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Man of God by Miracle A.N

PROLOGUE

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Mme Biopelo sat in her precious and favorite chair as her youngest daughter Reitumetse served her tea on a glorious Saturday morning. Today she was off work and wanted to be pampered for all the hard work she put in all week to make ends meet in her household. After her husband disappeared in the wind without a trace, raising Reitu and her older sister Itumeleng was hard. She lived on daily pay checks and would sometimes ask for help from strangers and neighbors. Seeing her kids all grown up gave her some peace of mind a little sense of pride. She did it, all on her own.

Reitu: Ma, you look exceptionally happy today.

Boipelo: it's my day off. I deserve to be happy. I had a long week.

Reitu: I know, here's your tea. Enjoy.

Boipelo: ahh... this is too bitter, bring me sugar and turn on the radio too. My favorite show has started.

Reitu: I thought you were cutting back on sugar.

Boipelo: I can use as much sugar as I want. This is my house.

Reitu: okay Ma.

Boipelo: where is your sister?

Reitu: she left early saying she had something to do at church.

Boipelo: she is very devoted and a good girl, makes me wonder if she will marry well.

Reitu: what about me?

Boipelo: just turn on the radio and bring that sugar already. My tea is getting cold.

Reitu: on my way.

Reitumetse Maleka, the youngest daughter of Boipelo, currently 21 and finished high school but had no luck in finding a place to attend tertiary studies. She has always wanted to be a nurse. Her calm, collected and caring personality matches her dream job by a 100. It has just been very unfortunate that she had no means to go to varsity even though she passed her matric with good enough marks to get admitted. Her sister on

the other side quit school in matric to work when they were going through hard times. She later found a permanent position at a church to work as a secretary of The Holy Grail Ministries, one of the biggest and most followed churches of the area. So

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technically besides church, she has nothing going on, or at least it seems in the eyes of her family.

Boipelo: is that radio fighting back or killing you? I have been waiting.

Reitu: I am done. What is so good about today's show? It's just a bunch of lies told by a man in a suit who runs scams and owns a castle for a home with a million cars and a flashy lifestyle that is forever on the news.

Boipelo: where did you learn how to talk like that?! How can you even say such atrocious things about a man of God, that man is the reason we have food on our table. If it weren't for Bishop Mahlala, we would've died of hunger. I don't know how I allowed you to be an atheist in my house. This is a Christian household and you will start acting like it. I will not allow this behavior anymore. From now on, you will join your sister on every church activity she partakes in. I will not take another word from you shaming the Bishop!!!

Reitu: I am sorry MA, I did not mean to. I was just saying what I usually hear on the streets.

Boipelo: which is why you will be staying off the streets. From now on, Sundays are Sundays for everybody in this house. No one will sleep on Sunday mornings and spend the rest of their day sleeping in my house. Everyone will attend church!

Reitu: but Ma---

Boipelo: shut up and increase the volume...

Reitu: done.

Boipelo: now go and make my bed!

Reitu; Ma!

Boipelo: is that chat back I hear?

Reitu: no...

Boipelo: then go!

Reitumetse disappeared out of sight. Boipelo sat listening closely as the radio chatted away with the recent news on The Holy Grail Ministries Bishop on air publicizing their upcoming revival. The man was great and followed by many, he was God sent and there was no way in hell all the things the streets murmur of him were true. His success was all because of his hard work and the result of the grace and mercy of the Lord.

People bashing him and talking ill of his riches were just jealous of him and what he has achieved.

OVER THE RADIO

DJ: now, Bishop for the biggest question that everyone has... how did all of this start? Who is Bishop Mahlala of The Holy Grail Ministries?

Bishop: first off to God be the glory. Thank you for such an amazing question. I would describe myself as a man who rose from nothing and was moulded into something by the grace of the Lord. Without salvation I would not be here. Just like anybody else I was once a sinner but my eyes opened and now I lead other lost sheep, try to do my part to call everyone into the Lord's presence because everyone deserves to go to the new Jerusalem.

DJ: wow. That was such a beautiful answer bishop. I now feel like I should turn a new leaf. To everyone at home, that was the one and only Bishop Mahlala of The Holy Grail Ministries. And now for the ad break. We will be back soon to chat with the bishop some more. Send in any questions you have on 021 345 2324 or call. We'll be right back.

Boipelo: now those were some wise words. Reitumetse! Reitu...

Reitu: Ma...!

Boipelo: come out of there and pour me another cup! Hurry!

Reitu: on my way...

1

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

Itumeleng stands on the podium as the rest of the youth group members sit upfront waiting for the next instructions from her. She has been very harsh these days, she was in her own bubble about the revival maybe that is where all the stress came from and that is why she cut anyone did not perform to standards off.

Itu: you guys must understand how much this show means for the ministry... how much it means for the bishop. You cannot do just as you please. Read your scripts and make sure to deliver the best!! Anyone giving off less than that is obviously going to be axed off the show, just as I did with Palesa and Thabo.

Cindy: I hear you, but some of us just do not have the talent. And some of us are talented and wish to execute the script the way we see fit. We just don't understand the harsh criticism and hate that comes with trying a different approach. Really, what is that about?

Itu: your point is?

Cindy: maybe give us time and stop chasing people out of the team.

Itu: wow... well then how about you excuse us Cindy, since you have so much to say. After all you are the worst performer so far.

Lesego: Tumi! Itumeleng!

Itu: not now, Lesego! I cannot stress enough just how important this showcase is. We are telling a life story of the bishop and how he grew the church. As much as I understand that is something great and something to be praised. Why are you guys so unenthusiastic about something of such grand scale? Are you even worshipers and members of this church or you're just some of the people who pretend? Maybe you're part of the hate groups that spread rumors about the bishop in the streets who knows?!

Lesego stands up to snatch her friend away from the podium as she fumes going on and on insulting the members of which some one by one stand up to leave. Too late for damage control because she seems to have said every word she wanted to say.

Lesego: what is wrong with you? That was totally uncalled for!

Itu; I thought you were my friend! What is this behavior from you?

Lesego: I am your friend which is why I am doing this. You were way out of line just now. We are people too, we are not perfect, we need time, patience. maybe if you considered----

Itu: stop right there. You are not the one the bishop expects grants results from. You have never planned anything. You don't know the pressure I am under right now. I've spent countless nights and days working on this to perfect it, but things are just not going my way. Just how much work does a person have to put it to get what they want? Do you know how much it hurts when things don't go the way you want after a lifetime of things always working out? You don't relate do you? Because all you ever do is follow me and---

Lesego: and now you're going off at me because--- girl, bye! I am done with this. Come talk to me when you've calmed down and have less insults to throw my way.

Lesego leaves the room while Itu sinks to her knees feeling a sharp pain in her chest. She still did not understand why the youth members were so bad at executing things the way they were supposed to be executed. The bishop ignoring her calls and texts all week maybe was the reason for her outrage and image downfall. Just who does he think he is? She gets on her knees to pray but is disturbed by a car revving into the yard. She looks up and it is the bishop's car, he is finally back from

the studio. She walks with anger fueling up inside her as she nears where the car is parked.

The bishop man exits the car with the most annoyed face she has ever seen. He signals her to follow him into his office.

THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

He takes off his jacket and hooks it on the wall, goes to sit on his chair with the same ice-cold expression from earlier on. He looks at her up and down and stands up. He walks closer to her and stands behind her

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snaking his arms around her waist and whispering into her ear. She shudders at his touch almost forgetting why she came here in the first place but forces herself to talk before she forgets.

Itu: why did you ignore me all week?

Bishop: is that what you're here for?

Itu: I just don't understand your reaction and all your actions in fact. I thought you said you would---

Bishop: would what? I sent you money to take care of it. why are you still here with that? I don't why you are so attached and distressed about it. It's just a lump of cells. Maybe you would feel better if I took care of it myself.

He presses on her stomach hard making her wince and jump away struggling to get away from his strong hold.

Bishop: I have a reputation to upkeep. I chose you to work here because I saw potential in you. Let's not get caught up in fantasies and ignore the reality. Get rid of that and get back to your senses. You are not fun when you're like this.

Itu: I thought you were a man of faith, a man who abided by the bible, a man of God. Why are you doing this to me?

Bishop: I am still a man of God. Nothing has changed. John 15, I am the vine, and you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers, such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

Itu: 1st Corinthians 6:19-20, '... do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.'

Bishop: you do not get to lecture me about the goddamn bible!! I am the bible!! You shut up and go do what you have to do. I am sure you know just what I am capable of, you do not want me to do this myself! Do you want me to interpret what I just said to you? Do you know what happens to useless branches that do not bear any fruit? Itu: yes bishop

Bishop: what happens to them?

Itu: they are thrown away to wither.

Bishop: thrown into the fire and burned. That is exactly what will happen to you if you do not listen to me. Listen to me sweetheart.

Itu: suddenly rushes out of the office with tears streaming down her cheeks. It hurt more that she could explain. After so many years together with the bishop she has never thought even for a second that the man who promised her the world would betray her like that. After all these promising her marriage and a happy life, he went and did this. How does he expect her to have an abortion, get rid of their child and act like nothing happened when he is the same man who wanted to have a child with her? What ever happened to practice what you preach?

What happened to the sweet and loving bishop?

2

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Itu comes in busting through the front door passing her mother and sister in the kitchen without offering her greetings. She gets to her room in a flash and slams the door behind her scaring the civilians of this house.

Boipelo: I thought you said your sister went to church.

Reitu: she said so to me.

Boipelo: then what is this attitude?

Reitu shrugs her shoulders and gets back to peeling the carrots. Confused Boipelo leaves the kitchen for Itu's room. She knocks and tries to enter but the room is locked. From the door she can hear that her daughter is weeping.

Boipelo: you're a 28-year-old woman!! This is not how you're supposed to cat. What are you teaching your little sister? Open this door now!! Or I swear I will break it down.

She waits at the door but there's still no answer. She leaves the spot and goes to her room, comes back with a spare key and

unlocks the door to find Itu bawling her eyes out lying flat on the floor.

Boipelo: there's no way church hurt you this bad. What happened to you? Why are you crying?

Itu: I am fine Mme, just--- I want to rest I had a long day.

Boipelo: fine? So fine means crying to you? Itumeleng? What is wrong with you? Did something happen?

Itu: nothing, I just have a bad headache that's all. I need to rest.

Boipelo: if you say so. I will get your sister to go buy something to calm it down. Rest then.

She leaves the room, leaving the door open and goes back to the kitchen.

Boipelo: you go get your sister something to help her with her headache form the shop.

Reitu: headache?

Boipelo: yes, she says she's suffering one, a bad one.

Reitu: headache? Is that all. She's had those before, but I have never ever seen her cry or act this way.

Boipelo: just drop your detective tactics and go buy something for Itu.

Reitu: but what is it's something else?

Boipelo: something like what?

Reitu: I don't know--- she's the one attending a suspicious church.

Boipelo: didn't I warn you against that behavior?!! Go and stop spewing nonsense!!

Reitu leaves the kitchen leaving her mother to wonder a little bit just what if all the rumours are true. Just what is all the things they say on the streets about the bishop are true. How did these malicious rumours even start? She later dismisses the thought and says a little prayer for forgiveness.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

The bishop's wife, Nomfundo sits in her lounge with a magazine and a glass of wine in her hand after a long day of counselling some members of the women's bible study group. Being a stay-

at-home wife is a hobby of hers, the only days you'd see her out is when she has to attend some church related act, usually going on meeting, shows, and of course church with her husband of over 20 years. The bishop walks in finding his wife relaxing, he hands his jacket and car keys to one of the helpers in the house and meets Nomfundo halfway for an embrace.

Mfundo: you worked hard today.

Tshepang: all thanks to you, what would I be without you?

Mfundo: nothing. So, the girl did you deal with her?

Tshepang: I tried handling the situation, she just too stubborn.

Mfundo: and that is why I told you not to groom them. Just attack and leave. Prolonged things usually become messy. Deal with it before it destroys us. Please!

Tshepang: I will. I will.

Mfundo: okay, now... look at this I was thinking of renovating the basement, you know for—what do you think of this design?

Tshepang: renovate? Why?

Mfundo: to show gratitude. We've lived all these years having more than enough. He has never bothered us, instead he gives us more and more. We have an abundance in everything. Why

can't we thank him by doing this. I think he'd appreciate it too. Plus, this can give you time until you find the next victim now that you're done with Itumeleng.

Tshepang: well, if you say it like that. I don't know anything about decorations and renovations, I'll leave everything to you. You can go as deep as you want, the pockets are heavy.

Mfundo: who are you telling? You know who I am, right?

Tshepang: I know, how can I ever forget. I must shower before supper, let me dash. I had a long day.

Mfundo: okay...

The bishop ups and leaves the lounge with a pang of guilt but quickly dismisses it as thought of what's at stakes consumes his mind. He was the chosen one for this job, out of all the suitors lined up for Nomfundo, her father chose him to wed her daughter and bequeathed them everything they have. Without his father-in-law, they would not be here. There's not single day he is not thankful to him.

DAYS LATER

ITUMELENG'S OFFICE AT HOLY GRAIL

Itu sat smiling and grinning by herself as she went through the record sales of the past weeks. Everything was back to being glitz and glamour in her life. Now that she went through with everything that she was ordered to do, the bishop was back to being his old sweet self. He even went as far as booking them a lunch date at one of the most prestigious hotels in the area. Being treated as royalty was nice for a change. Things were still sour, but they were definitely better than they had been a few days ago. A knock followed by an entering shifted her focus a little bit. She had a visitor

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Lesego, whom she had not talked to since the day she heaped insults at everyone.

Lesego: this where you have been hiding. I see.

Itu: what do you mean hiding?

Lesego: I mean that you've been scarce. I went to your house the other day but was told you were not home. So, I don't know if you were avoiding me or not.

Itu: no. I was just busy. I was not avoiding you.

Lesego: so, what has you glowing so much these days? You see happy.

Itu: I don't know. Maybe the Might Lord we serve. Just stop being nosy and help me with these.

Lesego: you know I cannot do math to save my life, right?

Itu: come one, it's easy. I will teach you. But first I have to go fetch something from the storage room. You can do whatever or read through that folder, I will be back.

Lesego: okay.

