too with his black zipper fly tapered jeans and a brown mock neck solid tee.

He heads downstairs and I follow him from behind. We make our way to the dining area.

CHRIS: "Must I turn on the fireplace?"

CANDICE: "Yes please baby and a blanket too. You'll find it when you open the first door on your right."

He turns it on and in just a second the dining area got warm and cozy. He leaves and comes with the blanket and covers me it. This weather is crazy. We're on February and it's cold already. I think the winter season will approach us very soon. He gives me a kiss on my forehead and takes a sit next to me.

I made all your favorite dinner too."

His eyes spreads wide in excitement.

CHRIS: "Ground beef and spaghetti?"

I nod and he gives me a hug tightly that made me feel uneasy. I fell the pressure on my tummy and I push him lightly.

CANDICE: "Babe babe babe be careful."

CHRIS: "Oh yes. Sorry I forgot."

He moves away from me and lifts my hand to give it a kiss.

CANDICE: "Let me dish up for us while the food is warm. I'll be right back."

I'm about to get up and my feet lock. I lose balance and lean roughly back to the couch.

CHRIS: "Woah babe watch it..."

He balances me with his hands from my behind. My heart starts pacing very fast and I start to panic.

"Are you okay?"

CANDICE: "I can't move my legs. Baby my legs are not moving. What's happening with me?"

CHRIS: "Try to straighten them up."

I try to do that but its painful as hell. I cry in pain.

CANDICE: "Maybe the problem is by the muscles."

CHRIS: "I'll call the Doc and see if she can find out

what could be the cause. Just don't move."

CANDICE: "My feet are swollen too. I think it's the shower.

Maybe I stood longer than I should."

CHRIS: "Its okay. Hang in there and I'll dish up for

us. After we're done I'll give you that little massage I learned from that pregnancy session."

CANDICE: "Are you sure?"

CHIRS: "Certainly baby."

He kisses my forehead and leaves to the kitchen.

I'm sure you must be wondering about the pregnancy session but my husband has been supportive enough to come with me and help me throughout the whole process. He has been attending the fatherhood programs on the basics to treat a pregnant woman and tips to deal with certain pregnancy issues. Ever since he's part of the program he's been helpful with reducing the false contractions and massaging both my feet and hands if they're swollen.

This pregnancy has changed me to something else.

My looks are gone. Even though everyone still thinks I'm pretty looking like

before but I just don't feel that way. I look fat and my color complexion is slowly fading away to a darker color. If you can take a chance to look at my wardrobe it has completely changed too. You will come across to nothing but oversized clothes and all my heels are placed somewhere safe in the closet. Everything has been replaced with something that is above my style but I'm getting used to it. My husband dishes up for us and brings the food to the table. He helps me move from the couch and slowly walks me over to the dinner table. He places a pillow to balance my back.

CANDICE: "I made dessert too. It's on the fridge."

He nods.

CHRIS: "Okay baby."

I take a seat and we say a little prayer and dig

in to the food. He tells me about his day at work and I tell him about my day

at the mall.

INSERT 21.

MELISSA.

THANDO: "No way! What?"

MELISSA: "Yes way!"

THANDO: "But how did you do it?"

MELISSA: "Lets just thank my mom. She pulled this
through."

THANDO: "I wonder what how did he manage to confront
you dad. He wouldn't even allow you to leave the house."

MELISSA: "I know right?"

Our order comes in and we start eating. We are at McDonald's and I ordered a chicken fold over with sprite flavored drink and she's having McCafé drink with a big mac burger.

THANDO: "so tell me are you excited to meet this mysterious guy for the very first time?"

MELISSA: "Yes and I'm nervous but happy at the same time 'cause in a few days time I'll be in Joburg to see me."

THANDO: "This mean you're leaving me?"

MELISSA: "It was your idea to leave. I wouldn't have but you pushed me to and I'm going for it. There's no turning back."

She makes the puppy sad face.

THANDO: "I will definitely miss you. Not just you but someone I can talk to. We've shared so much together and I don't think I'll ever find someone like you."

MELISSA: "But you have Noxolo. She can keep you

company as always and she'll even rejoice to know that I'm gone."

I roll my eyes in annoyance. I'll finally get away from seeing her ugly face and having to deal with her bad behavior.

THANDO: "But she's not as good as you. Besides it's not like we're in good books. You've seen it for yourself. She has been very distant and she barely comes around to chill with me during lunch. It has only been you."

MELISSA: "I guess it's all my fault she's like that."

THANDO: "What? Don't be ridiculous. She's just acting crazy and she thinks I'll run behind her asking for friendship? No I won't do that."

MELISSA: "I know you. You don't beg where you don't benefit."

THANDO: "Exactly! So if she keeps on acting like we're still teenagers fighting over a guy and having to choose who I should hangout with or not then I'm not going to entertain that."

MELISSA: "Same here."

After eating lunch we both grab the McFlurry for dessert along the way. We walk around the mall looking for a perfect spot to shop for Sanele's birthday gifts. We enter the first store which is the Dior store.

THANDO: "I'm hoping to get him a good looking watch don't you think?"

MELISSA: "Yes but do you have a budget or you're just gonna spend on whatever it takes?"

THANDO: "Oh no honey it's his money. Not mine. I don't mind to waste it all on him."

MELISSA: "You're buying him a gift with his money?"

I find that really weird but it's not a bad idea.

THANDO: "It not actually his. He gave me money to spoil myself with it but I'll be using it on him because I don't want to ask him any money. It's kinda vise versa."

MELISSA: "Let's not waste any time and start shopping..."

We enter inside the store and she bought for him

a watch from Dior a Gucci belt and two pair of Nike Jordan latest sneakers. Then we enter the XXX store and I give her the weird look.

What are we doing here?"

THANDO: "I'm here to get a lingerie for my man."

She blushes.

MELISSA: "You a baddie for sure."

She grabs me by my hand and we get in the store.

We look through various types of lingerie and Thando has no idea which one will look perfect to her.

THANDO: "I don't know which one to go for."

She frowns.

MELISSA: "Let's make it simple. What's his favorite color?"

THANDO: "Black."

MELISSA: "Then let's look for a black lingerie with a

touch of a red. I mean those two would do great together.”

THANDO: “I trust you.”

She says with a doubtful tone. I don’t know why she doesn’t trust me. That means everything I say is making her to second guess herself before she can be sure.

MELISSA: “Don’t lose hope. Not when we still have the whole shop to ourselves.”

She brightens up her mood and we start searching for the best looking lingerie and so far we have three sets of lingerie. I must say I’m proud of myself. I really have a good taste I’m lingerie and someone would swear I had worn those before and I haven’t. I’ve always wanted to buy it for my man but haven’t found him yet.

MELISSA: “Now you need to choose.”

THANDO: “I’ll go for that one!”

She points the one that is a black floral lace underwire garter lingerie set and choker. It even comes with the silky and shiny fishnets stockings that match with her skin color.

MELISSA: "This shouts bad girl. I swear once Sanele sees you in that he'll go mad insane!"

THANDO: "I know! He'll go even crazier to see me in black."

MELISSA: "Perfect! But there's one thing missing. A black silky nightgown."

THANDO: "I have to agree. You're good at this. I think time you get a man."

MELISSA: "I will soon and once he finds me I'll make him the happiest man in the world."

I smirk and she walks over to the pyjama section and buys a silky black gown. We go to the cashier to pay for her stuff and we leave the store. As we're on our way to exit the mall she stops from her tracks and thinks of something.

THANDO: "Don't you think we should get more stuff?"

MELISSA: "What? No. This is more than enough. Maybe you can order his favorite meal and a bottle of wine."

She smiles.

THANDO: "I like that. Lets go then...."

We walk towards the door and head to the taxi rank.

Thando decided to order food on uber eats app. It drives us to their apartment and we chill there for a little longer until we heard a knock from the door.

That should be Sanele. Kindly take those bags for me to the bedroom. I don't want him to see them."

I quickly take the bags to the room and hide them besides the bed and make my way to the dining area. I find Thando already by the door making out with her boyfriend.

MELISSA: "Can't you guys get a room or something?..."

They continue kissing and ignoring me.

Uhm hello?...

I wave my hands hoping they can spot me standing behind them.

Ahh guys! I think I should leave."

They break the kiss and laugh.

SANELE: "We did that on purpose to just get your reaction.

We would never do that to you."

THANDO: "I'm sorry my friend....

She comes to me while laughing and gives me a hug.

We were just messing with you."

I laugh back with them.

MELISSA: "I felt like my presence is disturbing you guys."

THANDO: "Oh no. What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas right baby?"

SANELE: " We disciple ourselves in front of our guests so we wouldn't do that to you..."

He covers his girlfriends shoulders with his

hands and leans on to kiss her cheeks. Then Sanele turns his face and directly at me.

What are we guys having for lunch?"

THANDO: "We had something to eat at the mall so we're sorted."

SANELE: "Oh you guys went for shopping?..."

Thando and I nod at the same time.

Okay we can just grab snacks at least?"

MELISSA: "Uhm I was hoping to leave. I really have some stuff to do at home."

I had so much fun with my friend and I really think I should give them together. Sanele needs to be with his girlfriend and have some time alone.

SANELE: "Oh its okay. We can fetch ice-cream while we drop you off how's that?"

THANDO: "That doesn't sound like a bad idea."

I take my side handbag and I get in the backseat.

My friend sits in the front seat and Sanele drives off. While he's driving he put his hands on Thando's thighs and after some time they'll switch positions and hold hands which I find very cute.

We make it to the Ice Cream Palace shop and buy each of our favorite ice-cream flavors. It take us an hour to pick flavors we prefer

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which I find very cute.

We make it to the Ice Cream Palace shop and buy each of our favorite ice-cream flavors. It take us an hour to pick flavors we prefer but we all find what we want and pay. Then they drop me off home.

MELISSA: "Thank you Sanele for these and for the ride."

I show him the plastic that was on my hand.

SANELE: "You're welcome."

THANDO: "See you tomorrow at school and you better have your phone with you. I'll text you as soon this guy leaves."

She brushes Sanele's beard and breaks down with laughter.

SANELE: "What? For lokho (that) I'm sleeping over."

THANDO: "I'm kidding baby. Let's go home."

We blow each other kisses and he drives off. I can inside the house and place my ice-cream inside the fridge to freeze it up again. I go to my room to study for my last test. It is finally seven o'clock in the afternoon and I've been studying like crazy. No taking breaks. I don't know what is happening me to but I just get dizzy or have a headache after studying. I feel sick and I decide to relax and stop myself from doing anything. Then I hear a knock from the door.

MELISSA: "Who is it?..."

I get no response and I drag my feet to the door. I open the door and my mom is standing in front of me holding what I believe is a brown envelope.

What's this?...

I ask her in confusion and I take the envelop
and open it. I read through it and my eyes open wide.

.....You are accepted to the University
of Johannesburg...

I look at my mom in disbelief.

Is this for real? I'm accepted!?! That means I'll be
leaving soon."

She nods.

MOM: "All the registration fees are well taken
care of. What's missing is for you to be there."

MELISSA: "I have to tell Candice about this. She's
gonna be happy....

I say in excitement and as soon as she leaves I
take my phone and dial Candice's numbers right away.

MELISSA: "Friend guess what?"

She giggles.

CANDICE: "You haven't even greeted me and yet you have something to tell me? But go on. What?"

MELISSA: "I'm coming over there! Expect my visit soon."

CANDICE: "Coming where?..."

I can tell she's

a little bit confused but after a minute she figures what I was talking about.

You
are leaving Bloemfontein for Joburg?"

MELISSA: "Yes. I might leave after two or three years in time."

CANDICE: "Oh my gosh! Babe? Babe?"

I can hear her talking to her boyfriend from the background.

CHRIS: "Yeah?"

CANDICE: "Melissa is moving back here"

CHRIS: "That's fantastic babe
and this is all going very well
because she'll be able to come to our
baby shower."

What? A baby shower? How come she never told me.
Was she eve going to tell from the first place?

CANDICE: "Exactly!"

She stops talking to her husband and returns
back to me.

MELISSA: "Uhm.. What baby shower
are you guys talking about?"

CANDICE: "My baby shower! We
planned to host it soon but it's a surprise from my in-laws. I just
can't wait to finally know the gender of my baby."

MELISSA: "You don't know the gender?"

CANDICE: "Just take it as a surprise
celebration party okay?"

MELISSA: "Wow! That's new to me. So since I
overheard you guys talk about it am I invited?"

CANDICE: "Of course! But it'll be held next
month May. I don't know if you'll be here by then."

MELISSA: "When I said I'm coming over I didn't
mean by next month or next week. I'm coming this Saturday."

CANDICE: "So you'll be owning an apartment?"

MELISSA: "I wish but I'll be staying with
my aunt until I get a job so I can be able to move out and find a place of my
own."

CANDICE: "Have you thought of meeting the
guy?"

MELISSA: "Yes!"

I say with a smile on my face. I can't wait to see him and I know he can't wait to see me too wherever she is.

CANDICE: "I can imagine it already you guys meeting up going on cute dates like everybody else."

MELISSA: "I'm definitely not his type and I'm way out of his league. I mean you can tell that this guy is capable of having a G-Wagon car or owning a big house ad guys like that don't date woman like us."

CANDICE: "So this dude is from the riches?"

MELISSA: "Not really but you can tell he knows how to handle himself. His lifestyle says it all and by looking at his pictures he's just not any ordinary guy you can come across. He's just living a good life and I doubt he'll want a girl like me who can't meet the same living standard like his."

CANDICE: "No. Stop saying that. You don't know what this guy wants and doesn't want. Looks don't mean anything. Maybe he's not as complicated as you think he is. Maybe he's different and he may actually love you for who you are."

I sigh deeply. I need to believe in me for a change and stop being a coward. I'm scared of rejections but it's part of life

and I must be able deal with such things in life.

MELISSA: "Maybe you're right but I don't want to give him the idea that I like him. I'm afraid to lose our friendship. He's been good to me and he knows how to put a smile on my face so I don't want to mess that up."

CANDICE: "Then stop preventing your feelings for him and just let things be. Allow your feelings to interact with his and in that way it'll build a strong connection between you too. I just get a feeling you guys have a thing for each other but the problem you're afraid to share your thoughts and feelings to one another."

I've been telling Candice about Russ. She wasn't trusting him and I still feel she doesn't. I told her a while ago about my intentions about Russ and she thought they were genuine. She believed I've fallen in love with him but I'm not sure if its safe to say it like that. I do like him a lot and talking to him made me realize I need more of his attention and his time but most importantly his company. I want to be around him at all times.

MELISSA: "What if he loves the Melissa on the pictures? I looked skinnier and prettier there."

I haven't posted my recent pictures yet. I still

don't have the eager to showcase myself on social media. Nobody know my looks apart from the people I'm surrounded with.

CANDICE: "I don't see any difference. You still look the same. Very beautiful and sexy just like the good old days."

MELISSA: "I worked on my weight loss too so it should be easy."

CANDICE: "Wait what?"

I haven't told Candice about my plans of losing weight. She's not discouraging but I was afraid she wouldn't like the idea or to even allow me to take part of this process. I don't need anyone to stop me 'cause I've been doing great and this is something I've always wanted to for years.

CANDICE: "You never told me this but I'm really proud you pushed yourself that far. I can't wait to see you."

MELISSA: "I can't wait to see you too and the baby."

We continue to talk until her husband call her out.

CANDICE: "I need to go. Chris needs me."

She says goodbyes and leaves. I drag myself to the bed and my eyes become extremely sore and heavy to uplift. I lose my energy and drop myself on the bed and one thing I know I'm fast asleep.

INSERT 22.

NOXOLO.

This paper is actually difficult than I thought.

By looking at these figures it completely looks different compared to what I've studied for last night. It's like I was fully wasting my time to prepare for something that doesn't exist.

I keep paging my question paper hoping I'll come across a question that I'll be familiar with and to my bad luck I find nothing. Everything is just so overwhelming but I manage to pull myself together. It's better to try than not writing anything. I check the watch on my wrist and its already 11:00am and

I've been flipping my pages over for an hour now. I take my pen and speed my writing pace until it is time out. Our scripts are being collected from row to row.

I pack my belongings from the table into my bag and head out. Everyone in my class seems to be happy and I can tell everyone did their best in this test but from my side nothing calls for a celebration. The pain and the thought of my time being wasted by studying for something that won't even appear on the question paper is seriously breaking my heart. I feel like crying but I hold it back in and keep a straight face. I take a taxi to home and I get in my room. My mood suddenly changes as I see my sister laying in her bed blasting the music so loudly that it gives me extra headache. I go to the sound bar and turn it off. She stops dancing with her head and turns back to look at me.

SISTER: "What is your problem? You can't just come in here and do as you please."

She says with anger and tilts from the side of her bed to switch it on again.

NOXOLO: "This is noisy. I don't understand how you can stay up in such a room that in any minute can ruin your hearing system."

SISTER: "Well I enjoy my music to be this loud. Now

please let me be and don't disturb me."

She turns it on and returns to her bed and continues to write what I believe is her homework.

NOXOLO: "Can you at least lower down the volume?"

She ignores me and I lay on my bed as I bring the pillow over to my head and press it gently to cover my ears. I feel like slapping her but I don't want to argue with my mom and fight her. I wish these pillows can swallow me so I can sleep in peace. A few minutes later the music suddenly stops playing. I remove my pillow to take a peak what happened.

SISTER: "Are you okay?...."

She walks ne with a sad face and I sigh. I don't know how to feel and I already know I didn't do well. I failed that test.

By the way she goes by the name of Lindelwa Mkhumbuza. She's my youngest sister but her maturity and the way she operates you may think she's older than me. She is sixteen years old and does her grade eleven to the very same school I was attending at her age. She can be cold-hearted but she is someone you can basically talk to and she can give you all the time

you can ever ask for. She has always been my best friend and ever since she was born we've been sharing a room until to this day. She fears sleeping alone. Mainly because of the dark and how she sees things around that are not even there so I'm here to protect her from those spooky things. She make her way to my bed and softly places her hand on my shoulder.

LINDELWA: "You know you can always talk to me right?..."

I nod.

Now tell me what's bothering you?"

NOXOLO: "School is the issue. I don't know what happened today I don't know what was going on with me. I thought I had it all but I guess I was just fooling myself."

LINDELWA: "What are you talking about?"

NOXOLO: "I think I did not so well in this last test. I made plenty of mistakes and time wasn't on my side too. I'm just a failure."

Tears start to fall down on my cheeks and I quickly wipe them away before she notices.

LINDELWA: "No don't say that. We all make out own

mistakes. You'll do better next time."

NOXOLO: "You don't understand."

LINDELWA: "Then make me. I hate to see you like this."

NOXOLO: "The thought of losing a friendship with Thando kept roaming in my mind and anger that is inside me can't just disappear as easy as that. I think that contributed to lose focus."

I tell my sister what has been happening between Thando and I. I know somehow she'll help me through this. As much as she's someone with peace she tries to make me understand and put me in rightful thoughts about Melissa too but I choose to be difficult and never want to build back any friendship with that ugly girl. I hate her. She made me to hate her.

LINDELWA: "You really need to move on from this. If not then try to fix your friendship with the two of them before you lose Thando. Not that I'm siding with Melissa but try to stay in your lane and mind your own business. Don't mind what Melissa does in her life. It shouldn't concern you at some point."

I sigh and continue to wiping my tears.

NOXOLO: "Yeah. But I like Russ. As much as he doesn't know me but I do. I can't stand to face Melissa. She stole Russ's heart from the beginning they first started to talk over the phone and now she made him to turn his back against me. I tried calling him and be friendly but he will push me away."

LINDELWA: "Are you jealous?"

NOXOLO: "Who? Me? You know I'm not the jealous type. Don't even ask me about that."

LINDELWA: "Can you face Thando after what you did to her?"

Did she really have to go there. I'm talking about friendship and she's bringing this? A shock hit me directly from the heart and my heart starts racing fast. I don't know what is going happen but she'll hate me for sure and want nothing to do with me.

NOXOLO: "Why do you have to bring this up? I thought we'll never talk about it."

LINDELWA: "Are you aware she's going to find out someday soon what you've been doing with her man?"

NOXOLO: "I know but she won't know because no one will spread a word to her unless you do."

LINDELWA: "I mind my business but just know that your friendship and hers will be destroyed. She will never forgive you"

NOXOLO: "I know and it only happened once. It's not like it'll happen again. Besides Sanele is not my type."

She sighs and goes to her bed to continue chatting on her laptop.

LINDELWA: "What really happened that night? You can't tell me that you guys did nothing."

I don't like sharing such news to my sister. For her to even find out about this issue was due to alcohol. I was very drunk and couldn't keep my mouth shut. I said few things to her but I'm grateful they couldn't make any sense to her. My head was blooming around. I had no one to talk to because guilt was taking over me. A true friend shouldn't have done what I did to her.

NOXOLO: "We had couple of drinks and got drunk. He kept ongoing about Thando and how much he loves hers. He began to act weird and started to lay his head on my shoulder and I comforted him. We came here and had sex. We both wanted it and we have to blame each other for

that.”

She gives me a nasty glare.

LINDELWA: “ You fucked your man’s best friend? Did you even use a protection?”

NOXOLO: ” Duh. Do you really think I’m that stupid girl? I always carry protection in my purse.”

She nods.

LINDELWA: “But just don’t do that again. Cheer up a little bit and be a bit more friendlier to Melissa. As much as you do to Thandothen do the same to that poor girl. I hope you didn't fuck on my bed.”

NOXOLO: "Ugh c'mon. I know better than that."

I take my phone out of my bag. I find two missed calls from Thando.

NOXOLO: ”Speaking of the devil. She just called me.”

I reach my call log and contact her again.

THANDO: "Hey. "

She says in a low voice.

NOXOLO: "Are you okay?"

THANDO: "Can we meet by the Locco Shisa Nyama section?"

NOXOLO: "Is it that urgent?"

THANDO: "Yes. Please make it around 3pm."

She drops the call and I quickly change to something comfortable. A short and off-shoulder hot pink dress and rose gold sandals.

LINDELWA: "What does she want?"

NOXOLO: "She wants to meet up."

LINDELWA: "Do you think she knows?"

I shrug my shoulders.

NOXOLO: "I doubt it. Sanele wouldn't tell her. We made
a promise to each other but I wonder what she wants. I'll see you later.

I grab my car keys and giving my grandma a kiss
on the cheek then leave the house. As soon as I leave the house

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but I wonder what she wants. I'll see you later.

I grab my car keys and giving my grandma a kiss on the cheek then leave the house. As soon as I leave the house I immediately arrive at the spot. I walk around to see if I can find her but it is so hard to look someone in this crowd. The place is surrounded by many so people. I look around me and more time and I get inside a bar where they sell liquor. My eyes look around again and I find someone looking like her in a pink dress and rose gold sandals. I'm so scared to go to her because I don't know what to expect and I don't want to be in a position of answering too many and unnecessary questions. I guess I have no choice but to go to her and find out what was so urgent that she wants to talk about it in person.

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THANDO.

AT THE RESTAURANT.

I've been sitting in here waiting and waiting for Noxolo. I don't know when she'll come but I seriously want someone I can talk to before I lose it.