Itu leaves her office leaving her friend behind as she ventures to the storage room to look for some folders for reference to help familiarize Lesego with the work. In the room, just after she steps out, the bishop knocks and lets himself in, in search of Itu but finds a different person in the room.

Bishop: oh, I did not know there was someone else here.
Greeting, my child.

Lesego: bishop. How have you been?

Bishop: amazing, the Lord has been amazing to me. I hope his mercy extended to you too...

Lesego: I believe so.

An awkward moment silence pass. While she sits down, she feels the man hovering over her, she gets a little uncomfortable and starts fidgeting her fingers pressed for time. The unholy and ungodly hands of the bishop brush over her chest as she sits, and he stands behind her. She freezes, still and appalled at the cat. The man continues to brush his arm against her chest while pretending to be reaching for something on the table in front of her?

Bishop: any idea when the owner of that chair will be back?

Lesego: n—n-no.

Bishop: ohh... I cannot wait any longer. Tell her I was here.

With that he leaves wearing a smirk on his face. Confused and now scared Lesego breathes out almost hyperventilating while thinking about what happened. Itu bust back into the office without a clue of what just happened scaring her friend in the process.

Itu: why shaken? You look like you've just seen a ghost. Are you okay?

Lesego: oh, yes, I am okay. I am a 100. Perfectly fine, nothing weird here.

Itu: whoa, whoa, who are you trying to convince. You're going a little overboard. I get it. You're okay, now let's work.

Lesego: yeah, let's work.

Itu: great. So, this is who this works, first you---

Lesego: hey friend, what do you think of the bishop? Don't the rumours about him bother you at all?

Itu: suddenly--- what is that about?

Lesego: I am just curious you know, since you've been working with him for all these years. I thought you might know a thing or two about his true self.

Itumeleng looks at her friend stunned that she asked such a question. Guilt eats her up, she doesn't know whether to tell her the truth and warn her to look out for herself just in case she gets preyed on or just to let things be and look at the greater and bigger picture while protecting the bishop and the ministry's reputation. She decided to keep her mouth shut, anyway it is not like the bishop would do what he does to her to other women, she is different from other. She is special.

Itu: the bishop is as he is. No change in scene and out of scene.
He is great leader and a great man. I aspire to get a husband
like him someday. Don't let the talks in the streets get to you.

Lesego: o-okay...

Itu: yeah, let's get back to work.

3

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Boipelo: bathong, Reitumetse my bag! I am running late! Are you still sleeping?

Reitu: does everyone have to be up and running just because you're up, no Ma, this is so unfair.

Boipelo: I'll assume that's not directed at me, hand me my bag. I can't be late.

Reitu: here's the bag, but Ma--- money for bread?

Boipelo: you'll have to cook, with that attitude, I'm not giving you anything.

Reitu: Ma!

Boipelo: and make sure my house is clean, that's how you'll earn your keep around here.

Mme Boipelo who's running late rushes out of her house into the street and halts a taxi taking her to her destination. She arrives at work with 5 minutes to spare on the clock.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Working at the bishop's house as one of the helpers has been magnificent for a couple of years. But there's times when things feel surreal. The madam of this house is not exactly a friendly and warm person too. She carries energy that no one can exactly put their finger on, although she has not outright mistreated anyone, she is not a comfortable person to be around.

For the first mission of the day, Boipelo heads to the main bedroom to change the bedsheets. She runs into the bishop as he makes his way out of the bedroom, looking to be leaving for something important as he's dressed up.

Boipelo: Man of God, good morning.

She bows at his presence.

Tshepang: Mme Maleka, it has been a while. It is good to see you.

Boipelo: yes, bishop... how have you been holding up?

Tshepang: not complaining, the Lord has been good to me. He is great all the time. From your side, how have things been?

Boipelo: all good, I am just a little worried about my eldest daughter. I don't think she has been coping very well.

Tshepang: Itumeleng was it?

Boipelo: yes, bishop. So, I was wondering if she talked to you about anything or if you can try and talk to her and see if she's going through anything.

Tshepang: she hasn't said anything. I will try and see what I can do, but I cannot promise anything since you know--- it is fairly hard getting someone to talk when they're going through something. It is usually better to let them come to you but for your sake and how you've served my family with nothing but honour, I will talk to her. So please

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let your worries subside. I will pray on the situation too.

Boipelo: thank you bishop. Thank you very much, may the great and merciful Lord see you through.

Tshepang: God be with you too Mme.

Tshepang dismisses himself from Boipelo's sight feeling a little guilty but overwhelmed with anger and annoyance. He runs into Mfundo into the lounge who's sitting peaceful enjoying a cup of tea. She's always so calm and unbothered that she scares him at times.

Tshepang: honey...

She stands up to kiss him on the cheek then sits back down.

Mfundo: going already?

Tshepang: yes, I have a lot to do today that I couldn't really do yesterday.

Mfundo: okay.... And? Your face looks pale.

Tshepang: we might have a problem...

He sits down and cozies close next to her lowering his voice and speaking in a soft manner.

Tshepang: I think the girl has been acting out and her mother asked me if I can do anything about it.

Mfundo: and?

Tshepang: can't we like--- remove her from the picture. She's getting too much.

Mfundo: how sad... she had potential. I will see what I can do, but if the Master says no--- then there's nothing I can do.

Tshepang: whew... thank you. I don't know what went into me that I chose her.

Mfundo: The Master chose her, not you. But it's fine.

Tshepang: how are the renovations going?

Mfundo: well. He likes the change--- and he also approved of the new girl. That girl.

Tshepang: oh...

Boipelo comes back down disturbing them, the bishop shuffles away from his wife and stands up preparing to leave.

Tshepang: see you later then. I must leave.

Mfundo: have a great day.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Reitu: it is not like I am asking for money to keep myself although that wouldn't be a sin. I am asking for money to buy bread. Mom didn't leave any.

Itu: I know you baby sis; you are lying to me. Mom adores you, she would never. Just tell me upright if you want money to buy data and talk to boys.

Reitu: boys are so cliché; I would never go to such lengths just to entertain boys. Please, I am craving a grilled cheese sandwich.

Itu: I will cave in just because I am in a good mood, don't make me regret this.

Reitu: thank you.

Itu: I am running late I have to go, don't let in any boys in here.

Reitu: what boys?

Itu: you know what I mean--- take care.

Reitu: bye...

Itumeleng leaves while chatting with Lesego on the phone to invite her to her office again to help her with the work they didn't finish yesterday.

[on text]

Itu: so, are you coming or not?

Lesego: wait, how far are you?

Itu: I just got out of the house. Why?

Lesego: I need to a favour.

Itu: what is it?

Lesego; can you please go to my house and bring me a change of clothes, a t-shirt to be precise. I am already at church, and you know I'm clumsy, so I spilled something on myself.

Itu: at church? Okay... I will. I guess I'll take longer now. See you.

Lesego: thanks friend!

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Bishop: now, where were we before we got rudely interrupted.

Lesego: I am sorry about that. I will put my phone on silent mode next time.

Bishop: of course, you will. How would you feel about taking the ropes on the planning of the upcoming revival showcase by the youth?

Lesego: that's already delegated to Itu.