Things between me and Sanele were great until something disturbed me while I was in his car. The day we dropped Melissa home the night she was in my house I found a packet of condoms in his car. Which is something weird because normally him and I don't use condoms when we have sex. It really was a big shock to me and as much as I want to confront him about it I can't. I don't really know how many people could be in his car. He has male friends and it might probably be one of them so I just decided to keep things to myself. The bartender approaches me and asks the kind of drink I want. I order a berry vodka flavored drink with sliced lime fruit on the plate to get rid of the bitterness.

BARTENDER: "Anything else?"

THANDO: "No thank you."

An hour later has passed and there's no sign of her. I don't know if she's caught up or she didn't want to meet me at but she could have said so and I would've allowed her not to come. I hate it when I make people feel uneasy or even force them from doing something they do not want to do.

I begin to gather my stuff altogether and pay off my tab. I feel a bit tipsy and I don't really remember how many shots I had. As I was on my way I familiarize a female taking a seat next to me and the vodka

is starting to run in my veins. It's hard to tell who is she. She looks at me as if something is wrong with me but I don't pay attention to her. I stand up from the chair and preparing myself to leave. It's pointless to be here and wait for nothing . I feel a trip from the chair and with the help of this woman hands balances me from my face kissing the floor.

LADY: "Thando? Is this you?"

She asks in worry. I can tell she knows.

THANDO: "Who are to ask me if it's Thando? Of course it's me. Who are you?"

I turn around to face her. I feel like I've seen this woman somewhere but I can't tell where.

LADY: "You are really drunk. Let me walk you to the bench. We can't be here. You're embarrassing me."

Who the hell does she think she is? I'm embarrassing her? I try to stand on my feet but my knees are weakening. I don't think I'll wait for another hour in this heels.

THANDO: "Let go off me."

I break from her arms and order another drink to bartender but she interfere herself.

LADY: "I think she's enough with alcohol. Can you give us water?"

THANDO: "I don't need water. I asked for a drink. Where's my drink?!...."

She shouts violently. I don't know its the alcohol talking or it's just her.

LADY: "No. I won't let you drown yourself with alcohol. I can't waste my petrol to drive down here for nothing. You called me and I need to know why I'm here."

My face is still facing down and I immediately look at her. I remember calling Noxolo and she promised to meet up with me. Could this woman be her? I attempt to call her by name and see if she'll respond back.

THANDO: "Noxolo?"

LADY: "Yes it's me. Can we go now?.."

The bartender gives her our drinks and we walk slowly to the empty middle row benches. She helps me to sit down and she takes

a sit front opposite with me.

NOXOLO: "What is going on with you? Why are you drinking so much?"

THANDO: "There's just a lot going on in my life right now."

NOXOLO: "Why didn't you call your so-beloved best friend?"

THANDO: "You're also my best friend."

NOXOLO: "When you don't have no one."

THANDO: "Ugh c'mon. You don't mean that."

NOXOLO: "What am I doing here? What do you want?"

She says impatiently and irritated.

THANDO: "Before I can tell you what's going on can we just fix our friendship? I know you don't like Melissa but the innocent soul hasn't done anything wrong to you. I know and I understand why you dislike her but don't punish her for Russ."

She keeps quiet and nods her head.

NOXOLO: "Let me tell you one thing in case you didn't know. That friend of yours made me to hate her even more the first moment she took you away from me. It all started when you guys started to secretly do some stuff together without me. Do you know painful is that?..."

I can tell from her words that her feelings are deeply hurt.

You keep making excuses about my rejection but you should've asked and find out from me before taking decisions for me with you and her."

She rolls her eyes and sip of water from her glass.

THANDO: "Don't start please. I didn't bring you here to talk about your beef with Melissa but to ask you to get along with her so that our friendship can go back to its normal state again. I know you might think I enjoy spending time with Melissa and yes I do but you're the first thing that comes in my mind. I get worried that I lost my friend because of some dude that the three of us barely know. I just want us to be as sisters like we used to."

I say in a pleading voice. She sighs and takes a minute to think before she can answer me.

NOXOLO: "Do you know how hurtful it is to love someone and only to find out that same person is not into you? That pains my heart."

THANDO: "Yes but then don't hate Melissa for it. You shouldn't be mad at anybody."

NOXOLO: "Its not easy but I'll try."

THANDO: "Just try. Do it for me."

She takes a lady sip from her glass and asks for a wine. I drink my water too but it's still full.

NOXOLO: "So is that all you wanted to talk about?"

I want to cry but I don't want to cause unnecessary drama and I have no clue what's going on. The thought of Sanele sleeping with another female just makes me cringe and makes it hard for my heart to continue serving its purpose.

THANDO: "You won't believe what I found in Sanele's car."

NOXOLO: "What is that?"

THANDO: "A pack of condoms."

NOXOLO: "So that's the urgent news you wanted to tell me? That Sanele wants condoms to be taken part of your sexual makings?"

THANDO: "Not really but its just weird 'cause we normally don't use condoms when we have sex. Now why did he buy them?"

Fear and nervousness is written all on her face and shakes her head.

NOXOLO: "What? Are you serious?..."

I nod.

THANDO: "The whole pack was emptied."

NOXOLO: "That's crazy. What did he say when you talked to him about it?"

THANDO: "That's the problem. I didn't confront him about it. I'm afraid to make one mistake that will make him believe I have

insecurities....

She gulps all her drink in just split seconds and orders another one.

No you should relax in taking that booze too. You better practice what you preach.”

NOXOLO: “I’m just thirsty. My throat needed that.”

THANDO: “But slow it down though. We still have more time to ourselves....

She coughs and excuses herself to the ladies room. I look at her acting weird and after some time she comes back with a bottle of water in her hands and takes a sip.

Are you okay?”

NOXOLO: “Sorry about that.”

THANDO: “You almost got choked by water as if I said something wrong. Why do I keep thinking you know something and you're hiding it from me?”

NOXOLO: "What? No. Of course not. I don't know anything."

She begins to crack her knuckles and wiping off her sweat with a serviette.

THANDO: I'll make sure I stay put and watch his every move since he's been acting very doggy and weird around me. Do men do that?"

She shrugs her shoulders and continues to drink her water. I continue to take a sip from my drink too. As I sit there a lot keeps running in my mind and I'm avoiding to bring negative thoughts that will affect me emotionally and spiritually. I try by all means to forget what I saw in the car and pretend like my eyes didn't drool over to where that pack of condoms was placed at.

THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

● Melissa the night after she left her friends house. She was unpacking her things and getting ready to hit the road on Sunday. The

night before she got a text from Thando saying that she wanted to meet her

urgently and it's regarding the issue of her boyfriend Sanele. Unfortunately on the very same day she had to go to the mall to do some

shopping for all the necessary things she'll need for her trip. She was excited

to leave and meet Russ but it still scares her whether this whole trip is

worth it or it's just a waste of time.

● With Russ he was been working forward to fulfill his

dreams. He got his house and he's been going to school. His friendship with

Chantel grew stronger. They've been hanging out together and being there for

each other. They started to develop trust which kept their friendship going. He

has also been getting in contact with his family to check up on them and sends

them pictures he often takes when he visits around the city.

● Candice has been keeping her work undercover from her

husband to make an extra income for them. She

saves the money she earns per month to a separate bank account just to be safe and yield more interest. Her family and her

husband's family kept paying her visits very often. She even attends the

family gatherings if necessarily so. Her life continues to run smoothly and she continues to make a good wife who thinks ahead of her family's well-being.

● Noxolo has been looking out for love

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but none of the guys he finds show her what true love is. It has always been her wish to find someone who understands her well and who can treat her better than her ex's but she always gets the opposite of what she wants and that tends to make her the jealous type around her friends with their boyfriends. As you've already discovered the issue she has with Melissa. Maybe if she changes her ways she might find him.

● Thando is living under the stress and that causes her

to experience insomnia. She has a lot going on because she tries to work

things between her beloved best friends who want nothing to do with each other and on the other hand she has to deal with his cheating boyfriend Sanele. She

is confused and doesn't know what to do. As much as she thinks it's a good idea

to bottle things up and not confront her boyfriend about it but she doesn't know the

damage its causing. Not only does it destroy and negativity affects her emotionally but mentally too. She barely thinks straight and she feels like she's about to lose it. She still has a leap of faith and hope that whatever she assumes her boyfriend does it's not real.

● James has been together with his newly girlfriend

Regina close to a year. He feels like he has won a jackpot with her. He loves her wholeheartedly and not even a second will he replace her with someone else but after an incident of meeting his ex Melissa made him realize he is still not over her yet. He noticed how much they've loved each other back in the days and it flicked his mind with the memories they shared but with the help of Regina's presence he believes he can create new memories and capture great moments with her.

INSERT 23.

MELISSA.

MELISSA: "I think this will be it."

I say as I breath heavily packing all my shopping bags to my dads car boot.

DAD: "You really did some quite shopping young lady. I mean look at all these plastics. Did you really had to buy all these stuff when you have so much clothes in your wardrobe?"

MELISSA: "I need these more than you think papa and besides this was my last shopping spree. I'm done shopping for clothes until winter approaches which will be in just two months time."

He closes the boot and we both get inside the car and he drives off. While he is driving I receive a text from Thando and she keeps it short it says...

I don't know if I'm losing it or what but I think Sanele is up to something. The thought of him fucking another girl just keeps playing inside my head numerous times and I can't stop it from doing that. I really need you to help me ASAP.

She has told me about what she saw in Sanele's

car but I failed to believe he would cheat on her because he would never do that to Thando. Not when they had their ups and downs and fixed them. I doubt he'll do something that will hurt my friend at the end of the day. I reply back.

I'm sorry baby

you had to go through this but I promise you he wouldn't do anything stupid to hurt you. As much as I know him he loves you so much and he is very much committed to your relationship so I recommend you to try and talk to him and find closure about that box of condoms.

I put back my phone in my purse and my dad turns on the volume to his radio and hums to the music.

DAD: "Do you know this track?"

MELISSA: "No but I can tell its old RNB."

DAD: "Exactly! Back in the days I used to play this song to your mom and this was the only thing that helped me to catch her attention....."

I've heard of this love story before. My mom told me how they met and how my dad was annoying her back then 'cause he would do whatever it takes to make her his girlfriend. How they even shared their first kiss that led her to start to liking him. It's weird and if it

wasn't for that kiss I doubt he could've been my father. I pretend to listen intensively as he keeps on talking.

I used my charm and I went to ask for her as she was sitting on table with her friends. Oh Lord she smiled when she saw me. That smile I will never forget it."

MELISSA: "Okay papa. I know all this love story and I've heard it multiple times now can we talk about something else?"

DAD: "Am I boring you?"

MELISSA: "No but can't we talk about anything else apart from your old love story? I'm getting tired of it."

DAD: "Oh I understand."

I can tell sadness in his voice.

MELISSA: " I didn't mean it in a bad way. You can still talk about it if you want to."

DAD: "No its okay baby. I'm not mad...."

I huff loudly and give him the saddest look and he quickly notices that I'm looking at him. He turns over to look at me.

How about we get home and make one of your favorite ice-cream?"

A smile starts to creep on my face. My dad has brought a mini making ice-cream machine. Ever since we had it he's been making the best ice-cream ever.

MELISSA: "I would love too! This is very even my last day I'll be spending with you before I leave..."

He nods and after thirty minutes we make it home. We get inside with bags full on my hands and I make my way to my bedroom. I have already packed few stuff on my suitcase including my toiletry. I take out the price tags to my new clothes and fold them perfectly in a suitcase. After gathering my things together I make my way downstairs to the dinning area where my sister is watching animation while my dad is making ice-cream.

Seriously? Cartoons?"

FIONA: "Don't you dare start with your nonsense."

She gives me the deadly look and continues to watch TV.

MELISSA: "Anyway I'm sure you know I'll be leaving tomorrow morning."

FIONA: "Yeah mom told me."

She doesn't bother to look at me and she still has her concentration to what she's watching.

MELISSA: "Are you going to miss me?"

FIONA: "Nope. Not at all."

Ouch okay? That sounded cold but I know she doesn't mean that.

MELISSA: "Well I will. As much as I irritate you sometimes but I will definitely miss you. I'll miss how we'll tease around each other and how I had someone who can understand me better than anyone else in this world."

FIONA: "You don't mean any of that."

MELISSA: "I swear I do. I know I don't tell you directly but you're the best sister I could ever ask for. You are amazing and I'm so lucky to call you my sister."

She pauses the cartoons and give me the shocking looks.

FIONA: "What on earth did I do that made someone to come in here and tell me how lucky she is that I'm her sister? You never said such things to me."

I laugh.

MELISSA: "Don't worry about it but seriously though. I will miss you and our littlest conversation we had."

She comes to me and gives me a hug.

FIONA: "I will miss you too sis and I will forever love you no matter what."

She breaks the hug and goes to the kitchen to help dad prepare dinner for the family. While we have everything done mom makes her way to the kitchen and exchange kisses with her husband then gives us kisses each on our foreheads.

MOM: "My girls."

She continues to throw in kisses until my dad sticks his head to get in between us.

DAD: "I'm getting jealous. I need more too...."

We all laugh and my mom kisses his husband for the last time on his lips. Mom leaves to their bedroom. Few minutes later we hear running water from the bathroom and my dad excitedly pulls off his apron and places it on the kitchen counter .

Excuse me ladies...

Fiona and I exchanged the "weird" looks to each other.

I have work to attend to and meanwhile you guys can finish off cooking. I'll be back in less than an hour or two."

FIONA: "You can have all the time you need with your wife. Don't worry about us. We'll be done before you know it."

He thanks us and quickly rushes off upstairs.

MELISSA: "Do you think what I'm thinking?"

FIONA: "Oh no. Don't even go there. It's adultery stuff and it's none of our business. Come help with chopping the cabbage."

MELISSA: "What? No of course my mentality is not there. Eww. I'm thinking about stealing few scoops of ice-cream since dad not around."

Normally we're not allowed to eat dessert or snacks before supper and I don't know what is wrong with that but hey those are the house rules.

FIONA: "You know we can't have that now. I don't want any troubles."

MELISSA: "I know but nobody will tell them unless you do."

FIONA: "I won't but if they find out don't involve me. Just cut me out of it."

She leaves me all by myself to the kitchen and I carefully take out the bowl from the cupboard along with a spoon. I gently open the refrigerator and take out the ice-cream. I scoop in four times and return it back. I make my way to the bedroom and patiently enjoying the cookies and cream ice-cream without any disturbance from either my mom or dad .

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CHRIS.

It's a beautiful Saturday morning and my wife went out with my sister Naomi to the nail salon. Normally my wife doesn't do fake nails ever since she got pregnant. She has mentioned that they can be irritating sometimes and the thought of breaking the nail by mistake can cause so much pain and that makes her even scarier to have fake nails on her fingers. Since I'm all alone I decide to enter through the clothing website and search for any Louis Vuitton dresses I could possibly find for pregnant women and to

my surprise there's just so many of them to choose from. I don't know which one she'll like and which color would suit her skin. I decide to text her cousin to find out exactly the dress she would prefer and she replies after two minutes.

Buy her any dress that is nude with a touch of black or white. Those are her favorite and best color.

Her wonderful cousin has rescued me. Now I have the idea what kind of a dress I will go for her. I buy her this off shoulder Luis Vuitton long dress that has pockets on the sides and a beautiful design by the breasts. Its none much revealing but its sexy and has a lace on it which helps not to reveal half as much of her breasts. I know at some point she will freak out but I think this is her look good on her and she doesn't have to hide her beauty behind that pregnancy. I buy her the dress along with a matching purse and shoes. As much as I wanted to get her heels I can't 'cause she will have struggles to forever be in those uncomfortable shoes since she's carrying so much already so I buy her white sneakers instead. Once I am done I clean the house. Not entirely cleaning everywhere but to just sweep around and getting rid off the dirt. Afterwards I hop inside the shower and enjoy every single drop of water that is pouring on my body. I wipe myself dry and get dressed too.

As I'm busy tying my belt I get a text from my wife informing that they're done and they'll be home soon. My mom is hosting a family dinner and we are invited.

I want to look presentable. I put on my black jeans grey t-shirt with a black leather jacket and white Jordan sneakers. I brush my hair to keep it neat and put on my wife's favorite cologne. That one cologne that turns my wife on as

soon as it hits her nostrils. I pack all the stuff we'll need in her bag including her sleepers to keep her comfortable for the day and her favorite snacks too if ever the cravings hit hard. I get disturbed me by the knock from the front door and it's the delivery. I know you must be wondering how do I get to order and receive the package on the same day. Well I have paid extra money to have it delivered before the usual working days. I sign off and the delivery guy leaves. I rush off to our bedroom and hide it somewhere in her wardrobe to make it a surprise. As time passes by I am sitting by the couch and watching TV. I hear the front door opens and laughs coming from the kitchen. I head towards them and stand by the doorframe.

CANDICE: "Oh hey baby. I didn't see you there."

NAOMI: "Yeah and how long have you been standing there?"

She places the bags to the floor and takes the rest from my wife's hands.

CHRIS: "Not that long. I'm sure two minutes. Your laughs disturbed me from watching my favorite show."

NAOMI: "Oh please. We weren't that loud."

CANDICE: "We're sorry baby. You can continue with your

show and we'll keep it low yeah?...

She makes her way towards me and kisses me on
the lips.

I missed you and that smell...mmh smells so good...

She sniffs on my neck and looks at me and
smiles.

Is that what I think it is?"

I nod. I place a
kiss on her forehead and I look at my sister who is busy looking at the plastic
bags.

CHRIS: "I missed you so so much..."

She tries to move away from me

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so much...

She tries to move away from me but I grab her by the hand and bring her closer to me.

Come here and give me that kiss one more time.”

She leans on and perks me by the lips. She does it slowly this time and I allow her to be in control. She let’s our tongue tangle to each other while she has her hands on my shoulders and my hands placed gently on her ass. I squeeze it tight.

NAOMI: “You guys should get a room honestly.”

She says with a disgust look on her face. We break from the kiss and Candice apologizes as she feels embarrassed that we kisses in front of my sister but I understand her. We respect our families so much and we wouldn’t do anything extreme in front of them. Not even kissing.

CANDICE: “So baby how do I look?”

She turns around and waves her fingers on my face. I don’t know much about nails but they look good on her. She went with the nude color and a touch of maroon. Those colors blend so well with her skin since she’s lighter so whatever she does looks perfectly good on her. She continues to turn around and I notice some change with her hair too. It’s a new

hairstyle and it looks different. Its not a wig but she keep her natural afro curls and it looks amazing on her.

CHRIS: "You look hot babe. That pregnancy did nothing on you."

CANDICE: "But it did something with my weight. I look fat."

NAOMI: "But you still look sexy sis. You're just thicker than before and I really think you should thank that baby."

She interferes like she always does. My sister is the youngest in the family but three years older than my wife. She is married and has two kids with one of the rich guys and cleverest guys who master the Forex Trade Business. She is happy and well taken care off because whatever she wants the guy provides for her and that is something I don't want my wife to get used to that habit. I want her to be the way she is and don't demand for things like my sister does.

CANDICE: "But after this pregnancy I'm heading back to the gym to get my body back."

CHRIS: "I don't mind to join you. We can do it together."

CANDICE: "But you don't need a gym. You look hella fine already..."

She steps back and smirks.

"I'm not even aware you dressed up for the dinner. You look ready for the road."

CHRIS: "I cleaned a bit so that we don't return home to a pile of dishes."

NAOMI: "Wait. You did what? Clean? Since when do you do that 'cause you're allergic to that."

CHRIS: "This woman right here changed me to become a better man for myself for our baby and her."

NAOMI: "Wow! Candice? What have you done to my brother? What kind of portion is this?"

My wife giggles.

CANDICE: "He wanted to change and he did. Not because of me but because he wants to. I really didn't force him to be the person he

is right now. Trust me.”

Naomi claps hands in disbelief.

NAOMI: “Wow I love this. I'm sure when mom hears about this she'll be as shock as I am right now.”

CHRIS: “Uhm please don't. I'm not down to do dishes for today.”

NAOMI: “ I'll keep my mouth closed but honestly though. I love this new Chris. He is more of a responsible father now.”

She gives me a smile. We both share a laughter and my wife excuses herself to take a shower again before we make it to my parents house.

As she left to bath my sister and I sit down and have a little brother and sister chitchat.

CHRIS: “How's Richmond?”

NAOMI: “He's okay but he's been very busy lately. Work is keeping him away from spending quality time with his family.”

CHRIS: "I thought he was only doing Forex Trade?"

NAOMI: "He has other jobs to do apart from Forex. He said to me that Forex is not necessarily his job or to even depend on it but its just a hobby. That's what he calls it"

CHRIS: "Are you aware of any other jobs he does?"

NAOMI: "No. He just wouldn't tell me. Whenever there are calls he would excuse himself and answer them outside then once he's done he comes back."

CHRIS: "Hmm something is fishy with this dude. Don't you think?"

She sighs

NAOMI: "Yeah but I'm getting used to it. I'm not even invading his privacy. Whatever he does I don't bother to go behind his back and go through his stuff."

CHRIS: "I don't trust him. I had a bad energy for this guy from the first time you introduced him to me. I just had bad vibes around him."

NAOMI: "He's not a bad guy and there's nothing wrong with him."

CHRIS: " I'm a good brother and u love you. I won't say breakup with him but my advice to you is to be careful. Just don't spy on him but try to look out for you and your kids."

NAOMI: "We're safe trust me. There's absolutely nothing to worry about."

We wrap up our conversation and my wife makes it to the dining room. She has all her makeup done and she's ready for the road.

CANDICE: "Let's go?"

CHRIS: "Wait baby I have something for you."

CANDICE: "But we're running late already. We don't want to make it there hourly late. I'm sure as we speak your mom needs an extra hand with preparing the food...."

She says in worry but I try to calm her down and take her with me to the bedroom. As we get there I ask her to open her side of the wardrobe and look for a brown paper gift bag. She looks for it and places it on the bed.

What's in here?"

CHRIS: "Look for yourself but before you can open it just promise me you'll wear it right now."

CANDICE: "Wear it? Is this some kind of clothing?"

She asks with a smile and I can tell she's anxious to know what I got for her.

CHRIS: "Go on baby."

She gently opens the paper gift and takes a folded wrapped huge box. She continues to tear it off until she came across VL sign on the box and her jaws drops.

CANDICE: "No way baby. You did not..."

She opens the box and finds the dress laying inside the box and looks me in disbelief. She grabs it and places it on the bed.

This is all for me?"

I nod and she gives me a kiss on the lips.

CHRIS: "Open the second box."

CANDICE: "What? There's another box?"

CHRIS: "Yes and this one I get a feeling you'll love
it even more..."

She reaches for the next box and opens it. She
finds the white Nike Jordan shoes with a touch of nude. She give me the puppy
eyes as if she wants to cry.

No no no baby. Don't even think about doing that.
You'll ruin your precious makeup."

CANDICE: "I just don't know what to say. I mean this
is unexpected and you caught me off guard."

CHRIS: "I realized you might need those."

CANDICE: "The dress itself is expensive and how much
did you pay for all of these?"

CHRIS: "Don't worry about it. Just wear those for

today and look stunning my baby.”

She hugs me tightly and gives me thousands of kisses on my face.

NAOMI: “Guys how far are you now? We really have to go!”

I can hear my sister shouting from downstairs

CHRIS: “We’ll be down in just a second!”

I shout back. My wife is busy getting dressed. She takes off her clothes and wears the outfit I bought for her. I take my time to admire how good looking my baby looks in that dress. Her cleavage is the first thing that caught my attention. It cupped her babies very well and nicely curved her body.