Bishop: but we're talking about you now not her. I am sure you're more than suited for the position. Your friend is a little--- disturbed and not focused, you on the other hand... are different.

Lesego: I thought---

Bishop: shhh... let me do the talking. You do the listening.

He stands up and opens one of the drawers on his table. He whips out a small bottle with oil in it and starts walking towards her slowly. The change in atmosphere is very obvious as Lesego twitches in the couch she's sitting on. She starts feeling a little uncomfortable and tries to pull her knee length skirt down as if it will have additional length if she does so. The bishop approaches her and starts running his hands from her shoulders down.

Lesego: bishop...

Bishop: relax.

He pours a few drops of the oil in his hands and continues to unbutton her blouse and starts smearing the oil on her chest further going down to her now exposed thighs. He repeats the motions going in circles until he's satisfied. He moves closer to her head and sniffs her hair then whispers in her ear.

Bishop: I am anointing you. This is the anointing oil to help you lead with courage and confidence. The youth group, you take that over and make it great. I trust you.

Lesego: yes, bishop.

Bishop: good girl. The Lord's work will always get done. You are now my anointed one and you shall obey every rule and task I bestow you. No questioning the bishop, got that?

Lesego: yes, bishop.

Bishop: what did I say?

Lesego: no questioning the bishop.

Bishop: amazing, you're such a quick learner. I think I am going to enjoy you. You can take your leave now. Go prepare for the takeover. I will come announce the news myself when the youth practice commences.

Lesego: yes, bishop.

4

LATER THAT DAY

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

Itu: your shirt--- your buttons are mismatched.

Lesego: oh, thank you.

Itu: I thought you said you stained that. I can't believe you made me bring another one for nothing.

Lesego: I did, but I went to the bathroom and managed to get the stain off. Hence the mismatching buttons.

Itu: okay--- let's get today's practice underway.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Itu stands in front of the youth members delegating today's tasks. Her attitude still has not changed making the room a little uncomfortable to be in.

Itu: Cindy, I did not think you'd be back.

Cindy: well, I am.

Itu: what are you doing here again?

Cindy: I have every right to be here just like everyone in this room right now. You are not the master of my life therefore you cannot tell me what to do and what not to.

Itu steps down from the podium and approaches Cindy slowly in her zone to start a fight but changes direction as she sees the bishop enter. She slowly walks towards the bishop to meet him halfway. Usually when he visits during practice, he has something to say to her and would hail her to meet him at the back but today he is not hailing but walking closer and closer to the podium. He also wears an unreadable expression on his face. He passes Itu without a word and proceeds to walk upfront.

The youth group members stand up and bow as the bishop stands in front of them. He orders them to sit down and calls Lesego up to stand next to him.

Bishop: glory be to God.

All: Amen.

Bishop: you guys must be surprised to see me here, I know. Your faces say it. I did not come to stay but I have a small message to pass to you all. I have sat down with the board members recently and we saw it fit to change the coordinator of the upcoming revival showcase. Seeing how the previous

coordinator is swarmed with work on her occupation, we opted and chose to appoint Ms. Lesego Semanya as the new coordinators and leader of the youth. From today onwards, I would like to announce that she is now your new leader and will be taking care of you guys and any pleas you might have. Ms. Lesego, you can go ahead and say a few words.

Lesego: first and foremost, thank you bishop. I wouldn't have thought that someday I'd be awarded with such precious and honorable work. I would like to thank everyone who put their faith and me, and to you guys--- I promise to be the best leader you guys have ever had. I pledge to be truthful, calm and to listen to your suggestions and requests without flaming out on you. I promise to give my best. I believe together we will take the youth of this ministry to another level. That's all. Thank you so much.

The room breaks into cheers and loud whistles as the youth congratulates Lesego and chant her name. Itu who's now at the back of the room runs out of the church and far away from the yard as her chest closes up. Images of Lesego and the bishop standing side by side haunt her. She thinks back to the day Lesego asked her suspicious questions about the bishop and it hits her just what happened. She has been hooked and there's nothings he can do. The knife the bishop has lodged down her

back is hard to pull out and might just end up killing her if she forces to pull it put. The bishop's sacred smile fades in her mind as tears blind her. She feels foolish and played that she could not see another case of betrayal coming her way.

Bishop: my job here is done, you kids have fun. I can't wait to see the full play on Saturday. All the best with preparation.

All: thank you bishop.

The bishop leaves and the youth gather around, some bashing the decision while some are for it because of their bad blood against Itu.

Cindy walks up to Lesego.

Cindy: girl, congratulations. I cannot begin to explain or express just how happy I ma for you. You deserve this more than that witch of your friend.

Lesego: thank you.

Cindy: so, does this mean it is finally over between you two? I can best friend replace her if you want to.

Lesego: I can't say no too... I know I will need the help.

Cindy: well bestie, let's get to work.

Lesego summons everyone to the center of the room and re-assigns the roles. For so long she has been under someone's shoulder, she has never tasted power. Being here and within this role feels different and she likes the change

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delegating seems to be in her blood and the people love her.

What could possibly go wrong?

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Itu runs into the house running over the cleaning bucket with water on the doorstep further infuriating her little sister. She runs into her room, slams the door and locks it and screams like no one's watching.

Reitu: Itu!!

Reitu exclaims and scrams from her sister's room shock her. She runs through the slippery floor to check on her, but the door is locked. She knocks but there's no answer. She tries many times but still, all she can observe from the outside is that her sister is angry and possibly crying as things crash nonstop inside the locked room. She gives up on ever getting the door open and

goes to call her mother. Her phone rings once and is answered.

[on call]

Reitu: Mama, we have a problem. Its Itu again. She just bust in her and locked herself in her room. She's crashing stuff in there and it is nosy. She locked the door and I do not know what to do. I'm scared.

Boipelo: what?! Wait I will try and do something. Calm down and wait for me.

Reitu: I don't think we have that long. The spare key... where is it?

Boipelo: that's with me. I will go ask for an earlier day off from the madam. I will call you soon. Just go to her door and try to get her to talk. I will be there soon.

[call ends]

Reitu does as ordered by her mother and goes to Itu's now quiet door. She sits in front of the locked door and sings a lullaby, the one her sister used to sing her when she was a kid. Her heart beats out of her chest as she sits imagining the worst while waiting for their mother.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Boipelo abruptly drops all her chores after talking to the madam and being granted the rest of the day off. She collects her stuff from the worker's cottage in a hurry and leaves the Mohlala premises in a flash. Nomfundo watches her as she disappears out of sight. She calls for one of the servants not her presence.

Mfundo: go bring me the small cooler from the fridge in the garage.

Servant: yes, ma'am.

The worker runs to and back and comes back with the small blue cooler box. She looks somewhat nervous as if she opened it and saw what was inside. Her hand trembles as she passes the small box to Nomfundo. She sees her hand and uncomfortable stature.

Mfundo: thank you. Did you open the box?

Servant: n-no ma'am.

Mfundo: okay, you can be dismissed.

The girl disappears from her sight.

Mfundo: it's always the young ones. They never learn.

She goes down to the basement. After renovations the area looks anew. The dim lights to provide just enough light gives this place a certain eerie mood and feel. She places the small cooler box on the ground and opens it. She gets on her knees as slithering and hissing continues out of the cage coming closer and closer to her.