CANDICE: “Babe don’t you think this is too much?”

CHRIS: “No. You actually look amazing. I love it!”

I go to her and give her a kiss on her forehead.

I grab her clutch bag and head downstairs. Naomi is impatiently waiting for us.

NAOMI: "What took you guys so long? Don't tell me you were kissing each other non-stop.. And woah!..

She stops talking and looks at my wife.

Is this you?"

My wife laughs and nods.

CANDICE: "Yeah. All thanks to my lovely husband right here."

She holds my hand and gives me a kiss on the left cheek. Aww my women. I adore her more than anyone and anything else in this world.

NAOMI: "No brother. You did good on this one. I never knew you'd grow up with a better taste in clothing."

She handshakes me.

CHRIS: " My wife is always good looking but this time I needed to make sure she looks extra good."

She laughs and makes her way to the car.

NAOMI: "Let's get going."

I lock the house and we drive off to my moms house. It's not really that far from my house but it takes an hour and couple of minutes to arrive there. It has really been a while since we last paid a visit to my mom due to work and my wife being pregnant. Lately she doesn't have all the energy to herself to pay visits to people. She becomes lazy and I don't blame her because it's not her. The baby prevents her from doing anything. Apparently my mom invited us and we don't want to disappoint her. After an hour we make it to the garage to park my car and Naomi parks hers. We make it inside the house and all of the sudden my mom opens the door and approaches Candice first.

MOM: "Where's my daughter-in law? I need to see her first...."

She makes it to our direction and gently gives my wife a hug. Then attends me next.

I'm glad you guys were able to make it. I hope I didn't ruin any of your plans for today."

CHRIS: "Oh no mom. We had nothing else to do for the day so I'm grateful that you called us over for dinner. We would be bored

home.”

MOM: “Oh my baby. We will have some braai. Your dad and brothers are outside the backyard by themselves. I think you should join them leave me with the ladies here.”

CHRIS: “Oh great! I'll check on them later.”

CANDICE: “What? No baby you can go and have all the time you want with your folks. I'll be here with your mama.”

CHRIS : “Are you sure?”

She nods. My mom allows us to get inside the house and I take my wife's luggage with me and place it in the guests bedroom. I walk to the kitchen and I find my wife in a deep conversation with my mom while she assist her with crushing biscuits with her hands. She notices I'm watching her and she wipes her hand with a damp dish cloth.

CANDICE: “Babe let me come with you.”

I take her with me to greet the rest of the family and they give us a warm welcoming. My sister doesn't know how to cook so she decides to join me with the gents. My dad is sitting on a bench and enjoying the shadow of the trees whilst my youngest brother Quinton and Billy the oldest

are busy preparing the meat by the braai stand. Naomi comes with two bottles of Windhoek beer for hers and me. I greet everyone and my brothers hug. My father is lazy to come to me so I walk to him and punch fists.

DAD: "I'm glad you could make it son. Where's my daughter-in law?"

Everyone is asking about her. It was my mom and now my dad? They must be loving their daughter in-law very much.

CHRIS: "She's with mom and helping out in the kitchen but you just say her not so long ago."

DAD: "I'm just making sure...."

He nods and looks at my little sister Naomi who proceeds to take a seat near the pool with her legs dipped inside the pool taking selfies.

Naomi? What are you doing there? Aren't you supposed to be in the kitchen too? I think they might need an extra hand."

She huffs and frowns.

NAOMI: "But dad...You know I don't know how to cook and

besides you know how mom gets along with Candice. I don't want to be a third party."

Billy laughs and interferes.

BILLY: "You are just coming up with unnecessary excuses."

NAOMI: "Whatever."

She continues with her selfies and I can hear the gents whisperingly gossiping about Naomi.

QUINTON: "How did she get married to Richmond if she can't even cook?"

DAD: "You can ask that again."

BILLY: "Maybe they hired a maid."

QUINTON: "Yeah probably but believe me bro I'm not going to marry and spend a lot of money to a woman who can't make a house full of warmth. As the man of the house you need to be happy as soon as you step your feet in the house and find your wife cooking. Not the one who lazily sits around and does nothing like her."

They all nod and my dad handshake him.

DAD: "You can speak some sense sometimes."

CHRIS: "And be matured for once."

He rolls his eyes playfully and we all laugh at my statement. We raise our bottles and did the cheers.

INSERT 24.

CANDICE.

My mood has literally gone up from a hundred to a hundred and ten percent. I don't why is that but I think it's the surprise I got from my husband and of course my sister-in law who took me out today to get both my nails and hair done. I feel good and pretty at the same time. Another thing was seeing my mother-in law. It has been a while and I'm happy that she still cares for us. Despite the fact that we don't pay her visits anymore but

she understands and she still kept the same old love for us. I get inside the house and I find her already done with making the desert. She walks me to dinning area to bond and catch up a little bit.

MRS SMITH: "So how is the pregnancy treating you so far?"

CANDICE: "Mhh nothing to complain about. The baby is doing perfectly fine with the help of attending my doctors appointments regularly. Nothing seems wrong with the baby but one question remains. The gender. Everyone is asking me about it."

MRS SMITH: "Hasn't Chris told you about the surprise gender reveal party?"

CANDICE: "He has but I'm just curious and the doctor refused to let me know."

MRS SMITH: "Oh you mean doctor Emily? I told her not to. She'll surprise us."

CANDICE: "So how long do I have wait?"

I'm getting really impatient. It's been months now and I'm close to my final week of labor. I'm tired of going to the mall and not buy my baby any clothes 'cause I don't know whether it's a girl or a boy. This is making things difficult for me and it can be frustrating at times.

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around the week before you're due."

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I jump in excitement. It's rare to have someone thrown for a baby shower or a gender reveal party at these certain times of the year.

Thank you so so much!"

MRS SMITH: "Don't worry about it. Chris told me about how you and your family never had such events.

CNADICE: "Oh yes. My great grandparents never done that in their early ages so it affected my mom's pregnancy too. She also believes it's nothing but a waste of money."

MRS SMITH: "I see. She's more like my best friend who never wanted anyone to throw a baby shower for her but guess what she did?"

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To come think of it that makes sense to me. You don't spend much on decorations catering and for so many things that will be needed for the baby shower. She actually did a pretty good job to come up with that solution and it helped to save money in people's pockets. That's what I would want to do but you can't do anything when the Smith family has done a decision.

CANDICE: So is she a single parent?"

She sighs.

MRS SMITH: "Yeah. She was married to this wonderful police who was mostly adored by the community. He was the best policeman you can rely on but unfortunately an incident took place and it took his life."

CANDICE: "What happened to him?"

MRS. SMITH: "We don't really know much but the investigators believe he was involved with dangerous people and those could possibly be behind his death."

Police and dangerous people? I'm not surprised.

I've seen a lot of documentaries on TV that deal with police living a double life. One is to be a good cop then the other life has to do with illegal

doings and breaking the law.

CANDICE: "Oh that's so painful. I'm sure it must have been hard for her to raise the child by herself."

MRS SMITH: "It was but with all the money that was saved by her husband it helped her and made a difference. Unfortunately they moved out a year ago."

CANDICE: "Yeah. It's better than nothing. I would start a new life to another place too."

She nods in understanding. I really hope her life and the baby is under protection. These guys who killed her husband may come for her. Mrs. Smith stands up from her seat and gives me a hand to stand up too.

MRS SMITH: " Enough with sad stories. Let's go and finish where we left off. The food must be ready."

CANDICE: "I'll meet you there in a second."

She nods and leaves.

Nothing is as sorrowful as that woman having to raise her child by herself. She has no one to lean on or even someone to give her a structural support when she's having difficulties in her life. What's even worse is not having an assistance to help her pay off and take care of both her needs and for the baby. I know you don't choose life for yourself and plan it the way you want it to be but I'm praying and wishing God to continue to protect my family all the way until my baby is fully grown up. I get off my seat and head to the kitchen. I find my mother-in law doing the dishes while she softly hums a song. That's her habit. As I'm standing by the door Naomi barge in with a tray full of meat on her hands and rushes off to put it on the table.

NAOMI: "Meat is ready!...."

She takes out the knife and cuts the meat into pieces. We had T-bone steak chicken and boewors.

Care to assist?"

She asks giving me an extra shape knife. I should be careful with the knife or else I'll cut myself.

CANDICE: "Sure."

MRS SMITH: "The food is ready too. I think we might as well just dish up for everyone."

I change the knife from the knife set. It's better safe than sorry. I continue to chop the meat into pieces. Once we're done I place it in the oven to prevent it from getting cold quickly. I go to the dining area to prepare the table for the whole family. I take out a white cloth from the chest drawer and use it to cover the table. I make the dining area to look more warm and welcoming. At the kitchen Naomi and her mom dish up in stylish plates

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so I place each plate nicely to every seat for each person while Naomi places fork and knives beside each plate.

NAOMI: "We're done. Now let's call them in."

Mrs. Smith and I take a seat while we're waiting for everyone to come and settle in. After some time we hear noise coming from the kitchen.

MR SMITH: "What? No. That guy knows nothing about basketball. He's just tall for nothing."

QUINTON: "Exactly dad! At least there's someone siding with me."

CHRIS: "Ugh whatever man. We shall see which club wins the finals tomorrow..."

They keep debating on each other until they enter

inside the dining area and find us waiting for them. They walk in and grabs a seat. Chris realizes he's two seats away from me.

CHRIS: "Uhm bro? Mind if we switch seats?"

QUINTON: "Oh no. Today I'll be seating next to my sister in-law and have a little conversation. It's been a while "

He smirks.

CHRIS: "Babe? Tell her you want me next to you and not him."

I laugh.

CANDICE: "Don't involve me in your problems and

besides we're sitting on the same table. That should mean something."

He starts to make the puppy eyes and focuses on his food. The day went on and on and everybody was eating and enjoying their food. We finished off with bottles of wine and champagne but unfortunately I had to drink juice since I'm a pregnant woman. As we're eating Quinton breaks the silent and looks at me.

QUINTON: "So how is the baby shower coming along? Have y'all thought about the decorations and the theme?"

MELISSA: "I don't know but I think Mrs. Smith has it all covered. Right?"

I look at her with a smile and she smiles back at me.

MRS SMITH: "Oh yes. She's right. Everything is sorted out but your opinions and views matter too so we need to come up with a suitable theme for both sexes."

I'm a bit worried because I don't really know which color will be best for boys or girls.

MELISSA: "I was thinking maybe we go with simple. Like

having rose gold with a touch of pink for the girls and sky blue plus grey for boys."

MRS SMITH: "Brilliant idea! What do you think Naomi?"

NAOMI: "It sounds great but I was thinking neutral colors. That will fit for a boy and a girl."

MRS SMITH: "That could also work...."

I don't know what to say but neutral colors are a top notch. If only there's a great set of matching colors.

I have something in mind and trust me this is going to be fun...

Everyone gathers together and listens closely to what she's about to say.

I think we should have fist theme for the first event. The other will follow."

I'm happy with all the ideas but I feel bad at the same time. I keep wondering how much are they going to spend on this and as much as everyone knows I'm not working it means my family-in law including my husband will take the responsibility of the costs and it's not fair to them. I have a lot running on my mind and I feel a

warm hand touching on top of mine.

CHRIS: "Are you okay?"

Now everyone's attention is on me. Chris and Steve decided to switch seats at last.

MELISSA: "Yeah I'm okay. I just need to go to sleep."

I fake a yawn and leave the dining area with my husband leading me to our bedroom. He helps me to take off my clothes and joins me to take a bath. We lotion our body and wear pajamas. I look at the time and it's already 10:00pm. This the perfect time for me to get some rest.

I prepare the bed for me and for my baby while he is busy shaving his beard at the bathroom basin. After a while he finds me laying on the bed. He walks to me and kneels down besides me. He slowly brushes my belly and a smile creeps on his face.

CHRIS: "What do we name our baby?"

CANDICE: "Don't worry baby. We'll figure out a name together when the baby arrives."

He runs his hands on my belly again for few minutes then makes his way to his side of the bed and switch off his left side lampshade. I do the same.

The following day I wake up to a very beautiful and delightful morning. The weather look so perfect too as I feel the morning breeze hitting my skin. I check the left side of my bed and my husband is sleeping so peacefully with his hand on my waist. I slowly remove myself from him and run to the bathroom to get rid of my morning smelly breath and wash off my face.

Minutes later after pampering myself I put on my white adjustable and elastic waist pants along with a solid crop tank top to provide a comfortable space for my belly. As I'm about to sit down and put on my running shoes I see Chris tilting himself back and forth to the bed. I walk to him and try by all means to make him stop. I catch his hands and put pressure on them. He stops and I see sweats running all the way down to his neck. His vest is so wet. I feel his temperature by gently placing my hand on his forehead and he's a bit warm. I lay myself next to the little space besides him and shake him by his shoulders to wake him up. It takes him few minutes to wake

up and looks at me.

CHRIS: "Why you waking me up so early in the morning
babe?"

CANDICE: "You were having a bad dream...."

He looks at me with worried eyes and sits up
straight then lays his head to the headboard. He looks at his pillow and this
sweat built a huge mark on it.

You don't remember anything?"

CHRIS: "Nothing at all."

CANDICE: "So you're okay? I have nothing to worry
about?"

CHRIS: "Yes baby. As you can see for yourself I'm
fine..."

He pulls me closer to his chest and gives me a
kiss on my forehead. Then his eyes run to my workout outfit.

Are you going somewhere?

CANDICE: "Yes. For a walk."

CHRIS: " Without me?"

CANDICE: "I didn't want to wake you up."

CHRIS: " I'm awake now and I'm coming with you."

He walks to the bathroom to do his hygiene

routine too meanwhile I make the bed. He puts on his shorts and a vest then

pulls a fresh pair of white socks from the drawer and shoes. We make our way to kitchen and Chris' dad shares

a smile as he sees us walking towards him. They share hugs and fits then he hugs

me too. We grab fruits by the fridge snacks by the cabinet and a bottle of

water in case of dehydration.

INSERT 24.

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CANDICE: "I'll meet you there in a second."

She nods and leaves.

Nothing is as sorrowful as that woman having to raise her child by herself. She has no one to lean on or even someone to give her a structural support when she's having difficulties in her life. What's even worse is not having an assistance to help her pay off and take care of both her needs and for the baby. I know you don't choose life for yourself and plan it the way you want it to be but I'm praying and wishing God to continue to protect my family all the way until my baby is fully grown up. I get off my seat and head to the kitchen. I find my mother-in law doing the dishes while she softly hums a song. That's her habit. As I'm standing by the door Naomi barge in with a tray full of meat on her hands and rushes off to put it on the table.

NAOMI: "Meat is ready!...."

She takes out the knife and cuts the meat into

pieces. We had T-bone steak chicken and boewors.

Care to assist?"

She asks giving me an extra shape knife. I should be careful with the knife or else I'll cut myself.

CANDICE: "Sure."

MRS SMITH: "The food is ready too. I think we might as well just dish up for everyone."

I change the knife from the knife set. It's better safe than sorry. I continue to chop the meat into pieces. Once we're done I place it in the oven to prevent it from getting cold quickly. I go to the dining area to prepare the table for the whole family. I take out a white cloth from the chest drawer and use it to cover the table. I make the dining area to look more warm and welcoming. At the kitchen Naomi and her mom dish up in stylish plates

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so I place each plate nicely to every seat for
each person while Naomi places fork and knives beside each plate.
NAOMI: "We're done. Now let's call them in."

Mrs. Smith and I take a seat while we're waiting
for everyone to come and settle in. After some time we hear noise coming
from the kitchen.

MR SMITH: "What? No. That guy knows nothing about
basketball. He's just tall for nothing."

QUINTON: "Exactly dad! At least there's someone
siding with me."

CHRIS: "Ugh whatever man. We shall see which club
wins the finals tomorrow..."

They keep debating on each other until they enter
inside the dining area and find us waiting for them. They walk in and grabs a seat. Chris realizes he's two
seats away from me.

CHRIS: "Uhm bro? Mind if we switch seats?"

QUINTON: "Oh no. Today I'll be seating next to my
sister in-law and have a little conversation. It's been a while "

He smirks.

CHRIS: "Babe? Tell her you want me next to you and not him."

I laugh.

CANDICE: "Don't involve me in your problems and besides we're sitting on the same table. That should mean something."

He starts to make the puppy eyes and focuses on his food. The day went on and on and everybody was eating and enjoying their food. We finished off with bottles of wine and champagne but unfortunately I had to drink juice since I'm a pregnant woman. As we're eating Quinton breaks the silent and looks at me.

QUINTON: "So how is the baby shower coming along? Have y'all thought about the decorations and the theme?"

MELISSA: "I don't know but I think Mrs. Smith has it all covered. Right?"

I look at her with a smile and she smiles back at me.

MRS SMITH: "Oh yes. She's right. Everything is sorted out but your opinions and views matter too so we need to come up with a suitable theme for both sexes."

I'm a bit worried because I don't really know which color will be best for boys or girls.

MELISSA: "I was thinking maybe we go with simple. Like having rose gold with a touch of pink for the girls and sky blue plus grey for boys."

MRS SMITH: "Brilliant idea! What do you think Naomi?"

NAOMI: "It sounds great but I was thinking neutral colors. That will fit for a boy and a girl."

MRS SMITH: "That could also work...."

I don't know what to say but neutral colors are a top notch. If only there's a great set of matching colors.

I have something in mind and trust me this is going to be fun...

Everyone gathers together and listens closely to

what she's about to say.

I think we should have fist theme for the first event. The other will follow."

I'm happy with all the ideas but I feel bad at

the same time. I keep wondering how much are they going to spend on this and

as much as everyone knows I'm not working it means my family-in law including

my husband will take the responsibility of the costs and it's not fair to them. I have a lot running on my mind and I feel a

warm hand touching on top of mine.

CHRIS: "Are you okay?"

Now everyone's attention is on me. Chris and

Steve decided to switch seats at last.

MELISSA: "Yeah I'm okay. I just need to go to sleep."

I fake a yawn and leave the dining area with

my husband leading me to our bedroom. He helps me to take off my clothes and

joins me to take a bath. We lotion our body and wear pajamas. I look at the time

and it's already 10:00pm. This the perfect time for me to get some rest.

I prepare the bed for me and for my baby while

he is busy shaving his beard at the bathroom basin. After a while he finds me laying on the bed. He walks to me and kneels down besides me. He slowly brushes my belly and a smell creeps on his face.

CHRIS: "What do we name our baby?"

CANDICE: "Don't worry baby. We'll figure out a name together when the baby arrives."

He runs his hands on my belly again for few minutes then makes his way to his side of the bed and switch off his left side lampshade. I do the same.

The following day I wake up to a very beautiful and delightful morning. The weather look so perfect too as I feel the morning breeze hitting my skin. I check the left side of my bed and my husband is sleeping so peacefully with his hand on my waist. I slowly remove myself from him and run to the bathroom to get rid of my morning smelly breath and wash off my face.

Minutes later after pampering myself I put on my

white adjustable and elastic waist pants along with a solid crop tank top to provide a comfortable space for my belly. As I'm about to sit down and put on my running shoes I see Chris tilting himself back and forth to the bed. I walk to him and try by all means to make him stop. I catch his hands and put pressure on them. He stops and I see sweats running all the way down to his neck. His vest is so wet. I feel his temperature by gently placing my hand on his forehead and he's a bit warm. I lay myself next to the little space besides him and shake him by his shoulders to wake him up. It takes him few minutes to wake up and looks at me.

CHRIS: "Why you waking me up so early in the morning babe?"

CANDICE: "You were having a bad dream...."

He looks at me with worried eyes and sits up straight then lays his head to the headboard. He looks at his pillow and this sweat built a huge mark on it.

You don't remember anything?"

CHRIS: "Nothing at all."

CANDICE: "So you're okay? I have nothing to worry about?"

CHRIS: "Yes baby. As you can see for yourself I'm
fine..."

He pulls me closer to his chest and gives me a
kiss on my forehead. Then his eyes run to my workout outfit.

Are you going somewhere?

CANDICE: "Yes. For a walk."

CHRIS: " Without me?"

CANDICE: "I didn't want to wake you up."

CHRIS: " I'm awake now and I'm coming with you."

He walks to the bathroom to do his hygiene
routine too meanwhile I make the bed. He puts on his shorts and a vest then
pulls a fresh pair of white socks from the drawer and shoes. We make our way to kitchen and Chris' dad
shares
a smile as he sees us walking towards him. They share hugs and fits then he hugs
me too. We grab fruits by the fridge snacks by the cabinet and a bottle of
water in case of dehydration.

CONTINUATION.

THE FOLLOWING DAY.

Nothing feels good to be waken up by a sound of birds and the sun hits warmly to your skin. It feels really unusual to wake up to a quiet house no music playing downstairs or even someone banging on my door to just call me down for breakfast. All of that thought makes me chuckle and I'm wondering how's life out there. Are the things still the same without me or things have changed?

I stretch myself and twirl around the bed to check the time and it's time for me to wake up. I grab my phone next to me and I check if I've received any texts or missed calls. I find millions and millions of SMS's from my mom. I look through the messages and I find a wonderful good morning text from Russ. I read and smile at it. I keep scrolling and I hear a knock from the door.

ZOLILE: "May I come in?"

She says talking behind the door.

MELISSA: "Yes."

I adjust myself by waking up and sit up straight on the bed. I bring along the bed covers right above my chest. I don't want my chest to be exposed to her. She's an adult and I have to respect her. She gets in and grabs a chair behind the desk and sits.

ZOLILE: "It looks different in here."

She continues to run her eyes around my room and looks back at me.

MELISSA: " I was just trying to make it look more like my style. I hope that's okay?"

ZOLILE: "Oh yes it's fine. You can do whatever. It's your room now. You can do anything you want so how was your first night? Do you like it here?"

MELISSA: "It was amazing. It felt like I haven't had good sleep in years. I don't regret my decision at all but it's really quiet in this area. How do you stay in a place like this?"

ZOLILE: "This is the burbs darling S-U-B-U-R-B. You'll get used to this.....

She spells that alphabetically. I laugh at her

funny face reaction. This woman is full of character and very dramatic.

Your mom said she can't get hold of you so I think

you should just call her back and hear what she has to say."

MELISSA: "I was planning to call her but it slipped

my mind....

I grab my phone besides me and dial her number. As I type the last digit she calls surprisingly.

It's her. Let me take this."

She nods and leaves. I take a deep breath and place

my phone on loud speaker.

MOM: "Oh Jesus! She finally answers my call. Where

were you Melissa? I've been calling you multiple times and you never bothered

to answer my calls nor my texts. What is it with you child? Are you trying to

raise my blood pressure high huh?"

Oh my gosh. The drama so early in the morning?

That isn't necessary.

MELISSA: "I got too tired mama and I'm sorry for keeping quiet and not saying anything. At least I'm here now and there's nothing to worry about. I'm fine and my trip was amazing. I enjoyed everything and I think I will have to use airplane for travelling transport from now on."

MOM: "You weren't scared at all or feeling nauseous? "

I laugh loudly. Back in the days I used to be afraid of getting inside the airplane. I always felt like something bad will happen. It could either run out of gas or it'll just stop functioning and we could all die. I think the contribution to my fears is heights. I don't like heights at all. I've tried to overcome that fear multiple times and my sister will be standing right by my side but it didn't make much of a difference. I'm still scared and nothing can change that.