Mfundo: Master, I offer my greetings. It has been a couple of days I know. I hope you like the final look of the place. I also apologize for the noise it might've caused you. I brought along a gift.

The snake almost her size indulges on the contents of the box. Hearts and brains have always been its favourite. It eats up the contents and goes in circles around Nomfundo a couple of times before it covets into human form, a deadly handsome young man.

The Master: that was not as fresh as I'd thought it would be.

Mfundo: apologizes, it was in the fridge for long again.

The Master: you can stand up; you don't have to stay bowed for that long. It is okay, you can look at my face. What do you think of my new look? I shed the last couple of days.

Mfundo: I would be fooled too. You look exquisite.

The Master: I know. So, about that Itu girl, what do you guys want me to do with her?

Mfundo: whatever the master sees as perfect punishment.

The Master: I liked her eggs better than any of the other girls before. What a shame. Well then, let me be on my way.

Mfundo: and master--- I have an extra gift. The maid currently in my kitchen, you can have her too. She saw something she shouldn't have. She spied on your food.

The Master: this evening keeps on getting better. Way better than the hospital stuff I just had.

Mfundo: again, I apologize. We'll try to do better.

The Master: don't bother for now.

Mfundo watches as the young man walks out of there before her and smiles to herself. This is the best inheritance and gift her father left her. She boastfully walks out and watches as the master finesses the young lady, hypnotizing her with his eyes

before he strikes her with his tongue, converts back to his original form and enters her body through her lady parts and moving further up to her ovaries and uterus, then heart and then the brain.

5

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Bishop: you did great today, I'm so proud of you.

Lesego: and how would you know that?

Bishop: I could hear laughter and cheers after I left that room all the way from here. I think they are really fond of you, which makes me very proud of you.

Lesego: I am honoured.

Bishop: see, change doesn't always have to be bad thing.

Lesego: I see, and I promise not to let you down.

Bishop: good girl. Now take these with you. Use the oil everyday before you sleep, the salt if for when you bath. These will protect you from your enemies. You don't even have to pray if you use these.

Lesego: I am really honoured; you do a lot for me. Words can never be enough to repay the kindness you show me.

Bishop: then show me in other ways... come here.

Lesego stands up on command and approaches the bishop's desk. He orders her to kneel in front of him as he adjusts his

chair. He undoes his belt and unzips his pants and forces her between his legs.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Boipelo opens the door to find her daughter staring at the mirror as if she's lost her sense. There's an empty bottle of wine on the floor, a lot of broken things and a mess bed. she's surprised to see the bottle but ignored it as it's not the bigger issue at the moment. She sighs at the sight and calls Reitu to help her clean the room.

Boipelo: I always depended on you and thought you weren't one to let life get to you like this. Right now, I feel like I don't even know you. Itumeleng, what happened to you?

Reitu: sis, did something happen at church? What did they do to you?

Boipelo: what did I say about your beef with the church? Can't you just keep the church out of your mouth. Not everything your sister goes through is because of the church!! Leave my sight you're starting to annoy me! Leave!

Reitu: Ma?!

Boipelo: leave little girl, now!

Reitumetse leaves the room feeling a little annoyed that her mother doesn't take her seriously but grateful she doesn't have

to help clean the mess anymore. Her heart is painful at the sad sight of her sister but what more can they do when she doesn't want to talk. Who knows what she has been doing in that room.

Boipelo: what is all this mess? I left work early to come and try to talk to you but you're just staring at that damn mirror like there's something in it!!! What do I have to do to get through to you?! Do you want me to beat the truth out of you?!
Itumeleng I am talking to you?!!

Itu: I need some fresh air.

Boipelo: Itumeleng? Itu?!

She ignores her and goes her way. Boipelo runs out of the room and catches her by the front door. She tries to hold her hand, but Itu fights back and yanks her arm from her mother's grip. Boipelo falls back down inside the house balancing on her arm causing a strain on the arm. She screams out in pain holding her arm up as pain takes over the whole arm to the shoulder. She watches with blurry eyes, tears threatening as her daughter disappears out of sight. Good thing that Reitu is not here to see her like this.

MANY HOURS LATER

SOME LOCAL TAVERN

Itumeleng crawls as her legs fail to carry her any longer. She drank herself to the bin. The pain she felt had still not subsided, but it felt good to be high and not be able to think properly about all her worries.

Itu: bar man, another one

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please. I ma not leaving this place until I puke.

Bartender: I don't think so, you are already beyond wasted. It would be better for you to go home.

Itu: just give me a drink.

Bartender: okay, but promise this is the last one, after this, you must go home.

Itu: I promise.

The guy hands her a beer and goes to the attend other customers. A mysterious but good-looking guy approaches her. Even in her drunk state she can tell who's hot and who's not and the guy sitting beside her right now is definitely hot and handsome. Maybe this is a sign from God.

Itu: you look too flashy and monied to be here. What are you doing here?

Guy: I came here for you.

Itu: you're so funny. You know--- maybe you are here for me. I mean I just got my heart broken, my best friend too betrayed me and I can't tell my mother anything because if I do, I might die--- the bishop might... you know what never mind. I'm here to enjoy myself, no worries just enjoyment.

Guy: you really are going through a lot. Too bad you won't see to live another day. Itu: what? I didn't catch that.

Guy: I said it's time to leave, I think you've had enough.

Itu: I'm not drunk. Guy: give me that...

Itu: leave my beer alone!! No!!

Guy: look into my eyes... Itu: what? Why?

The mysterious man cups her face into his hands and makes her look directly into his eyes. It takes a couple of seconds before she is all obedient and begging the guys to take her home. He stands up and forces her arm into his and together they walk out of the place without anyone noticing.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

The forensic team leaves the place as the bishop's car enters the premises. After that incident, it took a lot in Mfundo not to dispose the body. After much consideration she decided to morph a copy of the body so not to raise any suspicions as the wounds on the body were pretty unnatural.

Bishop: what was that just now? What happened here? Why is the forensic team leaving my house?

Mfundo: we had something to take care of. A mishap during the evening. It is all taken care of now so there's no need to worry. Bishop: what?

Mfundo: one of the helpers was snooping around so the master took care of her. Bishop: excuse me?!

Mfundo: why act surprised. He's done worse and you know that. Don't get on my nerves!

Bishop: I'm just shocked that's all.

Mfundo: yeah... that's that. Itumeleng will also be taken care of tonight. I thought you'd use the good news after a long day.

Bishop: whoa... already?

Mfundo: what did you think?

Bishop: nothing... I just didn't expect the master to act that fast considering he's been very fond of her.

Mfundo: well, that'd that now. I'll head upstairs first.

Bishop: what did you tell the helper's family?

Mfundo: I came up with something, don't worry nothing will lead back to us. Sorcery and witchcraft can't be traced using science. Even if it did, the master would take care of it so...

Bishop: wow, it really has been an eventful day in this house.

Mfundo: not surprised...

Bishop: I am grateful to you and for you every day.

Mfundo: I bet you are.

THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING

Cats meowing horrifyingly in the darkness snap Boipelo out of her sleep. After spending her whole evening waiting for Itu to come back, Boipelo found herself sleeping on the couch in the living room. Her arm was now very sore and swollen. Itu is still not back.