MELISSA: "No. It was good mama. I enjoyed the ride. I wish you there and saw me."

She slowly cools down her tone of her voice as she speaks to me.

MOM: "I'm glad you made it my baby and I'm very sorry

I couldn't give you a proper goodbye. Your father forgot to give you my gift before you left."

A gift? By the thought of that a smile with a little bit of curiosity in it appears to my face.

MELISSA: "What gift?"

MOM: "I didn't want to spoil it but I guess I have no choice..."

She sighs.

I bought you sneakers and matching leggings. I really thought they might suit you but if you don't like them you can just bring them back so I can return them to the store and get you something else."

MELISSA: "I know you never disappoint mom. Anything is fine. As long as it's pretty and we both know I'm just a simple girl who's not really into expensive taste."

MOM: "Yes I know baby. That's why I don't mind spoiling you."

She starts to yawn and I can hear the sound of running water along with the clash of dishes from the background.

MELISSA: "You sound tired. I think it's better you go to sleep."

MOM: "Yeah eey. I'm really tired. That morning shift from work sucked me down. I wonder what led so many people to be in our hospital at that time. It's highly unusual to attend more than ten patents in the morning."

MELISSA: "You had many patients?"

MOM: "Yes. Someone who was supposed to knock in earlier on today has filed for a sick leave so I was forced to takeover."

MELISSA: "I'm really sorry mama. You need to stop the doing the dishes and rest. Let someone else take over."

MOM: "I wish but I still have some errands to run around the house. I should be done soon..."

She continues to talk until it is time I let her know I have to excuse myself and rush to the bathroom quickly.

Okay my baby. I love you so much. Please take good care of yourself. I'll deliver your things tomorrow and you should get them by

next week.”

We say our goodbyes and hangs up. Honestly there’s nothing as fantastically good with hearing the sound of my mom. I can tell she really misses me and I do too but unfortunately I can’t go back home. I’ve already made a decision to stay here and have new beginnings in life with the man I haven’t met yet I feel so connected to him. I know it’s too early to tell but I really do like him. He makes me happy and makes me love myself for the better. Even though I don’t know what he thinks of me but I think he may be the person I’ve been looking for all these years of my life and now he has finally found me. If this is love at first sight then let it be. I can’t run away from the fact that I feel something for him.

I rub off the thoughts and call my friend Thando.

We talk over there phone and she congratulates me with taking a big step to leave my house just doing it for the sake of Russ. She continues to tell me more about her issues with Sanele and how she thinks it’ll be a great idea for them to breakup. It’s heartbreaking to see these two being in such a tough situation. They always argue and fix things but this one is too much for them to handle it and I bare with my friend.

MELISSA: “What? No. Don't you dare think about that.

Why don’t you just ask him and see what he has to say about it?”

THANDO: “I’ve tried but I can’t. I'm afraid and scared to build unnecessary trust issues

between us. Trust me when I say things won't be the same if he finds out that I'm taking him as a cheating person whereas he's not."

MELISSA: "But how will you find peace in your heart? We are not doing this for him but for you. I want you to be happy again and leave alone this lonely and depressed Thando behind. Lock her in cages. I want my friend back."

I sigh.

THANDO: I will give it a try one more time but he's not home yet. He just left with his friend but as soon as he walks

through the door I'll settle him down and talk to him like adults."

MELISSA: "Yes. Just relax and be comfortable. You got this."

THANDO: "Thank you. I really needed someone I can talk to and I always knew I can count on you."

She further continues to tell me about her plans.

She plans to go and visit her family since we're done with the tests and come back after couple of weeks. It's doesn't seem like a bad idea.

I advice her to go and that will help give her a peace of mind. She agrees with me and says her goodbye and drops the call. I wake myself up from the bed and get inside the shower. I settle inside until I'm enough to come out. I drag my towel from the rack and wrap myself with it. I brush my teeth and comb my hair and make it two ponytails. I really love ponytails. They make me look cute. I go to my closet and pick an outfit. Today it looks chilled and relaxed so I put on my black leggings multicolor sleepers and a baggy black T-shirt with nothing underneath. I don't wear a bra when I'm not going anywhere. I finally do my last routine which is preparing and cleaning my room. The room looks clean and smells the lavender fragrance. I go downstairs to grab something to eat and I come across a strong smell of fried beacon coming from the kitchen.

ZOLILE: "You must be hungry."

MELISSA: "As if you knew. Please add an extra slices of bead."

ZOLILE: "I dished up four slices for you already. Isn't that enough?"

MELISSA: "Make it six. I'm starving."

She chuckles softly and shakes her head. She leaves the kitchen and walk to the sitting area. She laughs and continues to make the food. Once

she's done she calls me out and I find a nicely prepared small table with food on it. I take a seat next to my plate and she joins me afterwards. As you know how grown people can be

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she calls me out and I find a nicely prepared small table with food on it. I take a seat next to my plate and she joins me afterwards. As you know how grown people can be they always have something to talk about. She wanted to know whether I have a boyfriend or not. I said i don't have any but she failed to believe me. She further asks me what's my ideal partner and how I'm planning for my future but not to bore the whole conversation I made a little bit of jokes and everything went smooth. After eating she leaves me by the table and walk upstairs to take a shower.

I'm now alone and I decide to just do the dishes to keep myself busy. After I go to the dining area and take out my phone from my hoodie and call Russ but it places me directly on voicemail I did try to reach out to him once again and nothing. I wonder what he's doing. Maybe he's having a busy day or he's probably asleep .I notice it's too early for phone calls anyway. I take the remote and scroll through the TV channels and watch my favorite show The Keeping Up With The Kardashians.

After a while a knock on the door disturbs me

but who can it be? I pause the show and quickly rushed towards the door and

slowly open it. I come across to a bald head guy wearing just casual clothes but smart too. A multicolor striped print half button shirt with matching

shorts and pure white sneakers and has a bunch of red roses in his hands. He

looks like he's around the age of thirties. He's not good or bad looking but just

alright and his height blends perfectly fine with his body features. He looks really friendly

but looks can be fooling sometimes. I keep the door slightly open and take my head out.

THE GUY: "Hey. Can I find Zolile?"

MELISSA: "Uhm yeah but she's currently busy at the moment."

THE GUY: "Can I perhaps get in and wait for her?"

MELISSA: "Uhm I don't know about that. I mean I don't

know you and I'm afraid to let strangers in her house without her consent. I'm not prepared to fight with her."

He laughs and shakes his head. He pulls out his

phone from his cross leather bag and turns his screen to me. I look at it and it's a wallpaper of them kissing so they're girlfriend and boyfriend? Interesting.

THE GUY: "Now am I still a stranger?"

MELISSA: "I'm sorry. Come in."

THE GUY: "Don't worry about it."

He chuckles one more time and I let him in. Yeah he is very friendly. He directly leads himself to the sitting room. I guess his been in this house for quite sometime. I close the door and follow him from behind. He takes a seat and stares on his phone. The silence fills the room. I look at him and look back at the walls. He types something on his phone and puts it on the table.

THE GUY: "So you're the niece?"

MELISSA: "Uhm yes and how did you know that?"

THE GUY: "Your aunt was talking a lot about you. She told me you'd be staying with her until you're finally done with school is that correct?"

MELISSA: "Yeah that's right."

THE GUY: " That's good. I'm sure you haven't heard of me from her. Well its okay I understand. She wanted to keep our relationship private but I'll introduce myself on her behalf. I'm Thamisenqa but you can call me Tammy with double m and y at the end."

I like his energy. He's not really boring and

not only is his humbleness but he's cool to hang out with. I wonder how old is he.

MELISSA: "Oh Tammy. I'm Melissa. Youngest niece to my aunt and the most favorable one."

We both laugh.

TAMMY: "Is it? If that's the case then you're lucky."

MELISSA: "Why do you say that?"

TAMMY: "Well it's hard to get your aunt to actually like someone If you get what I mean."

So let me guess? She didn't like him the first moment she saw him. That's her playing hard to get.

MELISSA: "Uhm I think I do."

TAMMY: "Yeah. If you want more information she can tell you about it."

By hearing the sound of footsteps approaching from the stairs aunt Zolile appears in a beautiful tight and silky red dress with rose gold heels.

ZOLILE: "Tell who what?"

TAMMY: "Don't worry about it baby and woah look at you beautiful. You look sexy. Is this really you?"

He goes towards and gives her a kiss on the
lips.

ZOLILE: "No. Its someone else."

TAMMY: "I think I'm starting to fall for this new
person."

He said teasingly.

ZOLILE: "What? Over my dead body."

They both laugh and I disturb them from having a
good moment.

MELISSA: "Uhm.. Are you guys going somewhere?"

ZOLILE: "Yeah. I'm going out on a date but I'll be
back home later. You can have all the house to yourself."

MELISSA: "I'll take good care of it until you make it home."

ZOLILE: "Don't burn down my house."

MELISSA: "I promise you."

She leans on for another kiss. I've never seen her this happy. It warms my heart to know that she's in love with someone who loves her back. As I'm looking back at them my phone rings and I check the caller ID and it's Russ. I really want to answer but my aunt is here and I don't want to disrespect her so I hang up and place it back on vibrate but she notices it.

ZOLILE: "What are you doing?"

I fake a smile.

MELISSA: "Nothing."

My phone stops ringing and after few seconds it rings again.

ZOLILE: "You should answer that call. It might be important."

If only she knew it's a call from a guy that drove me here just to see him and start something together as I sense so much potential in us.

MELISSA: "I will."

She shrugs her shoulder and faces her boyfriend.

She whispers something in his ear and I could tell it's something dirty as her boyfriend's eyes lift wide open and his mouth too. They say their goodbyes and leave. I take my phone out and call him back.

INSERT 26.

RUSS.

My days have been like hell. I've always been busy trying to balance school work and run half of my dad's company The Skyline News. I know my sister is educated and all but she asked me for help in partnering up with her in running this business and I agreed to it 'cause there's so much management that needs to be done. Not only supplying our newspapers but to also manage the staff members inside the business. I manage the staff members and she takes care of the orders. Mom has been calling me almost everyday just to check up on me. She kept on insisting to give me more money and I don't want it. I want to be able to be on my own and I know that money she needs it more than I do. Not that I keep declining her offer but she really needs to understand that I'm a grown up now and I can manage to take care of myself with or without her help.

With school I've already registered myself and

I've already started attending school. I attend classes like any other ordinary

person and of course I still live in my house. I bought my car a week ago to a dealership. It's nothing fancy or expensive. I found the blue volkswagen polo 2018 edition. It's smooth and perfect. Starting a new school in a

foreign country it's very difficult and tough. Especially receiving mistreatment

from the guys. Others would give me bad looks. One asked for a fight and I whoop

his ass. Others would say bad things about my country and that would piss me off as if it's the only country to deal with such but

I'm being avoidable and it really helps. The situation with girls is much

worse. Girls have been liking me and bringing themselves closer to me. Others

would even claim that I'm in a relationship with them which is something I'm

used to back home but I never thought I'll be facing the same situation and here

I am dealing with the same issue.

Today I'm out from school and my phone is

placed on silent all the way home. I scroll through my phone and I see a missed

call from Melissa. My heart really melt and I feel bad that I left her hanging

and disappointed. I decide to give her a call back and after the second try she picks

up.

MELISSA: "Hey."

Oh man that voice gives me goosebumps and

butterflies in my stomach. I know it's rare for a guy to experience that but

someone's daughter just puts me in that spot.

RUSS: "Sorry I didn't answer your call."

MELISSA: "It's okay. I guess you had some things to do"

RUSS: "I was at first but the moment you called I didn't realize my phone was placed on silent and forgot to switch it on back to normal after class."

MELISSA: "Oh don't worry about it..."

I want to ask her why she called 'cause normally she doesn't call me not unless I do.

I called you because I have something to say and I thought you should hear it from me first before you can hear it from anyone else."

RUSS: "What is it?"

She sighs and all of the sudden..

I'm in Johannesburg!"

My heart almost stopped to operate for a while.

It was like the Earth just stopped rotating for a second.

RUSS: "What?"

MELISSA: "I know right? It's unbelievable but it's

the honest truth. I came in here yesterday and I thought perhaps it'll be a good idea to let you know."

RUSS: "That is amazing! Tell me when I can meet you? Just tell me now. I can organize for us a picnic date a movie date you know name

it all."

She laughs.

MELISSA: "Calm down will you?"

I can tell by just the sound of her voice she

is smiling and blushing throughout.

RUSS: "I can't Melissa. Just let me take you out. We can go for an ice-cream date? I know a spot we can go to."

MELISSA: "Ice-cream date it is but I'll let you know."

I'm on top of the heel. We continue to talk as she asks me about how my days have been to a new school if I've made any friends and how I'm adopting to this new environment. It's kinda tough but I'm coping.

I

enjoyed talking to her but she had to be somewhere else. We drop the call and I take a quick shower. All of a sudden a knock comes from my door. That catches me by surprise because I barely get visits around this time of the day and nobody knows me in this neighborhood yet. I quickly wipe my damp hair and wrap the towel around my waist. I head straight to the door and the post delivery guy gives me a white envelope that has a hand written of my ex name on it Angela.

It

takes me off guard. I don't know how did she find out where I'm staying and who even told her about my location? I take the letter with me to the bedroom and tear it open. I sit on the bed and read through the letter and it says.

My

dearest Russ.

I know

you'll be questioning yourself how did I get your address but your mom told me your whereabouts. I came by your house weeks ago to ask for any updates from you about the job offer to know if it still stands. I've been waiting on you but you went mute on me and I understand you have so much on your shoulders. I need you not to worry anymore. I moved out to another place. A friend of mine managed to get me a

cleaning job from one of the tertiary institutions and I was wondering since we're in the same country we could perhaps meet up and try to rebuild a healthy relationship. I know I've hurt you through the past years but I really want to fix things with you and continue where we left of.

Down

below it's my personal numbers. You can phone call me whenever like and at anytime. I'm down to have talks with you.

I hope

to see you around.

Love

Angela.

After

reading this letter just brought so many emotions roaming inside me. I don't know how to feel or even what to think. I loved this woman so much. I gave my all to her but she wasn't the one. She's the reason why we aren't together anymore. If she was not easily influenced by living the kind of lifestyle her friends cherish then I think we would've still be together but she chose to leave me for money and now she's pregnant.

I

don't want to feel pity or have sympathy for her but it hurts to think how she's struggling after that incident. She has totally become a different person and I want to help her where I can so she can bring her life back together and take care of her baby.

I notice

she left her numbers and I store them on my phone. I continue where I left off and put on a pair of black jeans yellow top and black all star sneaker. My stomach starts grumbling and I walk to the kitchen to make a simple tuna sandwich served with an apple juice. I move to the dining table and all I can think off is Melissa and Angela at the same time. This sucks. I don't know what I'm supposed to.

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SANELE.

Things between my baby girl and I have been really weird. It is very tense when I'm the house. We barely talk and all she does is to serve me food then excuses herself to the bedroom or sometimes I would ask her to join in for a movie and she'll agree but she will pay her

attention on her phone. Sometimes it hurts me to be with her by knowing what I did with her friend. I betrayed her trust and I'm sorry about that. It was all a mistake and it only happened once. I know the truth will reveal itself but I can't lose her. I would rather stay single than to be with someone else.

I leave her home asleep to go freshen my mind. I find myself chilling at the bar having my eighth bottle of Heineken beer. I called my friend Sifiso to help me clear my head off. He orders himself a bottle of Windhoek. I tell him everything and he couldn't believe it because he knows how much I'm committed to Thando and I promised her not to do anything that will put our relationship in jeopardy.

SANELE: "I'm telling you man. I really don't know what led me to be inside the bedsheets with that girl. I remember calling her over for couple of drinks because she had something to tell me and we had a civil conversation until one thing led to the other. When I ask her what happened she doesn't tell me anything. She leave me clueless."

SIFISO: "Are you sure this girl didn't pour anything to your drink? Who knows? Maybe she targeted to you to do something crazy and blame it on you once things get heated up."

SANELE: "But how can she do that to her own best

friend? Now things are not okay in my relationship and I think she could've told her. Phela (you know) this girl is capable of feeding nonsense to Thando to just ruin my relationship."

He shakes his head and looks at me with worry.

SIFISO: " Why did you even call her by your house from the first place? You guys could've grabbed those drinks from the bar and talked."

SANELE: "She wanted us to chill by the house so that nobody sees her with me and that could've made the neighbors to be suspicious so I thought it made sense and I took her in. We talked about my problems and shared hers with mine too. She begged me to talk to Thando and fix their friendship."

SIFISO: "You really messed up and you better sort this before she finds out."

SANELE: " Yeah I really don't trust her. She's been blowing my phone too. I don't know what she wants from me.

I sigh.

Noxolo is really a troublesome and I really want to get her out of my life before someone bad happens."

SIFISO: "Wait? Who? Noxolo?..."

I nod.

That's her friend you've been talking about?"

SANELE: "Yeah do you know her?"

SIFISO: "That chick is bad news. She's the same

chick that ruined Michael's relationship. Do you remember the case of Alice?

The homicide case? That chick Noxolo was found in a relationship with Michael

and she was led to be the one of the suspects in his murder case. It has been found that she did pay Alice a visit afternoon that day and after couple of

minutes she left. Only to find out she will be killed that day."

I don't know what to say right now. I am

familiar with Alice's murder case but I never knew it could relate to someone

we've been surrounded with through our entire lives. She's been closest to my girl but never in a day have I heard Noxolo discuss about anything that has to do

with murder.

SANELE: "I really should warn Thando about her. This doesn't feel right."

SIFISO: "But be careful bro. If you tell her

just make sure Noxolo doesn't find out for you and Thando's sake. Who know what she can do?"

He's right. If she knows she can either kill me

or my baby girl and I cannot let that happen. It does sound good to tell her

but it somehow it'll make her not to believe me.

My phone rings and it's Noxolo and she asks me for a meet up. I say my goodbye to my friend and I drive to her place. I park my car few house's from hers and phone call her. She walks over to my car and gets in the front seat.

SANELE: "What do you want?"

NOXOLO: "Not even a hello?"

SANELE: "Look I'm not here to be all nice to you. Can you just tell me what you want."

Sponsored

sans-serif; color: black; font-size: 12px;">NOXOLO: " Why aren't you answering my calls anymore? I thought you forgave me for what happened."

SANELE: "Forgave you for what huh? How can I forgive you when you're not willing to tell me about what happened that day. You leave me clueless and believe me you I know what you did."

NOXOLO: "What did I do?"

SANELE: "You poured something in my drink so that I can be uncontrollable and do something that will benefit you."

She laughs and looks at me.

NOXOLO: "Are you crazy? Do you think I can do that?"

SANELE: "Yes and you have reasons behind that."

NOXOLO: "I don't know what you're talking about but what we had can never be replaceable. What's done is done."

SANELE: "You're sick and I swear to God I will tell your friend what you did to me. I know for sure she'll believe me more than you."

She gives me the saddest look and pleading eyes.

NOXOLO: "No please don't. Okay I will tell you. That night I was in a bad state with my boyfriend. I needed someone I can talk to and you're the only person I can thought off. You called me to your place and you felt uncomfortable for me to be around. You wanted to be somewhere safer and we went to my place. I may have had something in your drink but it was meant for us to relax and forget all our problem. It was not to drunk you and take you to you bed. We kissed and you stripped me naked. I had condoms 'cause I know how guys can be when they get in the mood."

SANELE: "Are you fucken kidding me? Are you even aware this could jeopardize my relationship? Not to mention your friendship with her?"

NOXOLO: " I know and I'm sorry. I really didn't think it to could go that far but it happened. Please don't tell her. I told you what happened and you should return the favor."

I do want to tell her but I'll be risking my relationship. This can turn out good or really bad.

SANELE: " Okay I won't and you should promise to stop calling me. I am not your boyfriend."

NOXOLO: "I promise."

She zips her mouth using her finger. She gets out of my car and I drive back home in hope things will be different. I drive to Nandos to get us something to eat. It's already twelve o'clock in the afternoon and I'm sure she's awake. I also buy the snacks of her favorite. I make it home safe and I find her in bed watching TV. She looks at me and tries to smile as I pull out a bag of Nandos behind my back.

THANDO: "Are those for me?"

SANELE: "If only you promise me you will stop being mad at me as if I've done something wrong."

She comes to my direction and sits on the edge of the bed.

THANDO: "I'm not mad. I'm just worried about our relationship. So much has been going on and I really don't know how to say this to you."

SANELE: "Say what? You know you can always talk to me baby."

She sighs and walk back to the kitchen. She moves the plastic bags on the counter and jumps on it to sit.

THANDO: "Firstly what I'm about to ask you is serious. Don't take it as if it's something I made out of my mind and lastly I need you to be honest with me so that ngizothola ukuphumula entlizweni yami. (so I can find peace in my heart.)"

SANELE: "Anything baby."

THANDO: "Are you cheating on me?"

SANELE: "No baby. Why would I cheat on you knowing that I have everything I need from you?"

Fear hits me. I've never been this scared in my life and I'm afraid she already knows what happened between me and Noxolo but if it's the truth that she wants to hear then I'll most likely to tell her.

THANDO: "Really? Then why is a pack of condoms doing in your car?"

SANELE: "There's no pack of condoms in my car. I really don't know what you're talking about. Where are you getting this?"

She snaps and starts to cry.

THANDO: "So I'm lying?..."

Before I can say anything she asks for my car keys and I give it to her. She leaves the house and I follow her behind. She gets inside the car and comes out with a box of condoms. I really don't know how that got in there but she comes and makes it to my way angrily.

What's this? Huh? Explain yourself?"

People's attention is drawn to us but she keeps on talking and doesn't care who's looking at her.

I try by all means to calm her down but she doesn't want to. Instead she raises her voice even louder so

that people can intentionally see what is this all about.

SANELE: "Babe can you please calm down and get inside the house so we can have a proper discussion about this whole thing."

She lowers her temper and gets inside the house. She wipes her tears falling from her cheeks with just a palm of her hand. I run to the bathroom and give her a toilet roll just in case she breaks down and cries again.

THANDO: "Why are you doing this to me Sanele? What is it that I do wrong huh? I'm trying by all means to be the best girlfriend I can possibly be and this is the thank you I get from you?"

I humbly kneel in front of her and hold her hands but she removes them.

SANELE: "I'm going to be honest. That pack you found in my car it's not mine. I don't know how got in there and I don't recall going to the store to get those. I truly respect you and I don't look at any woman the same way I look at you. I stick and own up to my own words. I made a promise to forever be with you no matter what but that box doesn't belong to me I swear."

She calms herself down but hiccups seem to bother her. She wipes off her tears and looks at me with sad eyes.

THANDO: "You don't how much it hurts to see that pack every time I enter your car. I don't even get enough sleep for that matter 'cause it's stressing me out and I've always wanted to confront you but I was scared of your reaction. From what you said right now I don't know what to believe in anymore."

SANELE: "Baby please trust me. You know I won't do anything to hurt you."

THANDO: "Then who does it belong to? I know it's not your friend Sifiso or Kelvin 'cause those two would never do that and disrespect us. So who is it?"

I really want to put the blame to Noxolo but I'm unsure if she's the one who's capable of doing such. She spoke of condoms earlier today but I doubt she brought them over to my car.