Boipelo: its 3 am, cold and dark outside...where could this girl be.

She checks the time on the clock on the wall and gives up retiring to bed as she only has 4 hours until her alarm rings for work.

THE NEXT EARLY MORNING

Boipelo wakes up 10 minutes early before her alarm rings even though she went to sleep just 4 hours ago. Her arm is still very swollen and painful, but nothing worries her more than her daughter who's still not home by now. Itumeleng had never been a person to go missing or even spend the night out, on the nights she did spend the night out, she'd always a call and let her mother know. This behavior was totally unlike. She goes into the kitchen only to find Reitu sitting on chair and sipping on coffee that seems to have gone cold. She looks like she barely got any sleep.

Boipelo: what are you doing up already?

Reitu: I can't sleep Ma.

Boipelo: me too. Something just doesn't feel right. to make matters worse I had a nightmare and there's this unrest I'm feeling on my chest like something happened to your sister.

Reitu: I'm also consumed by fear. I tried calling ausi Lesego, but she doesn't pick up. I sent her countless messages, and she left me on read. I don't know what to do anymore.

Boipelo: I can't take this anymore. I've waited enough. I am going to the police station.

Reitu: me too.

Boipelo: no, you stay here and wait for her and notify me as soon as she steps in through that door.

Reitu: but Ma...

Boipelo: but nothing--- shift I have to get ready. Get my phone and dial work, I need the day off.

Reitu: on it.

Reitu puts the cup down and follows instructions as ordered. Boipelo makes the call to work, and it doesn't take long until she's granted the day off. She disappears from the kitchen as the kettle comes to a boil preparing her bath water.

45 MINUTES LATER

THE POLICE STATION

Officer: Ma, I need you to get back, you're holding the line. As I've told you, there's nothing we can do for your daughter. It hasn't been 48 hours since she went missing. As you can see all these people behind you are in desperate need of help just as you.

Boipelo: I hear you, but I know something is wrong. This is my daughter we're talking about. Itumeleng never spent a day

away from home. This is unusual of her. Please officer, huh?
Hear me out. Something is definitely wrong.

Officer: did you try calling her or tracking her phone? How does a 28-year-old woman even go missing?

Boipelo: she left her phone behind.

Officer: Mama, I think it's time you start spending quality time with your kids and get to know them better. I've seen cases like this, and whenever this happens, the supposed missing person always comes back home all happy and fine.

Boipelo: Ms. Officer do you have kids?

Officer: I don't get why that is a question?

Boipelo: I am asking if you have kids because if you did, this would not be happening right now. No mother would sit back and let another mother suffer. We all feel the same pain and we all feel when something is not right with out kids. I am telling you right now that something is wrong, and you don't seem to even have the slightest will to help me. You're too engrossed on helping other people like my problem is not even worth your time! Is this what the government pays you to do?! Is this how you're supposed to treat civilians?!! Do you call this service doing work!!

Officer: then what do you want me to do?! Get busy and start investigating based on your gut feeling and your motherly

instincts?! I ma sorry that is not how things work her!! If you don't have anything more to say, please step aside!!

One of the detectives comes in between and tries to stop the fight. He takes Boipelo aside and talk to her in private.

Det.: ma'am, I am so sorry for that. Officer Nzima must be having a bad day. Her behavior was totally uncalled for, especially towards an elder. I heard your story, and unfortunately as she said, there's nothing we can do for you at the moment. Technically, your daughter is not considered to be a missing person until 48 hrs later. Seeing how you're here even though it hasn't been 48 hrs, there must be something going on. So

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when last did you see your daughter?

Boipelo: yesterday, around the afternoon to evening. She left home in a very alarming state. She was not herself; she was drunk and from what I could see she was going out to get more. We had a little fight and that was the last I saw of her.

Det.: what do you mean by fight?

Boipelo: I --- I tried to get her to talk why she was mad, but she refuted and pushed me to the floor and that's how I hurt my arm.

Det.: was she already intoxicated by then?

Boipelo: yes... she had drank wine while locking herself in her room.

Det.: so, you're saying you never laid a hand on her. She's the one who hurt you and ran away.

Boipelo: yes, officer?

Det.: this is so hard to piece together. Something doesn't add up at all. Ma'am mind if I ask what a normal day looks like for your daughter? You said she's not someone who'd go off the radar just like that? What kind of job does she do? What's her daily routine?

Boipelo: Itumeleng spends most of her days at work. She goes in as early as 9 am in the morning and comes back home around 7 pm and sometimes later than that. At first I did not understand why she spent so much time at church but after learning her position at Holy Grail Ministries and all the work she has to do, I started to understand her.

Det.: Ma, did you just say Holy Grail?

Boipelo: yes, officer... is there a problem?

Det.: was your daughter working as a secretary there and managing some records too?

Boipelo: yes, how did you know that?

Det.: I need you to give me your contact information now, you might be in danger!

Boipelo: what?! Why? What danger?

Det.: this is my business card, call me anytime you need help. I have to run somewhere really quick. Remember, call me whenever something happens, or you see something out of the ordinary.

Boipelo: detective!! Officer!! Officer!!

The man disappears out of sight rushing as if he finally got a breakthrough. Boipelo is left dumbfounded and disappointed she didn't get any help. There hasn't been any call from Reitu too. She takes the business card and walks out of the police station sighing heavily and wondering just where to from here? Where to start looking?

2 DAYS LATER

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

A dark cloud hangs over the Maleka household as news of Itumeleng's passing were announced just a day ago. There are no words to explain the pain and sadness Mme Boipelo feels as she sits on the mattress covered in dark clothing. That one afternoon when the police came to announce the news, she spent the rest of the evening at a hospital. She hasn't eaten or moved an inch in two days. She has even run out of tears as all the preparations for the burial are on her shoulders.

Reitu approaches her with a glass of sugar water.

Reitu: Mama, please drink some of this please. Itu would not like to see you like this. I know you're hurting and so am i. We need to be strong for each other. We only have each other from now on. Seeing you like this hurts me as much as it hurts you. You are not the only one who feels pain, you're not the only one who lost, I also did. Please share our pain with me. We cannot continue like this any longer.

Boipelo: I can't--- i---

Boipelo loses her composure and breaks into tears, this time only her dry and hoarse voice is heard--- no tears falling. Lesego's mother shifts from her seat to go and comfort as other women do the same too. Reitu leaves the room with

tears streaming down. She goes into Itumeleng's room and locks herself inside. There only she can cry in silence, and no one can see her.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

The youth cheers loudly as loud applause consumes the hall. After spending so much time preparing for the revival showcase, they finally performed, and their performance was loved dearly by the church. Lesego look at the bishop who winks at her as they step down the main stage going to change back into formal attire. She has never felt so loved and important in her life. Being the main character of something of that important did feel great for a change.

THE CHANGING ROOM

Lesego: you guys did great out there. I am so proud of you.

Cindy: it was all because of you. You managed us well and gave us great advice. You really were made for this position.

Palesa: Cindy is right. I wouldn't have made it back to the team if it was not for you. I cannot thank you enough really.

Cindy: yeah, but did you guys hear the tragic news of Itumeleng's sudden passing?

Lesego: is that something tragic? I heard she committed suicide because I replaced her.

Palesa: well, I cannot put that past her. But have any of you guys at least visited her house? You know—for offering condolences and stuff?

Lesego: why would we bother when no one's even moved by her death. It's like no one knows, even the bishop, he hasn't said a word about it. I don't think anyone cares and I'd like to keep things that way.

Cindy: well, it's not like I was close with her. The lady hated my guts.

Palesa: me too. I know its bad omen to speak ill of the dead but--- she deserves it after kicking me off the team.

Lesego: you guys are so bad.

The girls laugh it off and leave the changing room. The team atmosphere ahs really been different ever since Lesego' s reign. No one seemed to care about Itu's death, and no one seemed bothered by it. People moved on as if they never knew her or she never existed. Maybe this was the spell that came with her untimely and unnatural death.

A WEEK LATER

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

The yard buzzes with life as both people and animals go in and out of the premises after Itu's burial ceremony has passed. From all the relatives that attended only one aunty remains, an aunty from her father's side. All her maternal relatives have left. Boipelo sits looking lifeless and still in shock and disbelief that they just buried her daughter. The lump on her throat does not seem to want to go down, it just keeps getting bigger and bigger by the day. Her eyes have sunk, and her skin looks bad, her appetite has been very poor for the whole week but better than the early days. Someone would think she'd brighten up after receiving a large sum of condolence money from the church, but no, she's still numb.

Kutlwano: I can not lie and say I feel your pain, I have never lost a child, but I can relate because I have lost someone too. It may not be the same, but I get it, just a little bit how you feel.

Boipelo: thank you. I don't know what else to say. I really appreciate the support. I did not expect anyone to come to see Itu off after her father disappeared into thin air, but you being here means a lot. I am grateful.

Kutlwano: what my brother did to you is unfair and my being here doesn't even begin to compensate it. You were always too good for him; he lost a gem.

Boipelo: it's nice hearing such words. To be honest, I was a fool too for loving him.

Kutlwano: your words not mine, but yes~ maybe you were.

They both chuckle. Kutlwano observes her smile, and something tings in her heart. She's a little relieved to see her smile has not faded away. She looks at her one more time and smiles to herself standing up.

Kutlwano: I'm gonna make us some tea.

Boipelo: thank you, make mine green tea. There's probably some Rooibos green tea somewhere in the cupboards.

Kutlwano: alright.

Kutlwano leaves the bedroom for the kitchen feeling much better now after her attempt to serve tea was not declined. Things are about to get better, and she can't be more happier. Boipelo is one strong woman, and she deserves the world's best according to her.

ITUMELENG'S ROOM

Reitu wakes up from a nap surprised she was talking in her sleep. She looks around and the room is empty with a cold breeze coming in through the window. She stands up to go close the window then sits back down on the bed. the little dream was about Itu, she was laughing and smiling in the dream on a good summer's day, but her death still feels unreal. She still can't believe she won't have anyone to manipulate for data money anymore. Either way dreaming of her was good and a little gave her a little bit of comfort. Her phone vibrates from under the pillow. She retrieves it and checks, it's message from an unknown number. She reads the message but ends up getting more confused by its contents. A phone call comes through from the same number and she picks up immediately.

[on call]

Reitu: hello?

Voice: Mrs. Maleka, is that you?

Reitu: Mrs.? what? No--- what crazy dumbhead are you again?

Voice: okay... excuse me, I am looking for Mrs. Boipelo Maleka and clearly, I called the wrong number. I apologize, have a nice evening.

Reitu: wait--- this is Mrs. Boipelo Maleka's daughter... and what creep are you? What do you want with my mother?

Voice: oh, I did not know. I ma not a creep. I am a detective, I met with your mother when she visited the police station, and I ended up requesting her contact number because there some things I wanted to run past her.

Reitu: now you sound way creepier... so

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you're the douchebag who told her about the 48-hour waiting time bull crap. Any who, what are you doing with a married woman's number? What's your business?

Voice: I apologize for the treatment your mother suffered but I was not the one who was taking her statement, I just happened to overhear the conversation and offered help. That's all.

Reitu: boring...why do you have reasoning for everything?

Voice: I was just answering your questions, nothing odd there.

Reitu: got that. So, what things did you want to run through my mother? Run them through me now and don't bother her--- tell me.

Voice: I would like to ask you to visit the police station as soon as you're available.

Reitu: okay, tomorrow!

Voice: okay... see you then, Ms. Maleka.

Reitu: alright...Mr?

Voice: oh, my name is Kwanele Dikana, Detective Dikana... you can ask for Det. Dikana when you come visit tomorrow.

Reitu: alright...

[call ends abruptly]

THE POLICE STATION

Kwanele puts the phone down a little appalled how the person on the other hand ended the call even though she wasn't the one who made it. He smiles to himself and gets back to cross referencing the information on the folders in front of him. He has been carrying these and literally feeding his brain on them for the past week. Ms. Gina, also detective enters the office without knocking and gets to her desk, turns on the computer and starts clicking very loudly.

Kwanele: your habits are... very very hard to get used to. Didn't they teach you how to knock at home? And what academy taught you computer lessons? You type very loudly...

Gina: I was taught how to knock, but I just don't do it to annoy you, same as my typing.

Kwanele: wow... and you wonder why I try to change the person I share my office with every time...

Gina: you're so funny.

Kwanele: whatever.

Gina: those files, they look old--- what have you been reading, you look very fuelled and enthusiastic, is whatever you're reading that interesting?

Kwanele: to me it is...

Gina: whoa, that can only mean trouble.

Gina stands up from her chair and goes to Kwanele's desk. She scans through the documents he's reading, and her face goes sour. She sighs out loud and rubs her face in frustration.

Gina: why do you have those?

Kwanele: because I want to uncover the truth.

Gina: what truth?

Kwanele: you seriously can't be asking that right now. Are you for real?

Gina: I am. You worry me. Do I have to remind you what happened the last time you went through those files. You hit a brick wall and almost got admitted to a psychiatric hospital because they drove you mad. Are you seriously willingly trying to go back to that dark place again? Kwanele, don't do this.

Kwanele: for your information, I have never had a good rest after that incident. I blamed myself for being incompetent and not being able to find out what happened to my sister! S, please don't try and stop me, I've already made up my mind. I will find the truth and I won't ask for any favours from anyone. So, please let me be.

Gina: how can I not worry Kwanele? You're going through case files from years ago like something new will come up. This is not going to change anything, and you know that. It's not like a new lead will magically appear. You're working too hard to indict people on assumptions, rumours and your gut feeling. Why can't you let this be, huh?

Kwanele: I am not expecting you to understand anything. My sister died working for those damned people. She lost her life because of that damned cult disguised as a church. I will burn The Holy Grail Ministries to the ground if I must! I am not giving up on my sister again!! I am not going to let the enemy win

again!! I am not going to let those people live comfortably while they corrupt and murder people.

Gina: do you have any evidence for your claims?

Kwanele: I will find evidence! So, please if you can't use that energy to root for me, just sit back and act like you didn't see anything.

Gina: wow...don't say I didn't warn you.

Kwanele: I won't.