SANELE: "Okay I'll find out who did this then I'll let you know. Right now let's enjoy the food and be ourselves again. I really missed you."

She leans for a hug and squeezes me tightly. After couple of minutes I set the dining area cozy dimming the lights connecting to Netflix through the smart TV whilst she organizes food for us in the kitchen.

INSERT 27.

RUSS.

FEMALE VOICE: "Fuck fuck fuck yes yes right there oh my goshhh baby yeah yeah."

RUSS: "Is that good? Huh?"

FEMALE VOICE: "Yeah! Ahh ahh ahh ahh.."

RUSS: "Keep grinding on that dick like that oh shit yes baby work on it like that."

Chantel increases her speed and my balls keep clapping on her ass as she goes up and down with my hard dick inside her pussy. I hold her by the waist to give her balance and rock me on. Her pussy is wet as she keeps on leaning on her round fat boobs on my face. I take one nipple and suck it nice and slow whilst I play with the other to my left free hand. I get her off me and flip her back. Her ass is looking at me and I her stretch marks. I give them a kiss. I admire the tiger lines. They look so natural and attractive. I lick my hand and apply the saliva to wet my dick. I shove it and she cries. The more she cries the more I feel her pleading for more. I grab her by the back of the her neck and get it deeper. I move my pace and fuck her faster. She bites and grabs my velvet sheets.

CHANTEL: "Yes yes daddy..."

She talks in between her cries. She uses her hands to open for me and I tell she wants every piece of me and I'll give her exactly what she wants. I flip her back to face me. I rub my dick at her clit and she plays with her boobs. She licks her lips sexually and surprisingly she grabs my dick and slowly gets it in my herself. I groan softly and I'm speechless. I lean myself on her and I'm not making mercy to that pussy. I fuck her good and she keeps digging her nails to my skin. I can feel it boiling and I'm about to cum. I drill her couple more time and she starts to shake her legs uncontrollably and rolls her eyes like a demon. I pull out too and release my cum too on her tummy. It feels so smudgy and messy. I lay next to her and her breath is shaky. We're both soaking and we exchange looks and laugh all of

sudden. I join her and she gives me the kisses on the lips and leaves me naked in the bed to take a shower. I realize a from where she was. That could be her sweat. I'll change those later. I still need to relax and my breath. What just happened is unexplainable. It's been a while I had sex and Candice blessed me with a blast orgasm. My pull out game is good but I almost cummed in her. My heart is still pounding fast but I'm happy I pulled out on time. What we had was meaningful me. She's not just anybody. She's my friend. I pull the sheets and put them inside laundry bin. I'll wash them later.

I ask if I can join in and she agrees. We enjoy our bath as we help one another to scrub our backs. I really feel tempted by her body want to hit her inside the shower one more time but I hold myself and focus on getting myself cleaned up. We finish bathing applying lotion and put on back our clothes. She didn't have any fresh clothes and I offered her my clothes but she reused so I let her put on the clothes she worn yesterday. She goes to the kitchen and prepares lunch for us. She makes pancakes with a maple honey syrup and scrambled eggs with fried sausages and a homemade mango juice.

CHANTEL: "I hope you like it."

She serves me and we shift to the dining area.

The awkwardness is now filled inside the room. She keeps staring at her food and doesn't eat. Is she regretful for what happened earlier? I clear my throat to catch his attention. I

hope she doesn't keep quiet and not talk to me about it. I need to know what's going on inside her head. It's better I apologize.

RUSS: "I'm sorry about what happened."

She looks at me with confusion and finally takes a bite from her food.

CHANTEL: "What are you sorry for? You don't have to feel guilty. I wanted this...."

She gets hold of my hand.

"We wanted this."

RUSS: "How am I not supposed to feel that way when you've been quiet? You barely even looked at me."

CHANTEL: "I feel bad for coming here. I made a promise to keep our friendship faithful but not this..."

She takes a big gulp from her juice.

I really appreciate everything and I enjoyed every moment I had with you but this just feels wrong. I know you don't know

much about my life but I'm in a complicated relationship and all I needed was comfort. Not specifically from someone like you but to someone else and I used that on you."

Candice came over for drinks last night. I'm always alone so I called her in. We drank so much and I can barely remember what we've been talking about but I remember her telling me about her relationship problems and I told her too. Yesterday was just a day to share our problems.

RUSS: "You mentioned that yesterday. I know about your relationship. I know how your boyfriend has violently hit you and throw you in the street or to bring girls in his house in your presence. I know everything and it's okay. I'm not mad at you or be regretful for what happened...

I cup her hands and bring them closer to me. They feel so soft and warm.

I'm here and forever will be. If ever you want to runaway from that beast you know where the safest place you can be and that's where you are right now."

I give them a soft kiss and she looks at me blushing.

CHANTEL: "Thank you but what will happen to me if you find someone? Is this going to

end?"

I'm a loyal dude and I wouldn't want to do that to my partner.

RUSS: "I'm afraid yes but you can always come here to protect yourself from harm. I would feel bad if something terrible happens to you."

She smiles and stands up for a hug. She leans on my chest and I lay a soft kiss on her forehead. She looks at me with teary eyes and we share a kiss. Her ringing phone startles her and she goes to fetch it. She answers it and place it on loud speaker.

CHANTEL: "Joy what do you want?"

JOY: "That's not a proper way to greet your fiancé."

CHANTEL: " Do you think I give a shit? And I'm not your fiancée. I have not agreed to your proposal."

JOY: "Hey calm down. I did not call to argue with you. I just want you to come back home. I miss you."

CHANTEL: "You miss me for what? To be your

punching bag that releases you from stress? To make me a joke in front of your
whores? Why can't you just treat me good like any other dude would do their
girlfriends and protect them? The neighbors have tried talking some sense to
you to stop treating me like trash but what do you do? You make fake promises to fool them. I keep
falling for your words and I still end up getting hurt...

Tears starts to fall down her skin and I help
her down to take a seat.

You don't love me. You just want to use me for
your own good. I'm tired of you. I'm tired of running around your gigantic
fingers as if my life revolves around them. I'm tired of waking up and having to recover from the body
aches or applying makeup to cover my bruised my face. I don't care how much money you make in less
than a week or how my much you make my family happy I don't give a shit and I'm
breaking up with you right now. I'm coming over there to fetch my stuff so you can leave my fucken life
alone and for good."

Joy laughs and clearly the guy doesn't care
about Chantel's feelings. I'm just happy she broke up with her but I hope she won't
run back to his arms again. I've seen women getting abused and they still return
to the very same people who hurt them.

JOY: "Oh no I'm gonna cry. Chantel is
leaving me.....

He fake cries and takes this whole thing as a joke.

I want to say something but it's not my place to interfere to their business.

Hahaha fuck you. Do you really think I'm going to feel bad for you moving out? I don't care. You'll find your clothes packed and waiting for you by the doorstep. I don't want you anywhere near my house. You can keep all the clothes I bought for you but not the car. I want it back and my house keys too."

CHANTEL: "Fine! I'll be there in an hour."

She hangs up in aggression and asks for a glass of water. She takes a drink and looks for her purse and her car keys. She finds them and puts on her sneakers.

RUSS: "I'm coming with you."

CHANTEL: "No it will cause more drama and I don't want anything to happen to you because of me. It's fine I'll go."

RUSS: "Okay but promise me you'll come back."

She nods and does the finally touch ups on herself and leaves. She comes to me and gives me a goodbye kiss. I don't know what to call this with thing between me and Candice. I do like her and she's great but I don't think I want to date her and build something her. Our friendship is not like any other ordinary friendship. This is mixed with so much emotions and trust we have for each other. I feel like I messed up too. I told Melissa how I feel about her a while ago and she didn't tell me how she feels about me. I promised myself to be the woman I sleep with but she is taking too long. I'm tired of waiting for

someone who doesn't know what she wants. I broke my promise but I'll make sure she doesn't find out about me and Candice relationship.

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CHANTEL.

AN HOUR LATER.

I drive to his home and knock. Surprisingly a girl who looks more like a stripper approaches me by the door. She is chewing her bubblegum loudly and what's irritating the most is the too much makeup she has on her face. It's early in the morning and she already looks like a clown.

She hands me a bunch of clothes in a big plastic bags. She calls out for Joy and he comes out giving her neck kisses.

CHANTEL: "You just couldn't wait for me before you can bring this thing here." CHANTEL: "You just couldn't wait for me before you can bring this thing here."

JOY: "Watch your mouth."

CHANTEL: "What are you going to do? Hit me?"

He clenches his fist and he calms himself down. He doesn't hit me around his whores. I guess he doesn't want to show them how sick he is.

JOY: "Give me what belongs to me and leave."

I throw the keys at him and he quickly catches them before hitting the ground. Without saying any last words he closes the door behind me and I take my phone to request an Uber ride to home. It comes and picks me up and I pay off my driver and walk inside Russ's house. I find him playing FIFA video game online and he smiles when he sees me approaching through the door.

RUSS: "Alright man I'll be back later."

He pauses the game and puts his headphones on the table. He helps me to carry my luggage to the guest room.

CHANTEL: "Can I stay here for a while until I find my place to stay?"

RUSS: "Sure. No problem. Just make yourself home and you can stay here for as long as you need."

He high fives me and goes back to his game. I

unpack my clothes from the plastics and I find most of the clothes that were bought

by my ex. I place them inside a separate plastic bag so I can give them to

charity tomorrow morning. I put the rest of my clothes nicely inside the

wardrobe. I'm wearing yesterday's clothes so I change to a blue tight

high-waist jeans a white laced crop top and sleepers. I walk downstairs and prepare something to eat

for lunch. I make homemade cheese burger and fries. Russ finds me chopping

onions and slicing tomatoes. He comes and takes a seat to keep me company.

CHANTEL: "How was the game? Did you win?"

RUSS: "I wish I did but my teammates weren't

focused enough to aim for the highest score."

CHANTEL: "What was the score?"

RUSS: "4-6"

CHANTEL: "Not bad though. You're just two scores

away."

RUSS: "Yeah. So what are you making?"

CHANTEL: "We keeping it old school. I'm making the old classic American cheese burger and fries."

I learned this from my aunt. She gave me the secret recipes since she would go to America and come back after some time. Her intelligence got her overseas. She wanted to become a chef and she has opened her first restaurant in San Francisco.

RUSS: "But you belong to the newest generation."

CHANTEL: "I know. Don't spoil the fun."

He laughs and makes his way to the dinning area
meanwhile I continue where I left off. I feel happy and free at last. I won't be getting any beatings from Joy. That man is not good. He was perfect fine the first time we started dating then he changed. I don't know what went wrong. We were happy and be free to one another but who would've thought I would turn to be the victims of gender based violence? I feel stupid for staying in that toxic relationship but it wasn't my fault. I blame it on love. If it wasn't for my heart then I would've left him a long time ago but I couldn't 'cause I loved him dearly. He was my first boyfriend to tolerate his nonsense and I'm done with that. No more relationships until I'm ready to give it a try again.

My name is Candice and I'm twenty-three years old.

I'm light in color. I have faint eyeliner and tiny eyebrows. I'm a blonde with mid brown eyes. I have a nose and nipple piercing. Those are biggest obsession and addiction too. I wanna pierce more. I'm short in height but I love wearing heels

to make me look taller. I'm slim but thicker on my boobs and ass. I did my boob job

when I was nineteen and my ass recently. I was tired of feeling empty. I needed

my woman features to appear like everyone else's and the doctors helped solve that

problem. I may look fake but it's my happiness that counts. I rent property to make a living and my life is simply with a little touch of an expensive taste.

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MELISSA.

Nothing feels good to make shopping with my

aunt. She always make sure I get something that will put a smile on my face.

I'm just glad she became my gym partner and not that she wanted to but I had

to convince her. She recreated a room in her house for workouts and I'm so

excited about it. We don't get to spend more money for a gym. Today I wake up

early and head downstairs to the gym area. I did few push ups jumping jacks

planks and cycling too. I want to do more but I can't take the muscle ache

anymore.

I immediately rush to the shower and thoroughly remove all the sweat. I wrap the towel around me and as I make it to my room I find aunt Zolile's bedroom door slightly open and I pass by but something takes me back and it's the sexual noises of a female voice moaning. I take a peek and I find her laying on the bed with her legs wide open facing the laptop that is playing sex video. I can't really see what kind of material she uses 'cause the laptop is right between her legs. She continues to masturbate with whatever that she's using and I can tell she's enjoying it. She keeps rolling her eyes and crawling her legs. She even has the headphones on her ears to get the full blast of sexual noises. She continues to play with her boobs and it's my first time seeing my aunt butt naked. She leans on her front to reach for the drawer and takes out a vibrator shaped like a real dick. She switches it on and place it inside her pussy. She moans louder but quickly covers her mouth to keep it lower. She works it out as she pulls it in and out as she fantasies the dick she sees on pornographic video through her vibrator.

I don't know what's happening to me but her moaning turn me on. I've always been curious how it feels like to have a dick inside a woman's vagina. I heard it's painful for a virgin but at the same time all about pain and pleasure. I walk away to her room and get to mine. I take my laptop and search for sex videos. I haven't done this in a long time but I want to do it now. I've heard many people talk about the Brazzers page and I click onto it. I find a various to

choose from and I just decide to watch ordinary sex.

I look at it and I'm extremely horny. I use my fingers to rub my clit. I do it very nice and slow but little did I know I can feel something like to urinate and it's only just a squirt. I continue to play around with my pussy and inserting my finger. It is painful but as soon my finger got in the pain became less. I worked my finger inside out and keep moaning. As soon as the video would end I'll move on to the next one until I'm satisfied.

After getting my satisfaction I make my way to the toilet and pee. It is actually longer than I thought it would be. I return back to my room and change the bedsheets and put the ones with a mark inside the laundry machine. I go back to the bathroom to take a shower and prepare myself for the day.

I put on an army green jumpsuit and white all star sneakers. I tie my hair and lay down the simple edges. Before my aunt can

notice I put on fresh sheets meanwhile the machine is doing the work. I make my way to the dining room and she comes in to join me.

ZOLILE: "How long have you been here?"

MELISSA: "About few minutes ago."

ZOLILE: "Oh.."

She is in her pajamas and looks nervously at me.

MELISSA: "And you woke up very late today. Where you that tired?"

She laughs and runs her fingers to her thighs.

ZOLILE: "I was very tired. Tammy kept me up all night on the call and I couldn't excuse myself from him. We slept in the morning...."

The washing machine stops and she looks at me with confusion.

"Are you doing laundry?"

I can't possibly tell my aunt I was fucking myself

and I released on her bed. That will be ridiculous of me and weird to share her my personal bedroom affairs.

MELISSA: "Uhm not really. It's just the bedsheets. I realized when I woke up this morning that they have a blood stain on it."

ZOLILE: "Oh do you have pads?"

MELISSA: "Yes I do."

ZOLILE: "Okay. I'm going to take a shower."

She stands up and leaves. I knew for sure she wasn't going to tell me what happened in her room and I laugh at that thought. I get a notification on my phone and my calendar reveals it's Sanele's birthday. I send a text message to Thando to pass it over to her boyfriend. She replies back and sent me a video of her preparations for his party.

"I really wish I was there to see his reaction. What you did right here is really pretty."

kissy emoji.

THANDO: "I know right? But don't worry birthdays are celebrated every year so for his next birthday I want you to be there."

“I will. I hope you guys enjoy it today and we’ll talk later.”

She ends our conversation with heart emojis. I

logout on WhatsApp and grab myself a bowl of the remaining sour cream popcorn I

left inside the snack drawer to the kitchen last night. I continue to watch the Ex On The Beach TV show.

INSERT 28.

THANDO.

My days have been hectic. I don't know if I should really trust my boyfriend anymore. At some point I believe it's not his fault but he can possibly cheat on me. I really love him wholeheartedly and I don't want to lose him so I try by all means to forget about what happened and move on from it before it makes things mentally and spiritually worse for me. Yesterday I went to the mall to add on the gifts

I bought for Sanele a few weeks ago. I bought his favorite food and lots and lots of balloons. I went to Look & Listen store to get our photos combined together to make it a single piece of artwork. He knows how much I don't like it when his friends are all over in our apartment but I invited them over to celebrate his birthday with my him. I bought all the booze and champagne needed to keep the lunch celebration party going. One of his friends organized a photographer as a gifting Sanele and he doesn't know about that. I find it very sweet of him. His brother Mfundo and his half sister Mary agreed to join us. Today it's going to be perfect and I'm so excited.

I know there's so much that needs to be done but I wake up early in the morning to start with the preparations. I look behind me and Sanele is in his deep sleep. I take a shower and put on my casual grey biker tight shorts and his oversized plain black vest. I'll wear a better outfit later after I've pushed halfway through. I call Kelvin one of Sanele's friends and he answers.

KELVIN: "Who's this?"

THANDO: "Kelvin it's me."

Sanele's girlfriend."

KELVIN: "Oh what
can I do for you this morning?"

THANDO: "Since you know
what will be happening today I want you to call Sanele for hanging out or
something. Just keep him away from the house."

KELVIN: "How long will
that take?"

THANDO: "It shouldn't be
long. I'll text you when I'm done."

KELVIN: "It's fine. I'll
bring him over to my place."

I thank him before he could hang up. I try to sneak in to the bedroom and I find
him wide awake. The door is opened and I
see him talking over the phone while yawning and stretching himself. He smiles
as he sees me standing besides the door and opens his arms open for a hug. I
walk over and throw my hand around him. He picks me up and my legs are covered
around his waist. He talks a little on his phone and drops the call.

SANELE: "You look beautiful baby."

THANDO: "Thank you and happy
birthday to you birthday boy."

I give him a kiss on the lips. He smiles at me
and pulls me down.

SANELE: "Thank you baby. That
means a lot."

THANDO: " Who was that on the
phone?"

SANELE: "It was Kelvin. He
wants us to hangout today but I don't feel like it and I told him no. I wanna spend this day with you..."

I did not expect that. That's new. Normally he
would go out and celebrate his birthday with his friends during the day then
spend it with me later at night. I look at him with a smile and I try to kiss
him. But he pulls his head back.

My morning breath. Let me
brush my teeth."

He leaves and walks to the bathroom. He leaves the door open and I can hear the water run. I join and stand besides a door frame. I think of what Sanele did to his friend. He really has taken me by surprise. I watch him rinse his mouth and wipes his hands with a towel. He approaches to my direction and kisses me. I grab both his hands and place them from my back. He grabs and squeeze my ass. I moan softly and he stops. We gaze into each others eyes and he smiles. Gosh his perfect and those stainless white teeth. They are my biggest turn on.

THANDO: "Baby I think you should you go and see Kelvin. I don't mind. "

SANELE: "Really?"

THANDO: "Yeah. Anyway I have my nail appointment at 11. I'll see you when you get back."

I did organize to go to the salon and fix my nails.

It's been a while since I had done a manicure. I don't need long nails that will be a struggle to use them and I want Sanele to leave anyway so I can start doing my work. Time really flies and I'm only left with few minutes to make this party a success. He gives me the confusion looks and goes inside a shower whilst I do the bed and clean our bedroom by putting everything back into place. He comes back after half an hour with a towel placed around his waist. I can see his V line down below his abs and that makes his body to be even

more sexier. He laughs at my distracted facial expression and he continues to get dressed. He puts on his newest black and grey asics sneakers that I bought for him last year for Christmas. He puts his black sweaters and a white Gucci designed t-shirt tucked in. He puts on his favorite silver necklace and a silver rolex watch. He goes over to grab his car keys by the drawer and pockets his wallet to the back pocket of his jeans.

SANELE: "I'll start by the barbershop to get a haircut. I don't like how it looks."

THANDO: "Finally you get to spoil yourself. That's a great start."

My man doesn't love to spoil himself. The only thing he bought himself and that is expensive was getting an apartment.

SANELE: "Your man has to look good."

THANDO: "I agree."

He leans over for a kiss and leaves the apartment. Meanwhile he's gone I start to set everything up. I mop around the house to remove the little dirt from the floor and around the surfaces. I blow the balloons using the gas blower. I used his favorite colors silver yellow

and black. I place the balloons to our dining area wall and put the table in the middle of the room so that every gift I got for him will be clear enough for him to see them. I start to wrap each gift with a black paper gift wrapper to blend very well with the theme and place them to the table according to their box size. I take the black rose pedals I ordered from Takealot app a week ago and use them to decorate the floor from the kitchen front door and all the way to the dining area then I hang a small sign outside the gate that'll lead to the back door entrance. I head to the kitchen to prepare a light dessert. A banana cake with caramel syrup. I place it on the fridge to cool off. I place this three step cake next to the gifts to give it a complete look. I grab my phone to call Kelvin to come over and the rest of the crew. As I wait for them I cancel my appointment to home. I send my location and a young lady is delivered to my house and she does my nails. Stiletto is my favorite design but I need to change to something new and she suggests I should do square. She does my nails pretty well and they look good in black with tiny little golden stars. She finishes and leaves. I change to my white floral long and off shoulder with long sleeves designed dress. I put on the matching silver necklace and earrings along with the rolex watch for women he bought for me but it's made out of a bracelet design and very portable to wear. I put on my pencil heels and style my braids to a bun. I do my last touches on my makeup and apply a red cherry lip gloss a foundation and watery eye liner to make my looks pop out even more. Even though I just keep my looks simple but I'm pretty. After what seem like an hour I take out the lingerie and place it right on top of the bed with red pedals around it. I dim the lights switch on the heater to low to keep the room cozy and leave the room. I rush to the kitchen to separate the food into different bowls. There's

seafood and fried chicken and buffalo wings served with fries and cheese burgers. Then healthy food for vegans. I hear a knock on the door and his friends arrived earlier than I expected. I ask them to help me out with the final touches and everything turns out perfectly! I stand and look around the room and it's beautiful. I really hope Sanele would like this. His friend help themselves with snacks meanwhile we wait for the others and the birthday boy himself. A knock comes and it's Sanele's sister and his brother. I can't believe they came through. The three of us share a group hug.

MARRY: "Long time no see."

MFUNDO: "Yeah. I never thought I'll hear from you guys. Ever since you both moved here you became distant. What's going on? Siyaxabana yini?" (Are we good?)

THANDO: "No don't take it that way. We've been busy and we don't have the time to ourselves either but I promise you from now we'll try to visit you. I'll talk to Sanele about it."

We share a hug once again and Marry looks around the crew searching for something.

MARRY: "I don't see my brother. Where is he?"

THANDO: "He should be here in
any minute now."

Speaking of the devil Kelvin makes it to door while
holding Sanele with his eyes blindfolded. They make their way to us and I'm
signaling everyone to stay quiet.

SANELE: "Don't let me fall
man."

He says nervously and Kelvin balances him until
he places him right in front of the middle where everyone can see him. He
removes the blindfold and...

"SURPRISE!!!!"

His eyes run around the room in confusion and
later on he adjusts what's happening around him and smiles. He joins the crowd
and everyone greets him with handshakes and throwing pump fists. His female friends
give him hugs. I give him to engage with his friends. He notices I'm looking at
him and he whispers something to his friend and comes to me. We both share a
kiss and unexpectedly the photographer captures that moment. He hugs me
tightly and whispers to my ears.

SANELE: "How did you manage

to pull this off?”

SANELE: “How did you manage
to pull this off?”

THANDO: “I used one of my
tricks.”

SANELE: “Thank you baby. I
don’t know what I’d do without you.”

I feel a warm tear drop falling down my right shoulder.

THANDO: “Don’t cry baby. This
should be a moment of happiness.”

He breaks from the hug position and gives me
kisses on my face numerous times. He goes to interact with his friends whilst I
place the candles inside the cake and light them on. I call in everyone to
gather around in a circle and sing a happy birthday song. He smiles and his eyes
glued to me. He makes his wish blows the 24 design candle. He grabs a knife and
cuts a big chunk of cake for himself and eats it. The rest was cut by Marry into
slices and gives each person a slice of cake. I leave her to take care that job
and I walk to the kitchen. I grab the black paper plates and dish up for
everyone and serve them what they will want and prefer to eat. The booze is cold

enough and everyone is enjoying to be part of Sanele's birthday lunch. There's soft music playing by the background and everyone is interacting with one another. Few hours later he settles down to a chair and opens his gifts from me and from his friends. We all get him the common thing the sneakers but various types. We know how much he loves sneakers. He receives colognes a play station 5 money expensive bottle of wine and sports clothing items. He gets extremely excited for his gifts and thanks everybody. He walks over and stands in front of the crowd with a glass of wine to his hand clears his throat.

SANELE: "May I have your attention please?..."

We all looked at him and the room goes dead silent.

Everyone grab a glass I have an announcement to make...

I pull bottles of wine and everyone pours themselves wine and wait for Sanele's little speech.

Thank you. I don't want to waste any more minutes but I'd love to take this chance today and express my emotions. I'm more than grateful for you guys coming to celebrate this special day with me. I know some of y'all compromised so much to be here and that really means a lot. The expensive gifts were not really necessary but you bought

them anyway and I appreciate them. As long as they didn't drain your pockets then I'm okay...

We share a laugh and his eyes land on me and I look away blushing. I can't help but to look again at him.

Baby I'm out of words for what you did today. You always have surprises for me each and every year. I don't know how much I can do to show you how much you mean to me. You've been nothing but the best girlfriend I could ever ask for and you're the reason I'm the man I am today. I thank you so much for bringing everyone together even my family over there.

He points over to his siblings who are leaning back on the table.

Thank you Marry and Mfundo for pulling over. I know you came a long way to be here and it shows you're my only family. Now let's continue to have fun and please drink responsibly the party is not over yet."

It pains my heart to hear him talk about family.

I wish he knew where his biological parents are. When he told me about his past I was pained. Who would give birth to their baby and give him away? I'm grateful she was wise enough to place him for adoption. He was found and moved with a loving family. They accepted him like he's their own. His siblings are not his biological

but the love they have for each other is out of this world.

We clap hands and he joins his friends. The photographer captures tons and tons of pictures with Sanele and his friends. He takes pictures of us by the garden with his arms wrapped around my waist and when he would lift me up and give me a kiss. The day is fabulous but the fun has to come to an end. I check my watch and it's 10 o'clock. The people in this neighborhood are strict. They don't want any events to be held until the next day. They have a time limit and you should obey it or else they'll call the police on you and you'll either be forced to pay a fine or be arrested. We explain to everyone about the situation and they become a disappointed but we assure them to look for a better venue next time. They say their goodbyes and leave. Marry and Mfundo booked a BMB for a night and they will leave tomorrow morning. The house isn't that dirty. It needs a little sweeping and washing dishes. I do exactly like that. I'm really tired and tipsy and I do things slow but with the help of Sanele we try to push to finish. We take a shower together and he immediately throws himself to bed. I find my lingerie pushed on the floor pedals are messed up. I look for a plastic and tidy them. I tie it and throw it in the bin. I put lotion and get dressed to pajamas. I pick my lingerie fold it nicely and put it inside my wardrobe. I don't bother to tuck us in bed 'cause once he's asleep it's hard to wake him up. I place his phone besides him and it beeps a text message from an unknown number that reads..

“Happy birthday Sanele. I know we don’t talk but there was no need for you to keep me uninvited to your party. I wasn’t going to come anyways ‘cause your girlfriend would be around and I respect her so much. I hope you still remember what we agreed on. I’m making sure. I’ll see you soon. Bye.”

Who is this? Seems like a female but everyone was invited unless there’s a new friend I don’t know about. What did they even agree on? Curiosity roams inside me but I let it slide. I turn off the lights and drown to sleep. The following day I wake up around 8:00am in the morning to prepare food for Sanele. I look at him with his brown lips screaming to be kissed. I lean over and place a soft kiss on his lips and a creep smile appears on his face. He opens his eyes slowly until they’re facing me.

SANELE: “That was a good way to wake your me up...”

He rubs my hands in a circular motion.

You should do that more often starting today.”

I nod happily in agreement and he brings me closer to his chest. I can still smell his cologne and they’re worth a fortune and money he spends on each of them. We look into each others eyes and we kiss.

I pulled off and ask him to relax I'll bring him breakfast in thirty minutes time. He continues to lay in bed placing the pillow behind him to support his back by the headboard. He has the remote with him and scrolls through the TV channels. I walk to the wardrobe and shove the lingerie in the front pocket of my pajamas pants and luckily he didn't notice. I walk slowly until I make it to the kitchen area. I place it on top of the kitchen counter and prepare his favorite bacon and cheese omelet breakfast served with a pineapple juice along with fresh diced strawberries and a plain yogurt for dessert. Everything is coming together and that gives me time to do my things. I quickly go to the bathroom to change to a lingerie. It is actually difficult than I thought to put it all together but I manage to pull few strings. I head back to the kitchen and place his food on a tray. I gently open the door and I find him throwing his phone angrily on the bed. All the reaction I've been wanting to see from him is not there. He eases down as soon as he sees me standing by the door. He smiles and walks towards me with his hands open.

SANELE: "Are you trying to land me to the hospital? Or you're just teasing my bad boy purposely?"

THANDO: This was supposed to be worn last night but you were tired. I would've given you this....

I turn around and a smirk appears on his face. That's exactly what I want to see. I can tell his horny by his pants and I'm really not in the mood to fuck than to have this moment and enjoy eating breakfast together

in bed. His dick is pointy but I try to ignore it and make my way to the bed. I

place the tray in the middle of the bed. He comes behind me and works his dick on my ass.

Babe?"

SANELE: "You turning me on with that outfit on."

THANDO: "Yes. That's the whole point but we can't do it now..."

I stand straight and face him.

Let's enjoy our breakfast and we'll deal with it later.

SANELE: "But babe? How do you expect me to swallow my food without choking when you're wearing that thing? You're not making things easy for me."

I bust into laughter and I sit on the bed. He joins me with a sad look on his face and I give him his plate. We say a little prayer and start digging. I look at him as he enjoys his food and I curiously want to ask him who was he talking to. That wasn't a good call.

THANDO: "Babe is
everything alright?"

SANELE: "Yeah why?"

THANDO: "I saw you getting upset
over the phone and I've never seen you like that. Who was it?"

SANELE: "It's no one babe. There's
nothing to worry."

THANDO: "That didn't seem
like no one to me. Something is going on and you have to tell me."

He takes a deep breath and sighs.

SANELE: "Okay. It was just
one of the insurance companies. I was supposed to pay them twice this month and
I don't have that kind of money."

THANDO: " Oh. So that was it?
There's nothing else you want to let me know about?"

He looks at me furiously.

SANELE: "No Thando. Can you stop asking me questions. I don't know what else you want me to say. You asked me to tell you and I did!"

His voice grows louder and louder. I'm not sure if he notices that he's shouting right now.

THANDO: "Okay I'm sorry. You didn't have to be that mad loud. I heard you."

We continue to eat our food in awkward silence. He realizes I'm not in the same mood like before. He places his food on top of the chest drawer and kneels in front of me. He tries to hold my hands but I remove them. He bows his head down in embarrassment and sighs heavily.

SANELE: "I'm sorry baby..."

I keep quiet on purpose and continue to eat the remaining pieces of bacon in my mouth.

I'm just stressed and I know that doesn't give me any right to talk to you like that. Please forgive me?..

I keep staring at my food silently. I wonder what's

going on with him. We had a perfect night and we woke up in a good mood. Now all of a sudden he gets mad and shouts at me.

I keep staring at my food silently. I wonder what's going on with him. We had a perfect night and we up in a good mood. Now all of a sudden he gets mad and shouts at me.

Say something...

He ask me pleadingly and I push him back to lay his ass down to the floor so I can move away from him. I take his plate and mine to the kitchen. I return back to our bedroom to gather my toiletry bag and outfit for the day.

So that's it? You're just going to ignore me for that careless mistake?"

I turn around in anger with my hands cross folded.

THANDO: "Careless mistake? You call that a careless mistake Sanele? Don't you dare start with me please."

SANELE: "But I apologized."

I take my shoes under the bed and leave him
without the urge to say any word to him. What makes me to be upset is lies. I don't
think to receive any insurance company call can get someone to be this mad. I know it's something
more than that and I'll have to find that out. The quicker the better.

INSERT 29.

A WEEK LATER.

CANDICE.

Someone is knocking by the door and I open to see who it is. I find Katherine with a bunch of files in her hands. She let's herself in and takes a seat by the dining area and places the files on the coffee table. She splits her for people she sees potential to work for us. She's been wanting to hire people and I gave her that job. I know that I can trust her and she can do good.

CANDICE: " Want some tea? I have coffee and juice too."

KATHERINE: "Water will be fine..."

I nod and walk to the kitchen to grab her water from the fridge and give it to her. She takes big gulps and burps. She must be dry and thirsty. She apologizes in embarrassment and I take a seat next to her.

I know I came unannounced but I really want to get this over and done with. Time is not our side and production is slow.

CANDICE: "But you could've called and I would've organized a place for us to meet. Just to keep it professional and you're lucky my husband isn't around."

KATHERINE: "So must I be worried?"

CANDICE: "No but he'll be home soon."

KATHERINE: "Okay I'll be quick..."

She lays out her papers correctly and takes out a note pad from her bag.

Okay in here we have people who filed in for this job position and quite a number of people are interested. We found males

who are fond to work with us. Right here....

She shows her note pad

we have names

of people whom I think will fit enough for this job but we only have ten positions to fill and I only have fifteen people. This is the list of all names their personal details and their CV's.....

She gives me the papers and I page through them.

I see different people from different places. Many have job experiences but not involved in the production industry. Others have a great potential in representing themselves at the last page of the CV. They attached their photos so I know who I'll be working with. I look through each applicant until the last one catches my attention .

KATHERINE: "Lastly we have Angela Robinson. She is a twenty-two years old and she doesn't have any experience at all but we can use her. She dropped out of school at grade twelve. She has lot of ambition and is capable of handy work. Surprisingly enough she's from Nigeria."

CANDICE: "Angela? Does she have kids?"

I don't want people with kids. I've dealt with those workers before and they were troublesome. They would file a sick report

or use their kids as a way of skipping work so I'm just tired of working with these people.

KATHERINE: "No. She didn't include any of that information. I don't think it was necessary."

She shows me her profile and she's pretty looking. You can tell by her looks that's she's younger and I don't think she's capable to work in a factory.

CANDICE: "Did you include age specification in that advertisement?"

She shakes her head no.

KATHERINE: "I thought age wouldn't matter and as much as our productivity increases each week I think we need active people like Angela or Rose or Sydney. Such youngsters can be worth giving them a try."

I sigh and look at the files of people who are younger. I don't know how to feel about this. People at her age are my biggest issue. Those are even the worst. They work reckless. I had an employee who almost lost his hand. He made wrong things and the machine stopped working then he decided to use his hand and fix it little did he know the machine was still turned on. Luckily he managed to pull his hand out of the machine. I was

left terrified to see the camera footage and that's when I decided not to hire anyone younger than the age of thirty.

CANDICE: "But we must be careful. I don't want to be running behind them as if I'm reprimanding toddlers to do their work. I don't want people to laze around during working hours. We need serious and hardworking people."

She nods okay and scribbles something on her iPad.

KATHERINE: "Okay I'll conduct an interview with them and I'll let you know how it went."

CANDICE: "You better."

She smiles and looks at me.

KATHERINE: "We really miss your presence at work. Everyone is asking how you're doing and when are you coming back."

My staff is the best. I love them wholeheartedly. They do their work with dedication and hard work. They make sure to meet deadlines every now and then they wouldn't let me down and I wouldn't let them down either. They're my family and we grew this business together.

CANDICE: "Worry not. As soon as I deliver this baby I'll make it to work. Speaking of work....."

I stand up and reach for baby shower invitations those were placed inside the cabinet in case someone comes up but I know what I want.

Please give this to everyone at work. You guys are invited to my gender reveal party. I wouldn't leave you guys behind."

She looks at me excitedly and gives me a hug.

KATHERINE: "Thank you so much. They gonna be excited..."

She admires the invitation card and puts them

inside her bag. She gets to pack her stuff until we are disturbed by the sound of a closed door from the kitchen.

Katherine gives me the frightened look and I ask her to ease down and relax. My husband makes his way to the dining area and finds us pretending to be taking selfie pictures using her phone.

I think I should get going."

CHRIS: "Oh no. You can stay. I didn't mean to interrupt your little business. You can continue."

KATHERINE: "It's okay Mr. Smith. I was already on my way out."

CHRIS: "Oh okay..."

He takes a stare at Katherine but she doesn't pay
him attention.

Do I know you?"

KATHERINE: "I don't think you do Mr. Smith.
Maybe you just familiarize me with someone else."

CHRIS: " Right. You can call me Chris."

She nods and I walk her out to her fancy black
Range Rover sports car.

CANDICE: "I'm sorry our meeting had to be short but next time book a place we can use for such. I don't want husband to know any of our little business."

KATHERINE: "Yes boss. I'll see you around and thanks for the invitations."

We share a hug and she drives off. I walk inside the house and Chris is busy at the kitchen refilling water to the kettle and plugs it on.

CHRIS: "I've never seen that face in here. Is she your new friend?"

CANDICE: "She's a friend from high school. She came here for a business trip and I called her over. I thought that wouldn't be a problem."

CHRIS: "Oh no baby. You can hang around with anyone as much as you want."

CANDICE: "Oh..."

I walk pass him to the fridge and take out grapes.

I feel like snacking chips but I don't want to add extra weight on me.

CHRIS: "The papers she had what were those for? I saw you putting them quickly inside her bag."

CANDICE: "She was just showing me a display of her work. Nothing much and just like she said she was leaving and I helped her pack."

The water finished boiling and he completes his cup of coffee. He takes it with him to the dining room and switches on the TV to watch a soccer match.

That was almost close. I don't know what he would've done if he finds out but one thing I'm sure about he's gonna be upset.

I have an appointment date with Nicole and her friend Jessica. She thought it would be a good idea to get away from home and meet

the world again. The weather seems a bit cold. I don't know what is going on with this weather lately. I put on my black tight leggings comfortable reebok sneakers with a mustard t-shirt. I grab a fluffy coat just in case I make it home late. I let my hair loose and grab my clutch bag that has my cellphone my purse and extra necessities. I walk to my husband and kiss him goodbye. I ask Chris to drop me off and he agrees. I wait for him to change to something else as he'll be going to his friends too.

FEW HOURS LATER.

We arrive and I kiss him goodbye.

CHRIS: "Give me a call when you get home."

I leave

his car and walk inside the building. It's classy and beautiful. I look around me and it's really empty but I think people have better things to do than to spend their hours in this place and besides it's during the week. It looks quite fancy and is most definitely Nicole's kind of style. The hostess comes to me and gives me a warmly smile.

HOSTESS: "Candice Smith?"

She asks politely. It's rare to find a place that welcome people in this manner. I think I'll come here often.

CANDICE: "Yes that's me."

HOSTESS: "Okay. Please follow me."

She walks me in to the VIP area and points to the

last corner table. Nicole spots me and waves her hand to join them. I walk over and she give me a hug.

NICOLE: "I thought you wouldn't make it."

CANDICE: "Why wouldn't I?"

NICOLE: "I know how feisty my brother gets when you leave the house with that pregnancy."

CANDICE: "Oh please. I need some fresh air."

She nods in understanding while looking at her friend who is busy staring at her phone. She pokes her by the shoulders and she finally realizes my existence. She comes over and hugs me too.

JESSICA: "It's so wonderful to finally meet this mysterious woman that drives Chris crazy."

CANDICE: "The one and only."

NICOLE: "She's the one who helped with the invitation cards."

I'm in shock right now. Who would've thought this precious lady in front of my eyes would be so creative. I know looks don't say anything but judging from her looks she's doesn't look like someone who's hands on.

We grab a seat by the couch and the waiter comes
take our orders. Since this place serves wings

Sponsored

we order chicken and buffalo
wings with BBQ dipping sauce.

NICOLE: "How have you been?"

She asks looking at me. I let saw Nicole the
night I stayed over to her parents house for dinner.

CANDICE: "You know how pregnancy can be. This
baby is really making my life a living hell but I'm trying to keep up with

it.”

JESSICA: “You must be tired. Have you tried going to a spar? I’m sure they offer service for pregnant women.”

Spar sounds good and I never thought about it. I should tell Chris and ask him to tag along. I could use some company.

CANDICE: “I’ll think about it. I just can’t wait to get in the delivery room and get baby out.”

NICOLE: “Don’t worry. You’re a two months away.”

JESSICA: “So how are the preparations getting along? Have you guys distributed those invitations or you guys still need

more?"

CANDICE: "No they're enough for now."

JESSICA: "I'm left with many surpluses. You'll let me know when you need some."

I nod and she takes out her phone to check the notification that appears on her screen. She can't stay away from her phone.

NICOLE: "Everything is coming okay. Just a few touch ups here and there. My mom is good with organizing and it'll be all worth it."

CANDICE: "Your mom has done so much already and

I don't know how I'm going to repay her. This is over my budget. I can't keep taking things from you her and the anyone else."

NICOLE: "Oh no you're family now. We got you.

Just let us take care of you."

The waiter comes and serves us with our food and we start eating. We take pictures and ask Nicole to share them on my phone. I send one to my husband and he reacts with a heart emoji. The day goes we'll with the girls and I enjoy spending my hours with them. This feels like it's something brand new. I've never went out for a while and it's feels like my first time.

Jessica

is not as bad as she seems. She is very friendly and reminds me of Melissa. She contributed to my baby shower

with all her efforts by providing the invitation letters for me. She made them

look very beautiful and inviting. I told her do neutral colors to match with

the theme color and she gave me exactly that.

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REGINA.

Here I am waiting impatiently to get my nails done. The queue is very long and I've been here for almost two hours. I've been wanting to leave but there's no any other place I can go to that's near. This salon normally gets packed towards month end but it's the middle of the month and it's already this full. How annoying. There aren't even enough sits. I have to stand on my legs until the next person is called to do her hair.

Few minutes later my nails are done and I go back home to visit my mom. It's been a while since I last saw her. After James leaves for work I decide to pay her a visit. I get off the taxi next to the stop sign because the street law to this place has prevented the taxi's to operate within their houses since there's too much hooting going on. I walk few kilometers and make it home. I softly knock on the door and my mom is in shock to see me and I'm not surprised. I would be in the same scenario like her to see my child who left almost a year ago. She stands there without any movement for a while and she hugs me. I hold he tight and the scent from her hair hits my nostrils. We break away from the hug and she smiles at me.

MOM: "My baby. Come on in..."

She let's me inside the house. I head to the dining area and she comes with a bowl of cookies in her hands and a big glass of ginger beer. My mom loves to make ginger beer. I used to drink it a lot when I was younger. I would come home from school and a small mug of ginger beer with a polony sandwich will be waiting for me on the table.

Here's a snack."

She gives them to me and I take a bite.

REGINA: "As if you knew how much I've missed these."

MOM: "You barely visits me and I don't know why. Is it really draining your budget to come and visit your family?"

REGINA: "No mama. It's just that I have a lot going on. My work is hectic. I was supposed to be at work but I filed a sick report. I don't want to work today."

Working to a retail shop is rubbish. You only get one day off and that's it. I want a job that can level up my standards. I need to afford my own house and have my own car but that will take me a while. As long as I'm still on that job then there's nothing that's gonna change.

MOM: "Aren't you afraid you'll get fired?"

REGINA: "No I'm not. Unless someone goes behind my back and calls the manager to tell him about my whereabouts."

MOM: "I won't do that. I know you're tired and you deserve a break but it's no longer in my hand to report you for not going to work. You're old enough now to make your own decisions. You know what you're getting yourself into."

REGINA: "Relax mama. I'll go to work next week."

She huffs and looks at me in worry. Next week is just in two days.

MOM: "So what brings you here? I know for sure you came for a reason. You don't just come here for a random visit."

She knows it already. I take a deep breath and start to worry my doubts.

REGINA: "I know this might sound ridiculous but I wanna hear from you."

MOM: "What's wrong? Is it James?"

REGINA: "It's not him. I don't know maybe it's him but his ex seems to be the issue. We met her at the mall a while ago but something wasn't right when we left home. He completely changed. I don't know if it brought back memories with her or he never thought he'll see her again."

MOM: "Maybe the poor guy felt guilty for what he has done to her. Don't forget he cheated on her with you. You're the reason they are not together."

Wow. Who is she siding with? Me or Melissa? I can't believe she said that. All I thought we're both on the same page but I guess I was wrong. She pictures me as a relationship wrecker.

REGINA: "You didn't have to spread it on my face though. I know what I did and I admit I was wrong but I'm not the only one at fault."

MOM: "I'm sorry my baby. I just had to make you understand. Some men can't really get over their ex's but I'm not saying he is. I'm just worried he might run back to her arms and we don't want that. That boy is too good to let him slip through your hands."

REGINA: "James is mine and he loves me mama. He can't go back to her arms. If it takes me to fight for our love then I will. I'd rather lose a battle knowing that I've done something. My life will be miserable without him mama."

Worry is written all over my face and I can't help but to imagine my life without him. It will just be terrible. There's no one who has ever shown me the love and affection like he does. Yes he cheated on Melissa with me but that doesn't mean he can hurt me. At times we meet people with bad relationship history but when they meet that right person they'll do them right and I'm that person. We've been together for four years and that should mean something about the intentions he has for me.

She grabs my hand that is laying on my thighs
and gently squeezes it.

MOM: " I know my baby but leave a room for
disappointments. I know how much you see him as this good guy but he can still
hurt you one way or the other. As much as he cheated on his ex there's a
possibility he can still do it to you. No one is close to perfection. Just know
that. I was like that with your father thinking he wouldn't do anything bad to
hurt me thinking he was a great guy until he laid his eyes on another woman
and we divorced. I was hoping and wishing for him to realize where he went
wrong and come back to me but he didn't and it was too late. That woman had
him like this.....

She makes fist and shows it to my face.

And she fell pregnant. I couldn't believe it when
he came to tell me those news. You can see from that moment that stress was

killing him but he became all right. As much as I loved him I had to let him go because he was a father to someone else now.”

REGINA: “Does this mean you forgave him?”

MOM: “My heart gets broken every time I see him coming over here. I loved your dad so much but I don’t think he knew that. Enough about your dad. This is about you. If someone can’t get over their ex is a serious problem but I need you to watch out. It’s for the best.”

I sigh deeply and bow down my head rubbing my fingers.

I have regrets why we even went to that mall from the first place. Maybe if we stayed home and things would’ve been better. Maybe he would’ve kept his focus on us and stop worrying about the things he did to his ex. What’s done is done and we move on.

REGINA: “I’ll keep an eye on him and fight for

my relationship. I'd rather lose knowing that I tried fighting with my battles."

She nods and goes to the kitchen with my dishes.

I walk with her and make my way to exit the house. She stops me and gives me a hug.

MOM: "I'll be here when you need me and do me a favor?"

REGINA: "Yeah?"

MOM : "Don't sacrifice your happiness for him."

REGINA: "I promise."

She breaks the hug and pecks me on my forehead.

I walk out of the house and make it to the taxi rank. I catch a taxi and drives me back to the apartment. I look over to the garage and his car is not there. I get inside the house and make my way to the bedroom to remove my shoes. My toes are really painful and I think it's caused by wearing tight fit shoes all the time. I need to give them break and wear sandals more often. I massage my toes as the moan escapes my mouth in satisfaction. My phone rings and I take it out from my purse and look at the caller ID it's him.

REGINA: "Babe?"

JAMES: "I've been trying to reach out to you and you're not answering my calls. What's wrong?"

REGINA: "I'm sorry. I was out to check my mom."

JAMES: "Oh what did she say?"

REGINA: "Ahh it was nothing. Just talking
about life in general."

JAMES: Oh okay. Are you home now?"

REGINA: "Yes."

JAMES: "Okay I have something to talk to you about but we'll discuss it when I get home. Sharp."

Without waiting for me to respond back he hang up. Just like that. I don't let small things bother me. I
continue to massage my toes

with a foot cream and put on my socks. My mom's cookies and ginger beer didn't do any justice. I'm still

feeling hungry so I grab my phone that is laying next to me and order KFC pieces of chicken Mr.D food app. I'm

sure when James comes back from work he'll be hungry. I place my phone and look up to the ceiling. I feel so many emotions running inside me. I feel happy sad worried you name them all. Having that talk with my mom wised me. There was a lot I didn't consider first and she made me to think out of the box now. I need to put myself first more than anyone in this world I need to accept that James is not only perfect but he can make mistakes like everyone else I need to fight for our love before it's too late. I won't allow some stupid ex come and ruin what I have with James. No. I'll make sure he doesn't hurt me like my mom said he would most likely to and she might be telling the truth but I'll fight as soon as I see it coming. I won't just sit back and relax. A woman needs to fight for what she loves and that's exactly what I'm going to do.

INSERT 30.

JAMES.

I knock off early today at work and I can't wait to be with my woman. I get home and hang my jacket behind the hooker that's on the door.

"Babe!?...Baby?"

Regina? I'm home!"

I get no respond. I look her in our bedroom sitting room bathroom backyard and she's not there. I grab my phone and it leads me to voicemail. I send her voice message to call me back. I walk to the kitchen to get myself a drink. I don't feel alcohol today. I make myself a glass of juice and chill at the sitting room. I open the windows to cool this room down and switch on the TV. I really don't matter what is playing on TV. My mind immediately rush to Melissa. I don't know what is happening to me and I don't like it. I don't want to be feeling this way about someone else when I have my Regina but my heart is betraying me now. I don't realize my heart is crying for my ex. I thought I would never see her after that terrible break-up with her. I feel bad for doing that to her and I'm sure she hates me for that but I don't blame her. I would feel the way if I was in her shoes. While we're at the mall I wanted to talk to her more and apologize decently but the timing was bad. Lately I've been wishing to bump to her one more time. Just one more time but I don't think she'll want to see me. I remember she gave me her numbers and stored them. I have attempted to call her but Regina will be pissed if she finds out I'm still in contact with her. I just have to make sure I keep this a secret. Staying at home and alone will make me think

about everything. It's better I call my friend Tshepo to join me to at the bar. I find his number on my phone. It rings and he answers.

TSHEPO: "What's good man?"

JAMES: " A lot is going on. Are you busy? I was hoping we could chill?"

TSHEPO: "Yeah. I'll be there."

I'm glad he agreed to chill with me so I prepare myself and we're going to bar. Few minutes later I get a knock on the door and it's him. We pump fists and I tell him we we're going. He waits outside his car and I lock the house. I get in and he drives. The bar is not so far from my house so it takes us twenty minutes to get there. He finds a good spot and parks his car. We walk out and enter the bar. As always the place is full and the atmosphere is here smells beer. We make our orders and we walk outside to chill at one of the beach benches. It's better to be here than inside and be with those people. I tell Tshepo about Melissa and he was shocked as I am.

JAMES: "Man I don't know where did she get all the looks but I'm telling you when I say she's different. It's like I'm seeing her but trapped in someone one else's body."

I take a sip from my water and he gives me the stupidest looks. Maybe I'm sounding crazy right now.

TSHEPO: "Are you serious?"

JAMES: "I'm dead serious and I found her talking with my girlfriend under the same roof. I wonder what they were talking about but surprisingly they seemed to be getting along very well. I never thought I'll see them like that ever."

TSHEPO: "Wow man so she's really looking hot?"

JAMES: "I think there's something she does to keep her looking like that..."

He nods thoughtfully and leaves a smirk on his face.

Don't tell me you'll go for her."

TSHEPO: "I didn't say anything."

JAMES: "That's my ex dude. Don't even think about dating her 'cause it's not going to happen. Not in my presence."

He raises his left eye brow.

TSHEPO: "Are you going to be jealous?"

JAMES: "No."

TSHEPO: "Then what's your problem? Angisho you have Regina and you're happy with her? So relax. I'm not going for her. Besides you'll never know if she's happily in love with someone."

JAMES: "Nah man. She looked single to me."

TSHEPO: "Then let me have her."

JAMES: "I dare you."

I give him a deadly stare. I don't know why I'm feeling like this towards her. I thought the feelings for her are gone but as soon as I saw her that day it's like everything just went back to its position. It felt like she was there waiting for me and to love her again but I can't. There's someone already in the picture and I love her more than anything in this world. His laugh tackles me and I laugh back with him.

TSHEPO: "I'm kidding man. I will never do that to you. We're brothers and real bros don't go each others backs so do you

think you'll see her again?"

JAMES: " I don't know but I bet I will. She's been very distant lately and I'm sure she's making it hard for anyone to find her. I don't even know where she lives but she has to be somewhere around."

TSHEPO: "Do you have her number?..."

I nod.

Then what are you waiting for? Call her.

JAMES: "I don't know man. Even if I call what am I going to say?"

TSHEPO: "I don't know. Tell her that you're hypnotized by the beauty of her looks..."

I look at him frowny and he laughs. The waiter comes with our drinks. I told myself I won't drink today but I need something strong and help me forget about Melissa. Tshepo takes his castle lite beer and I'm drinking a double scotch whiskey on ice.

Okay look. I don't know what's going on between you too but don't call her. You don't what to expect so it's better off you

leave her alone.”

JAMES: “Now I’m confused. What are you trying to say to me?”

TSHEPO: “It’s not worth it. You have Regina and stick to her. She’s a good a woman...

His phone on of a sudden rings and he takes it out from his front pocket and answers it.

Hey man.... I’m chilling with my friend.. yeah....

Okay.... That’s so cool man! Where’s the occasion?... Okay....Okay.. I don’t know but I’ll ask him and I’ll let

you know... Okay bye....

He hangs up and looks at me with a wide smile.

You are going to love this.”

JAMES: “What is that?”

He takes a sip from his fourth glass of castle lite beer and runs his finger to his beard.

TSHEPO: “Do you remember Themba? The guy who

owns Rocco Mama's at Bophelo Mall? He's opening a new branch in Pimville. He would love us to go with him and give him our support. Who knows if he might give us a job and work for him? You can even bring your meddie(girlfriend) it's fine with him."

I'm not really sure if it's a good idea but since Regina loves to travel around she will want to tag in and be part of this whole trip.

JAMES: "I think she'll be pleased to go with us but what about work?"

TSHEPO: "I know you how much you hate working for that old White man. That is not even a job it's slavery. He is just using his workers so he can benefit from them. Working as a farmer and taking care of those crippled chickens and goats as the sun is blazing hot then when you receive your salary you earn peanuts. The inflation rate is high and the food is expensive and you can't get yourself anything with that money. Not to mention how it won't make you buy you and your woman a house. I know how much you want to make that to happen. Same as I do but I can't keep working for that family. I have great qualifications to earn a proper job and a salary like everyone else but this economy is messed up so I've asked Themba a year ago to hire us if anything comes up and this is it. This is our chance to live a better life."

JAMES: " But how can can do this without consulting me first?"

TSHEPO: "I never said he hired us. I just gave him the benefit of doubt you might want to be one of his employees."

I sigh and think about what he said. Working in a farm is no child's play. Having to take care of animals making sure you provide the correct amount of food making sure they drink water and making sure there's nothing around that can harm them. Doing that everyday is straining my energy and to think of the amount of money I get breaks my heart. I don't know if its racism but no one is allowed to be treated like a piece of trash after their hard work. I would've resigned a long time ago but it's scarce to find a job lately and I had to make a living for me and my girlfriend. No company is willing to hire people and work for them but luckily with Tshepo's friend whom is a God sent has opened a new branch and he's obviously looking for people to get that business running. I agree with him and we make cheers with our drinks. I enjoy the rest of the day with him. After he drives me back home and I find Regina laying on the sofa with takeaway paper bags laying on the floor. The place looks untidy and messy. She looks sleepy as I take the remote from her hand and lower down the sound of a TV. I tidy her mess and she's awoken by the sounds of a crumple paper bag. She yawns and sits up straight.

REGINA: "How long have you been here?"

She says with a sleepy voice and rubs her eyes.

She wipes the remaining saliva coming from her mouth with the back side of her hand.

JAMES: "Not so long ago. I think I have an hour or so. Why is this place like this? It's like room filled with piglets."

REGINA: "That's offensive."

JAMES: " Look at this place? You've turned this place into a dumpster. "

REGINA: "I was going to clean but I don't know what happened. I was really tired and stop making it as if I don't keep this house sparkling clean. You don't always arrive home to this....

I keep my mouth shut as her tone becomes harsh on me. After grabbing everything into place I take the trash and throw it outside the huge dustbin. She follows me behind and leans behind the fridge.

So you wanted to tell me something?"

I grab a water bottle from the fridge and balance my back with the cupboard.

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sans-serif; color: black; font-size: 12px;">JAMES: "We're moving out. We'll find a better place for us to stay and I'll finally get a decent job."

REGINA: "Where are we going? We don't even have the enough amount of money for settling for a new place."

She asks in worry. The flat we're living is fully furnished because the room small and moving out to a new place will take time to make it to a warm welcoming home.

JAMES: "I think I've found a job already..."

REGINA: "You think? And already you want us to move out? What if this job will not be yours?"

She interrupts before I can finish what I wanted to say.

Just hear me out and let me finish. By month end we can pay for the new rent and buy a mattress then as time goes on we can go for something fancy. Right now we really need to settle for extra less."

REGINA: "What job did you find that allows us to move out so fast?"

She cross folds her arms and raises her eyebrows.

JAMES: "Tshepo's friend will soon open a new food restaurant so and he will hire me.

REGINA: "What makes you so sure? What if he won't? I don't want us to be looking like idiots to our landlord begging for this this room again. You need to know what you're doing."

She interrupts again and I get frustrated. Why can't she just hear me out then I'll give her time to say something. I don't bother to answer her and I continue where I left off.

JAMES: "I heard the guy pays fair money to his employees.

REGINA: "So why are we moving out? That's the part I want to understand."

JAMES: "The restaurant will be allocated to another area."

She looks at me in disbelief and walks back and forth with her hands placed on her head.

REGINA: "You are not serious James. What about my family? My job? Have you thought about those?"

JAMES: "Heee what about my family 'cause I left them for you. I'm not with my family right now but I'm with you. I haven't been with my family in months and you ask me about yours? I've compromised so much for you. I'm here trying by all means to make a good life for us and you're telling me about your job? Your job that can't even meet out needs? No c'mon babe. Don't push me to say things I'll regret."

REGINA: "My job is way better than yours. Don't you dare talk about my job like that. My job pays for your car that's parked in the backyard and for our rent..."

Tears starts falling down her cheeks and she walks over to grab an orange fruit then looks back at me.

I never knew you'd think like that about my job. After every little efforts I'm doing you're telling me you can't see none of that?...

She sniffs her nose and wipes her tears with the ends of her sweater.

This is the kind of thank you I'm gonna get? Wow James. You're so unbelievable right now."

She walks off to the dining area and leaves me with guilt. I know my words came out wrong and I really want to go to her and apologize but I know she'll make it hard for me. She will want me to go an extra mile to prove to her how apologetic I am.

I think of cooking dinner tonight. Make all her likings and decorate with rose pedals and light the candles by the table to make it a little bit romantic. I call an uber fast to pick me up. I realize we're short of veggies. I go to inside the mall and I pass a flower shop. I take a look inside and buy her fresh roses. I grab whatever I want and request back home. I walk around the house to look for her and she moved to stay in the bedroom. I twist the door slowly and it's makes a quick and short sound. I proceed to open the door and I peek inside. She's peacefully laying in bed and asleep. I close the door slowly and walk back to the kitchen to start the preparations. This will give me enough time to do everything without having to rush. I feel nervous to do this for her but I hope she accepts my apology.

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MELISSA.

I'm at the mall having a solo date. I really wish I had someone to come join me but sadly I don't have much friends around and that worries me. This is a wake up call to start to socialize with people and who knows? Maybe I can find a friend I can rely on and grow up with and who's definitely a total opposite of Noxolo. I wonder how she's been doing. I never heard from her and it feels really good. She blocked me on the whatsapp app and I don't see the reasons behind it but I don't care. Maybe she thinks I'll go down with my knees and beg for a friendship and I'm not going to do that. She never meant anything to me anyway. I take a sip from my cappuccino and a bite from the chocolate muffin freshly made from Mug & Bean. This used to be my favorite breakfast restaurant when I was young. I would come with my family and just enjoy the coffee ascent surrounding us. My dad would form a mustache from the milk foam. He will make jokes and we will all burst into laughter. That memory brings a smile

on my face. My cappuccino is almost half done and a female makes it to my table. She asks if she can join me since the tables are occupied and I agree. She looks very beautiful. I'm afraid to start a conversation but I let her to continue to drink her coffee in peace.

LADY: "Are you waiting for someone or you're just here by yourself?"

She finally says.

MELISSA: "Oh no I'm alone but you can feel free and occupy that space."

She nods and continues to look through her magazine. There is awkward silence between us and I feel like I can just cut it with the knife so we can talk more and enjoy each other's company since we share a table. I thought I'll make a friend but It is indeed feels like I'm chilling with a stranger. She finally looks at me and gives me a smile and gives me her hand for a handshake.

LADY: "Sorry for being rude. I'm Angela."

MELISSA: "Melissa."

ANGELA: "There's rhyming in there."

We both laugh. That wasn't a bad joke.

MELISSA: "There sure is."

ANGELA: "So are you're from here?"

MELISSA: "No. I just came for a visit."

I don't bother to ask her back. How pathetic I am? This shows I'm not so good with building any kind of relationship with anyone.

ANGELA: " Oh that's good. I know you didn't ask but I'm new here. I moved in a week ago and its been really hectic but I'm pushing. If only I can get a chance to go to the beach dip my toes in the soil.....

Looking at Angela she seems like a fun person. Very bubbly and outgoing too but her ascent still troubles me. She sounds more like someone coming from another country. I want to ask but I don't want to be forward and make her feel uneasy.

She continues to talk about exploring the world and have the experience fun until her facial expression changes to sadness. She huffs and looks at her coffee.

Unfortunately that won't be anytime sooner 'cause I have a baby on the way."

MELISSA: "You pregnant?"

ANGELA: "Yeah. You didn't notice?"

I shake my head and she stands up to unzip her denim jacket and takes a seat back.

MELISSA: "Well congratulations!...

I clap hands for her but she doesn't seem too pleased. I bring myself together and humble myself to her.

What's wrong? You don't happy."

She huffs and looks at me with teary eyes.

ANGELA: "I really wish I can be happy and rejoice like any other pregnant mom but I can't fake it. You don't know the pain of carrying a child of ra.."

She wipes her tears with the palm of her hand. She excuses her already and takes the remaining coffee with her and the shopping trolley that is filled with groceries. She leaves and didn't bother to look back at me. I wish she could've told me what was bothering her and maybe I could've helped her. I can see that she's carrying so much on her shoulders and whatever that she's facing must be too deep and painful to handle. I'm a little disappointed too 'cause I thought I made a friend but she slipped away from me but I'm hoping to meet her again soon. I leave the restaurant too and catch a taxi from the rank and go home. The house looks very empty and I can tell there was no one here since I left this morning. Maybe my aunt went for a sleepover to her boyfriend's house. I rush to the bathroom to refresh myself and put on shorts that reveal my butt cheeks boob lifter sports bra to support my boobs and push in sandals. I grab my phone and dial Russ number. He answers after the third ring.

RUSS: "Wassup sunshine?"

MELISSA: "I'm okay. Just missing you and I thought I should check up on you."

Since Russ told me he likes me I've been taking charge now. I call him when I feel like it and he does the same. Someone would swear we're a couple.

RUSS: " Thank you sweetheart but you're afraid to meet up with me. I've been begging you multiple times and you're not doing anything about it."

I sigh and think about ways I can overcome my shyness but I'm afraid my aunt will pick up the idea of coming here from the first place and she might send me back. I want to tell Russ about my problem but I don't want him to think that a grown woman like me is living under her someone's rules. I think of

something I can say.

MELISSA: "I want to but you know how school can be."

I lie hoping she would let this issue slide.

RUSS: "But I'm sure you can squeeze me in to your daily plans. I mean c'mon baby girl. We've been talking over the phone for months now and I still haven't met you. At least if you give me five minutes of your time won't hurt. Just five and I'll bring you back home. If money for taxi fare is an issue then I have no problem to pay it for you. As long as it'll bring you home safe then I won't mind."

MELISSA: "Okay. I'll let you know."

I forgot how he can't take no for an answer. He always has ways to convince me in any way.

RUSS: "Same story everyday. I don't know if I should believe you on that one."

MELISSA: "Trust me I will. Just make sure this week you be available."

One way or the other I have to meet him. I hate it when he has to beg me like this. He begged me a lot and that's enough.

RUSS: "I'm always available baby girl. All I need is for you to tell me where and when then I'll be there."

MELISSA: "Okay."

RUSS: "There's no pressure though. You can come back and talk to me if this is overwhelming for you."

MELISSA: "Don't worry about that. All right see you then."

I hang up and lay my head on the cushion by the sofa. I really want to meet him but I'm just afraid. I have this new look and I don't know if he'll love the girl he saw on my Facebook profile picture or this new me. I've changed a lot and I doubt he could barely recognize me. My mind keeps whirling around and I'm unsure what to do. I don't want to disappoint him much more so either way I have to meet up with him before he gives up on our friendship. I connect to the Wi-Fi and tune in to Showmax. I watch my favorite series The Lord Of The Rings. Ever since I have all the freedom to myself to watch whatever I want I'm comfortable enough to watch explicit scenes on TV but only in my room 'cause there's still an adult in this house. It's not like home where I'm not even allowed to watch anything rated sixteen and above which sucks 'cause I'm older than that but my parents still see me as their little girl.INSERT 31.

KATHERINE.

I knock off early today at work and drive back home. I find the housekeeper busy sweeping the floor but she stops doing everything as she sees me approaching from the kitchen. She greets me humbly and takes my handbag to my bedroom. She prepares a bubble bath for me and its like she senses that I want it very badly. I undress and hop inside the vanilla scent steaming hot water. I sit there and lay my back to relax until the water turns cold. I wrap myself with a towel and walk to my bedroom. Since it's 7pm and it's a Thursday I change to something simple and casual. I tie my hair into a nice ponytail. I walk in to my office and sit down on a chair. I login to my computer and take a look at the applicants who filed for this job.

Many chose to do cleaning since they don't have any experience with working with machines nor their hands. Others have qualified management skills while others have only completed their matric and some are dropouts but that's not an issue. What matters is seeing what they can put on the table and show me if they're passionate enough for working with us. The production management staff management and production workers. From the application forms I selected ten females and ten males for the interview. The rest I've sent them an apologetic letters via email for not qualifying for the job. I realized we have very old people and we don't want to deal with that age so it made my work easier to send them off. The twenty applicants received their emails too that includes the date time and place for the interview. I sort that out and close my laptop as Ms. Mkhonza knocks on the door and walks in. She places a big brown bowl that has steam coming from it and gently puts it on the table.

MS. MKHONZA: "I brought you soup. Very nice and warm."

KATHERINE: "Thank you ma."

MS. MKHONZA: "You are a hardworking woman I've ever known and there's nothing that makes me proud to see a young woman on her own. Very responsible and independent."

KATHERINE: "Ngiyabonga (Thank you) ma but this job is really tiring me. I understand hard work pays off but this one will get

me wrinkles at an early age. I'm telling you."

MS. MKHONZA: "Hayy suka. Ungazodlala. (Ooh please) There's no such thing as appearing wrinkles for working hard. All you have to do is to rest. Get that hour rest then get back to your work. Your mama would've said the same thing I believe."

KATHERINE: "Yeah. I'm just glad to have you ma. I don't have much to thank you but you make my life easier. If it wasn't for you I don't know ngabe ngiyini." (I don't know where would I be.)

MS. MKHONZA: "Don't worry nana. You're like a daughter to me and I won't let you suffer when I'm around. I made a promise to your mom to take good care of you."

KATHERINE: "Thank you ma."

I smile at her and she excuses herself. Mam

Mkhonza has been a super heroine to me. I don't normally see her as my housekeeper but as a parent. She has been friends with my mom from work but things started to change when she felt sick. Her business stopped operating and she had to retrench everybody before she can shut it down. She felt horribly sick and that worried me and not just me but her friends and colleagues too. A month later my mom sickness deepened until we had to take her to the hospital. She was taken to the ICU for nearly six months without talking or moving and few month later while I was at work I got a call from Mam Mkhonza in the morning. She told me my mom had passed

away from a severe stroke
and body aches but those weren't that serious. I've never seen my mom
suffering from stroke before but I had found what that her stroke was very serious.
It really broke my heart 'cause she was the only person I was left with. My dad
died when I was five days old. He was shot dead by his friend for wealth. I grew up knowing my dad by
just looking at his old pictures. I wish
one day he pops out of a picture and hug me but the world is not some
fairyland where everything happens with magic. Mam Mkhonza came in the picture
and took over. She took me in as a child of her own and raised me with the little money
she had back then so now that I'm old enough and I'm able to take care of
myself she asked if she can come and work for me since people at her age don't
qualify to just get any decent job. I couldn't say no. She started to work for
me and things got a little awkward at first but I got used to having her
around as a worker. I tend to share my problems with her and especially if she
sees something troubling with me. She's a good shoulder to cry on and has
been very supportive in every step of the way. I grab my phone to call my friend Lindo. He
answers with a deep voice and I curl my hair in between my fingers.

KATHERINE: "I'm sorry to wake you up."

LINDO: "Worry not babe."

KATHERINE: "Unjan kodwa?" (How are you
though?)

LINDO: "I'm good. Just missing someone's

daughter so bad and it pains my heart to know that she's far from me."

I blush and I know for sure he is talking about me.

KATHERINE: "But you can always come here."

LINDO: "Haah yoh. That maid of yours I'm afraid of her. The first time I met her she gave me the scariest looks and I don't think she likes me at all."

I laugh and he laughs too. I've ever seen Lindo this scared of a woman. He's afraid of mam Mkhonza and that shows the respect he has for her. Even though I can push it sometime and invite him over he would still refuse. The only time he comes will be the day we're alone.

KATHERINE: "Not the Mam Mkhonza I know. She's very friendly. Trust me. Just get to know her a bit more and you'll see what I'm talking about it."

LINDO: "No baby. I'd rather have you here. I want to feel free around you while I bang that pussy so hard."

I cover my mouth and smile shyly.

KATHERINE: "You're a complete freak but I

like that.”

LINDO: “ How about you come to my place
tomorrow?”

KATHERINE: “If only you agree to fetch me.”

LINDO: “Okay. I'll come. Sharp neh?”

I make a kissy sound through the speaker phone
and he gently laughs and hangs up. Lindo is my old time friend. We've been together
for almost three years. He's funny amazing and sweet. He is just my sweet
pillar of happiness. He's a supportive friend and a shoulder to cry on also a good
influencer. He's exactly what a woman would want their boyfriend to be like.
He's just close to perfection. We took our friendship to the next level and
became more than what any other ordinary friends would do. We became more
comfortable with each other and went to extreme by exchanging souls. From then
we never stopped and things just keep on floating.

I'm Candice twenty- six years old. I'm hazel brown in color complexion. I have small Chinese black eyes and portable pink lips. I have a long brown silky and curly hair at the end. I'm not too tall and slim. I have naturally trimmed eyebrows. It's been really hard to describe myself as a person. I can say that forever smiling and I'm quick to take things personally so you better be careful on how you joke around and I'm a woman with not so many words. There's one thing that keeps me single and no one wants to be with me because of the way I handle situations and one of them is dating broke guys. Never in my life have I dated someone who's not financially stable. I tried to but it didn't last. I couldn't take it anymore. They guy was not capable to spoil me and take me out on dates or get something that reminds him of me. Nothing! He did nothing. I was the one to spoil him instead and I'm done doing that. I believe in a relationship it must 50/50 so dating a broke guy can be challenging and especially when he ask for money. They can't just be independent. Imagine dating a guy who can't even afford to buy himself a cigarette? That's a disgrace and a big turn off. That is the reason why I set my standards very high and I don't see anything wrong with that. Never settle yourself for little sis. By doing that you'll never go wrong trust me.

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NOXOLO.

AT THE ABUNDANT SHACK BUILDING.

“Get me out of here please.

I don’t want to die.”

She cries out loud until her makeup gets smudged
and ruined. The eyeliner makes it to look even worse.

NOXOLO: “Shut up!....

I aggressively put on a dry cloth around her
mouth as she fights aggressively too with her head and bites my thumb. I slap her
hard across the face.

Don't ever try to do that.

Unless you're asking for more punishment....

She stops talking and swifts her head back and forth.

"I will stay away from your

man but please just let me go.... I didn't to sleep with him but I couldn't help it and he couldn't resist me either. Temptation took over me but I promise it won't

happen again. Just let me go."

NOXOLO: "That word! That

stupid word! I hate it. It makes people to foolishly look at our mans and crave

for them. Did you really think I wouldn't catch you bitch? Fooling behind with my man

was good but now you're going to suffer for what you did. You don't go around

sleeping with people's man and it's sad you happen to have slept with the wrong one"

I switch on the electric chair as she fights to

break away from it but the thick leather belts makes it hard for her to unite

herself and she doesn't notice they pull a strain on her. She shakes her body rapidly until

she urinates on herself. I switch it off and all the sweat keeps dribbling down from her forehead and all the way down to her neck.

"You gonna pay for this I

swear. I won't let you get away with this."

She says trying to catch her breath.

NOXOLO: "I really don't care

bitch. I've been to jail before so that doesn't scare me at all. I don't mind

to rot in jail but after I see your ugly ass kissing six feet underground."

"Fuck you. He never loved you

anyway."

The audacity this woman have. She still talks crap

about me? I didn't want to do this anymore but she pushed a wrong button. I

torture her one more time as I switch on the machine to a blast. I see smokes coming out of the electrical machine. It

crashes and breaks down. The power immediately goes off as well. The room is dark

and my heart panics. I don't like being in the dark. It freaks me out sometimes. I run my

hands in my pockets to look for my phone. I switch on the torch from my phone. I light

around and I find her sitting on that chair. Her hair is a little messy up but

her skin is still good with few burnt wounds from her hands and legs. I walk around her and push her head to lean backwards so I can face her.

NOXOLO: "Hey wake up..

I say slamming her face softly with my hand.

Lady wake up! Don't play funny
games with me. Just wake up!"

I don't even know her name. We didn't start off very
well and I didn't go easy on her too. I touch her several times and she's not moving.
Her head loses balance and it gently bows down lifelessly. This can't be. Her soul
can't leave her body like that. The room is filled with burnt human flesh and
it starts to smell terrible. My heart panics. What have I done? I can't afford
to go back to jail. Not again. I have to do something and one way or the other is to get rid of her and hide
the evidence.

I don't have anything with me so I exit outside to look for a switch. It has to
be somewhere around here. All I have to do is to keep searching for it. I don't notice
it's been drizzling outside and my clothes are getting soaked but it doesn't matter now. I'm wet anyway
so I keep roaming around the building
and I find it. I open it and luckily the wires are still good. I switch it back
on. I look inside the window and the lights are back on. I close it down carefully and
I walk inside the building. I look around for something I can use to cover her body
and I spot a mat under a broken table. It looks really dirty and it's covered in dust. I'm disgusted to lay
my hands on it 'cause I don't know how long it's been
here. I have no choice but to grab it and throw it on her. She doesn't even flinch
a tiny bit. I guess she is dead. I pat through my jeans and my sweaters and I don't have money. I look
over to the
far corner of my right and there's her white purse. It must have some money. I rush
to it and run my fingers through it. My eyes open wide in shock. This bitch is money loaded.
I see blue ink bank notes only and a couple of red. I take all of it and fill in my pockets. I pocket her
phone as well so I can throw it away. The remaining things on her purse are just useless.

I exit and lock the door. The locker is a little rusty but it still does the work. I look for a nearest petrol station and find it. It's not really far from the building. I notice there are few people inside by looking from my distance so it's visible enough for me to see them. I pull my greasy hair back with my hands and wipe my sweat from my face. I know I look horrible but I can't let myself look like this around people. After fixing myself I walk in and look for big black plastic bags a brush a washing soap powder a thick bleach and two 5 litre bottles of purified water. The total price of these things aren't so expensive than I thought. I walk over to till and the lady tries to make eye contact with me but I keep looking away and she's taking forever to scan my things. I tap my feet on the ground and I'm staring to lose my patient. She starts to notice my behavior changing slowly and she keeps up to a faster pace. She tells me the price and I hand it to her. I exit outside and I realize that I need to find something that can contain water in it. I notice there's a dustbin laying outside and I steal it. I drag it with me and throw away the trash that is inside. I walk back inside the building and lock myself in. I immediately start my mission. I quickly untie her from the chair. I pour the water bottles inside the bin with soap and use her t-shirt she had on to wash her body and wipe her dry to get rid of my finger prints. She's a little heavy but I manage to get her lifeless body inside the plastic and tie a big knot top stiff. I put on the extra bag just in case it rips off. I walk around to where she was seated and I notice blood spots. I use the same water to wash off the blood. The stain is still there but not visible enough. It actually looks better than it was before. I grab the machine and smash it hard on the floor. I had to put extra strength in there. It's made out of wood and hires so it's breaks into pieces. I grab her body and throw it inside the large recycling bin dumpster. I take the rest of the evidence and that'll be her purse and the equipment used. I pour bleach

since it's inflammable and burn them inside the same dustbin that was also in the crime scene. I leave windows open for the smoke to come out. The guilt doesn't kick in. I was feeling scared at first but I'm good now. I wish I can rejoice. The bitchass is dead and no one will come in between me and Sharon. That boy is mine.

I stand from outside and look at the rejected building once again. The switch is nearby the door so I turn off the lights and close the door but I am startled by a man's voice behind my back. I want to look back and see who it but the brightness from the torch makes it difficult for my eyes to clearly see him.

MAN: "I asked you a question young lady. What are you doing here in the middle of the night? Aren't you supposed to be home sleeping?"

NOXOLO: "I had some business to take care of but I'm going home now."

MAN: "Do you need a ride home?"

NOXOLO: "I don't need one. I can walk myself. It's not far from here but thank you though."

MAN: "No it's not safe. Let me take you home. Just wait here and don't go anywhere...."

He leaves and he comes back with a car. It seems

as if he stays near and I'm very skeptical about this man. I don't know what to do. I panic and run away as fast I can while he's still at a distance.

I use the other road so he can't easily find me. I make it to the public phone

and dial my sister's number but she doesn't answer. I try one more time and

nothing. I turn back as I see flashlights coming my way. I speed up my pace and

keep on running until a car keeps up with the same pace as mine. The driver

slits down the window and when I take a look at inside. I roll my eyes in annoyance. It's that same person. He does really look old. The lighting inside the car flashes on him and I get to see him properly. I don't know what this old man wants from me and he better do whatever he wants with me quickly. He has a smirk on his face and does the old grumpy laugh.

You must really think you're a

smart-ass huh?"

NOXOLO: "Just leave me alone.

I don't owe you anything...

He drives pass me and parks in front of

my legs. and I stop from my tracks as my heart starts racing fast.

You almost ran into me you idiot!"

I say with anger and this guy laughs it off.

Everything seems so funny to him as if one of us keeps cracking jokes.

MAN: " You're feisty little

one hey? Come here and stop acting all serious. You really need this ride...

I fold my arms and frown. He opens his car door and

I wait outside a little longer. He hoots for me but I stand there angrily. He scoops

his head out from the window and looks at me. Why can't he just go and leave me

alone?

We can wait here all day you

know? I don't mind."

NOXOLO: "Don't you have a

wife to cuddle with in bed or something?"

I ask annoyingly.

MAN: "Well I do but its past bedtime and she's

fast asleep."

NOXOLO: "Then join her and

leave me alone you weird old man."

MAN: "Ouch! Am I really that

old?"

NOXOLO: "Duh what do you think?"

MAN: "A handsome and charming dude."

NOXOLO: "Wake up from that dream. It's messing with you."

MAN: "Only if you allow me to take you home then I will. It's not like I'm going to hurt you. I look harmless and you can tell...."

Man this guy wouldn't stop. A total stranger who just wouldn't take no for an answer. I slowly drag my feet and I find myself inside his charcoal white porsche sports car.

That wasn't so hard was it?"

He says with a smirk.

NOXOLO: "Just drive."

I don't bother to look at him. He makes a U-Turn and drives me home. I ask him to take me to Sharon's apartment and he agrees. I

direct him and he follows. It is normally an hour drive but with his driving skills I make it in less than thirty minutes and he parks across his house.

MAN: "Do you want me to walk you straight to your bed?"

NOXOLO: "You're acting weird now bye."

MAN: I'm just messing with you. I'll wait here and watch you get inside."

I exit his car and rush to the door and knock.

After the fifth loud knock Sharon walks out shirtless and scratches his arms from taking a nap. He looks so surprised to see me. I'm expecting him to ask me questions but he keeps quiet and lets

me walk inside. I'm so exhausted and I need a shower right now. We walk into his room and without any waste of time I get inside the shower. I don't bother to drag it longer than I used to. I drool over to his wardrobe naked and pick out one of his t-shirts and boxers. He switches off

his side lampshade and we get in bed. He brings his hands over to my waist and sleeps.

My mind is still awake. I'm still thinking about what happened today. I can't believe

I murdered someone and this feeling starts to strongly kick in. I have created fear in me and I doubt I'll get some sleep tonight.

THE FOLLOWING DAY.

I'm awoken by this soft and firm arm around my

waist. I turn my head back and watch his face as he keeps inhaling and exhaling through his hairy sharp looking nose. I stare him for a while as he opens his eyes in a slow motion and smiles at me as soon as his eyes land on mine. He yawns and stretches himself out of the bed. I look down to his hard dick and he hides it with his hand embarrassingly. I laugh and he makes his way to me and pecks my lips.

SHARON: "You woke up very early tonight. Am I expecting you to leave very soon?"

He takes a sit by the edge of the bed and faces me.

NOXOLO: "No. I couldn't keep up going back to sleep. My stomach was troubling me."

I became sick to the core last night. I kept overthinking what I did. I killed someone and to think I was a murderer made me sick to my stomach and I became ill. I kept going to the toilet and constantly vomiting. I'm still feeling tired and I need more sleep.

SHARON: "So you've been up this whole time?"

I nod in agreement and he shakes his head. He stands up from the bed to put back his t-shirt on that is lazily laying on top of the laundry bin and makes his way to the kitchen. His apartment is really not that

good looking and it's not too big but it's portable and spacious. He makes sure he keeps his place hygienically clean and that's what I love about him. Not only does he care about himself but he cares for our health too. His apartment is separated by the different house equipment. A kitchen area you can tell by the stove the fridge and the cabinets. The dining area has two portable and comfortable sofas the lampshade a small coffee table and a TV placed on the wall. There's a passage that separates his bedroom from the other rooms. He has a portable king size bed a wall wardrobe and a table for his gaming. His room has a bathroom that has a shower and a toilet. Then there's a piped laundry machine next to it.

NOXOLO: "Can you pass me my jeans? They are right behind you."

He leans over his back and throws it at me. The jeans perfectly land on me and I don't realize the money has fallen off the pockets. Chris walks over and kneels next to it. He looks at me with confusion and I don't know how am I going to explain to him.

SHARON: "What's this? Where did you did you get all this money? Did you rob a bank or something?..."

Damn! How did I forget to hide it? That must have slipped my mind. Now my man is panicking and he starts fuming.

Talk to me baby. What's going

on?"

NOXOLO: "Really Sharon? Robbing a bank? I just found it outside laying on the floor and I took it."

SHARON: "This is so unbelievable.

What if this belonged to someone or what if they've seen you taking it and they must be on their way here. Nah baby you need to take this back immediately."

Is he crazy? I'm not taking this money back. I found it and it's mine.

NOXOLO: "I'll go and deposit it to the bank."

SHARON: "No. You're taking it back where you found it. We don't want to get in any troubles."

I sigh. I need to secretly hide this money somewhere safe and away from him. He helps me to pick it up and put it inside a plastic.

NOXOLO: "Okay. It'll be gone by tomorrow I promise you."

SHARON: "That's what I wanted to hear."

The room is quiet and I look over to Sharon who's

staring at me. I don't know what's going inside his head but if it something I need to hear it then he talk to me . I check my clothes and they're still wet. I exit outside and hang them on the washing line. I walk back in and he still glances at me.

NOXOLO: "What?"

SHARON: "Nothing."

NOXOLO: "I know there's something. You've been watching me and you haven't said anything."

He sighs and makes his way to me. With a sad

look on his face he cups my face with his hands and looks at me straight in the eyes.

SHARON: "Have you been cheating on me?..."

I give him the confused looks. What is he talking about now? Me cheating? Who has he seen me with now?

I saw that car pulling away after

it dropped you off. I don't know who was that but I feel it's a man and for the mere fact you brought him here I feel disrespected.

NOXOLO: " I'm sorry baby. It was just a guy I

met along my way here and he volunteered to drive me home safe to you. It was so dark and I'm grateful to be here as a one full piece otherwise something bad could've happened to me."

SHARON: "Do you know him?"

NOXOLO: Yeah. He was one of my neighbors."

I know he would've freaked out if I said it was a stranger. I see him softens and kisses my lips. We break apart and he walks over to the other side to help do the bed.

SHARON: "But you should've called me and let me you know you're coming over. I would've made a plan to come fetch you."

NOXOLO: "I had to pass somewhere.

That's why I came home late last night and that doesn't matter now. I'm here with you aren't I?"

He nods in agreement and we lay the pillows nicely right at the top with the big pillows and all the way down to the smaller ones. I grab a broom behind the kitchen door and sweep the floor meanwhile my boyfriend takes a shower. After sometime he pulls out and gets dressed to simple khaki colored baseball collar shirt and black flap pocket cargo pants with his black and white sneakers.

After keeping the house clean it is now my turn to bath. I undress my clothes and hop inside a shower. I adjust the water to be perfectly hot as the steam fills the room. I use my boyfriend's toiletry since I left mine at home. They smell manly but I don't have any choice. The tenseness and stiffness from my body seems to instantly relax as soon as the water runs on me. Thereafter I wrap the towel tightly around me just in case it doesn't fall off and I lotion my body.

I call out for Sharon to pass my clothes but he's doesn't respond back. I try it the second and the last time but I still get the same feedback. I open the bathroom door to take a sneak peek and it seems like I'm alone. I walk out and rush to his wardrobe to find something to wear and I spot an ordinary looking navy blue track pant and a black short sleeve vest. His clothes look big on me but the pants fit perfectly fine as my thick ass supports them from falling down to my ankles. I put on his fresh pair of white socks and comb my hair backwards. I put on a white hair band around my head to add that oomph. I look over to his laundry basket and it's packed. I turn the machine on and since it's automatic I can relax and let it wash. I throw his clothes inside and as I'm about to throw mine I get a vibration from my front pockets of my jeans and it's the the lady's cellphone. I look who is calling and it's her mom. I can imagine what she's going through right now. She leftt thirteen missed calls and she must be worried about their daughter's whereabouts. I feel a little guild and I don't bother to answer. I let it stop ringing and I take out the sim card. I flush her Samsung A 31 smart cellphone and make it look brand new. I can probably change to this phone and give my sister my old phone.

After what seems like an hour or more than that

a hard slammed door startles me and I see Sharon approaching by the door with plastics on his hands. I walk over to him and I watch him packing the groceries.

He notices me and he drools over the plastic bags. I don't know what is he looking.

SHARON: "For your period cravings....."

He takes out a packet of pink marshmallows and pickles.

I've been so obsessed with pickles ever since I tried them for the first time. We pack the rest of the groceries inside the cabinets. After we're complete he comes to peck my lips and lifts me up as he places himself in between my legs and our faces meet.

Shall we watch a movie? You can choose whichever you want."

NOXOLO: "Like right now?"

He nods and I nod happily too. He carries me with him and gently lays me down on the couch and turns on the TV. He joins the two couches so he can find himself right next to me. He grabs the fleece blanket and switches on the oil heater then tunes in to Netflix. He leaves to the kitchen to prepare snacks and comes back with a bowl filled with candy and lays chips that

I don't know which flavor. We select the movie After We Collided and enjoy the rest of our afternoon together. The weather is perfect and it's been drizzling since last night. There's no any disturbance from his side chick or any other person. This is the way I've always had it in mind and wanted it to be. Just him and I.

THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

● Noxolo has kept a dark secret from her loved ones. She was suspected to have murdered someone and spent three years in jail with parole. No one knows much about her past until Sanele was told about it by one of his friends Sifiso and she's not aware that someone else knows about it. She could've told everyone about it but she's afraid she could be referred to a monster and that could jeopardize her friendship with Thando. Not to mention his new lover Sharon Washington. The Korean man. They met at the club that's down the road and it's few blocks away from her house. She couldn't risk and give herself in to him without

knowing his intentions he had with her but Sharon has proven his love to her way more than he could have and he loves her unconditionally.

● Sharon the most popular guy is not everywhere

by the corners of the city. He is known to be a play boy and a womanizer back in high school days. Not to mention the things he used to do on his spare time with his friends.

They would hit the club and buy prostitutes to satisfy their needs for sexual cravings but he grew up and realized that is not the kind of

life he wants for himself so he changed his friends and he believes to meet better ones someday.

● Melissa has been treating herself like home. She

enjoys her aunt Zolile's company more than anyone else back home. She continues to study for fashion and furthermore she gets more

knowledge from the internet since she has full access to it. Gym has always

been at the top of the list and as much as she would get tired her aunt is there to encourage her. What

she adores the most is the family dinner dates she often has with her aunt and

her boyfriend Thamisanqa and she thinks he's a good man for her aunt.

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Sometimes love may come in different ways. It may be one of those days where people bump into each other and introduce themselves or just meet them online. I know many people find it weird and how they think you're stupid enough to fall in love with someone you met online. Not to mention how they make it big fuss to date someone who's not from the same country as yours.

Unfortunately the very same people we look down at are the same people who choose to love adore and cherish us all the time. I've been looking for love for almost three years after I went through a terrible breakup with my high school lover. I was in the thoughts of giving up and losing hope but God made a miracle. He brought this young man into my life. Even though I'd wish He could've brought him earlier and things wouldn't be so messed up with my love life but it's okay. It's part of life and everyone goes through such. I'm happy He showed him guidance to me and I still cherish the day we decided to make things official between us.

Never in a million years have I thought I'd be involved in a relationship with someone outside the country. I was afraid of the mistreatment he will get from my family and friends. The society we live in is too quick to judge and they don't know the purpose of choosing a different path of doing things as compared to theirs. As bad as it was on social I didn't want to let him be known to be one of the funny memes or allowed people to make fun of our relationship but I was proven wrong.

Instead of throwing hate at him they admired him for who he is and how handsome my man looks. I'm

not a jealous type. I allow him to take compliments like everyone else. As long as they can see but cannot touch. I like it when woman respects another man's woman by keeping their claws to themselves. Nobody likes to see their partner getting snatched from them. It hurts to watch. He was also a big help to the community. His contributions made a difference. Not only did he think of himself but he cared for others too and that made me realize how much I've fallen deeply in love with him.

He comes from a wealthy but my intentions about him were truthful. I wasn't after his money 'cause I learned to make my own. He would get me something but only if he sees a need to. At times I would get something special for my birthday or valentine's day. This man is the best boyfriend team partner and a friend I could ever ask for.

I go by the name of Melissa Rodriguez. A young woman who's twenty-one years old of age and soon to reach twenty-two years on the first of the month of October. I would actually describe myself as a person who's more loving sweet caring

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very ambitious goal driven and minds her own business. My hometown is at Soweto in Diepkloof Zone 5 but I relocated to another province in Free State in Waverley Bloemfontein. My family thought it was a good idea to move out and begin a new life with new people. I found that interesting too and in just few days time I met a friend Thando. She's great and awesome too. Her company is the best. Then there's my annoying sister whom I also consider as my friend too. She's my everything to me. We share so much together more than we can do with other people. She can be a pain in the ass but she plays a huge sister role in my life.

For my body description I'm a size thirty-six and a large but I'm stepping to a bigger size now because I keep consuming nothing but food. I'm a hundred percent food addict. I eat so much as if the world would come to an end and I made that to a bad habit. I've been treating food as the source of my comfort and happiness for the longest years. I have big boobs and that has been my problem especially when I have to find the perfect clothing size to accommodate them. Normally I grew up with no boobs but I can put the blame to food and for experiencing puberty stage at an early age.

My skin tone is a darker brown and I have hazel brown eyes. I wouldn't really relate my height as to tall or short but I can say I'm average and I have the toughest afro. It's not making it easier for me to comb and style it. I always have to keep my hair damp to help comb out the knots so that I can start and apply any products to keep it soft and moist. I'm not the girl with perfect teeth perfect body or having the perfect hair nor the perfectly smooth skin with no sign of a pimple or dark spots. I'm one of those people with the most hilarious laughs you could ever come across. It could be the longest and the loudest. It annoys a lot of people and I don't care about what they think about it.

All in all I'm just a simple and a bubbly girl. You'll find out the rest about me as you're about to be taken to the journey of my life.