Gina goes back to her seat feeling a little down and defeated. She knows the guy and when he's fixated on something, he never lets it go until he sees it through. She just hopes that he don't get hurt in any way on the way to 'uncovering the truth'.

THE FOLOWING DAY

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Kutlwano's presence really had a positive and big effect to Boipelo. After spending almost the whole night up chatting, she woke up feeling a little better and lighter this morning.

Kutlwano drags her small travel bag as Boipelo goes upfront o tope the door for her. Today she's going back to her house and Boipelo vouched to accompany her at least until town because she needs some air and some time out of the house.

Kutlwano: you really don't have to take me that far.

Boipelo: I want to, and I need some air. Your presence here helped me a lot.

Kutlwano: since there's mo convincing you, let's go then.

They bid their goodbye's to Reitu who is also up and preparing to leave for the police station. Yesterday after that call she spent a lot of time contemplating whether to go or not, after some much needed thought she took the decision of visiting the place. She felt she owed that to her sister and though she has not said it much, she feels there's something fishy about

Itu's death too. Because she was unsure where she'd go or not, she kept the news about visiting the police station a secret from her mother. Seeing her smile after a long 2 weeks of nothing but sadness lifted some heaviness of her heart, as much as she wanted to tell her, she couldn't. she thought this was not the right time to talk about whatever awaits her at the police station. Maybe after she's caught the jinx of it and believes she can trust the detective from the call, only then she can tell her mother.

AT THE POLICE STATION

Det. Dikana comes to the front desk after being alerted he has a visitor. After pulling an all nighter preparing the materials he has been going through in order he's not feeling very well but manages to put a smile on his face as he comes in contact with the person he as been waiting for.

Det.: I have been waiting for you. I am detective Kwanele Dikana by the way.

Reitu: morning, I am Reitumetse Maleka, but you can call me Reitu.

Det.: okay, nice to meet you Ms. Maleka, my office is this way.

Kwanele leads the and opens the door to his office. Reitu greets the person they find inside before she's ushered to a chair. Gina

smiles back and excuses herself as she can sense that whatever's going to be discussed is super sensitive as per Kwanele's words the previous day. Reitu judgementally looks at the clustered table then shifts her gaze to Kwanele who doesn't seem to notice anything wrong.

Reitu: sis this how you work?

Kwanele: excuse me?

Reitu: this place's a pigsty. Is your desk perhaps a trash can?

Kwanele: oh no, excuse that. I was here all night hence the empty coffee cups and a whole lot of other trash. Give me 5 minutes, I'll clear the desk and then we can resume.

Reitu: you don't have to do that on my account. You're probably very tired right now if you pulled an all nighter. Let's just get back to business and I will leave you be.

Kwanele: okay then. When chatting to your mother when she visited the station, I got grounds to believe that your now deceased sister worked at The Holy Grail Ministries as a secretary of some sort.

Reitu: I really don't know a lot about what she did but yeah, she did work for those people.

Kwanele: okay... before she--- you know--- on the night she passed on, was there anything out of the ordinary with her behavior?

Reitu: something had been off and odd with her for a week or two before that. On the night of the incident, she came back home way earlier than she usually does and was not feeling well. She came home upset and crying. She locked herself in her room and started smashing stuff in there with the door locked. We later, mom and I had to clean the room.

Kwanele: did she say anything, or give any reasons he was upset?

Reitu: not, not really. I excused myself before mom investigated her. I later came back home and heard from mom she was not home and had run away drunk, after pushing her making her sprain her arm.

Kwanele: oh

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she did mention that. Anything else?

Reitu: no.

Kwanele: tell me about the incident you mentioned that occurred a week or two before the preceding one.

Reitu: its more of the same as this one. She came back home angry again, locked herself up in her room and did not talk to anyone. She did that for a couple of days, she looked distraught and in pain, but she did not say anything. It was only later in the week that she started acting like 'herself' all happy and stuff.

Kwanele: would you say you and your sister had a good relationship like were you close with her?

Reitu: yes, we were.

Kwanele: did she share anything with you that had to do with her life and work?

Reitu: not really, we never talked about her work. We only talked about other things. Never work or her life.

Kwanele: I see.

Reitu: okay, you've been asking me questions forever, but I don't get where this is going. Why did you call me here detective?

Kwanele: I won't sugar coat this or try to beat around the bush. I'll just say it as is.

Reitu: say what? What is it?

Kwanele: I have grounds to believe that The Holy Grail Ministries is actually the reason behind your sister's death. That place runs a cult and their so-holy forever to be worshiped

bishop is a cultist. There's more that meets the eye to that man, and I will risk anything and everything I have to bring that place down and bring that evil man and his whole empire to justice.

Reitu stares at the man puzzled and lost for words. Out of all the brainwashed people she'd met and lived with, not once did she think or even dream of meeting someone who saw different and shared her beliefs to a T., she stays stunned and shocked for a good minute until she finds herself again and speaks.

Reitu: what?! Are you saying that place killed my sister? Are you saying this was not some accident? Are you actually saying that my sister never suffered a heart attack and everything she suffered was induced and made to look the way it did because she was of no use?! Just who the hell do those people think they are that they can decide on their own who's useful and who's not. Where is the justice in all this?! Why did my sister have to die when all she merely did was work for that godforsaken place?

Kwanele: Ms. Please calm down. I understand how you feel. I know exactly how unjust it feels to have such happen. I get where you're coming from, I totally do. Believe me. We will uncover the truth. It may hurt and you might want to give up sometime but please take your time to think this through.

Whatever decision you make, I will support you. I will be there for you.

Reitu: my sister--- my poor sister--- after years and years she devoted herself to that nasty place, this is how they thank her. When I done said something was wrong with that church. No one ever believed me!!

Kwanele: I am so sorry for your loss again. When my older sister suffered the same fate, I lost all will to survive. I was in a dark space for months and shut out anyone who tried to help me or say a word. You're handling this way better than I did. You are strong and I admire that about you.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Two young girls aged 15 and 16 stand in the middle of the office after being showered with praises by the bishop.

Bishop: you girls did great. I may have not praised you as much as I did with the youth, but I enjoyed your show better. When I asked who came up with the idea and I was pointed your way, I could not believe that such young souls did such great work. I rest assured every night knowing that the future of the ministry is in good hands.

Emihle: we are grateful to receive such wise words from you bishop. To be truthful we could not have done it without the

help and encouragement from the church. Everything that happened with the showcase was because we have great support and an amazing leader.

Isabele: as she just said, it is an honour to be lamp of this flock and bed led by such a great leader. Coming to this church gave me stability and wisdom I could've never gotten anywhere else. Ima very grateful and thankful of all the work you have done bishop. You are a benevolent leader and a man of honour.

Bishop: you guys flatter me. I am grateful too. I miraculously feel young again. For the honour and as a way of showing I appreciate you, I have prepared something. You girls can take a seat in the meantime.

The girls follow on command and sit side by side on the couch across the room. They squeal in excitement as it still feels like a dream that they got to meet with the bishop. It is not every day that teenagers of this congregation get a one-on-one with the bishop. The fact that something of this grand gesture happened to them only means there's great things coming for them.

The bishop closes the drawers of his desk after retrieving something. He paces two small bottles on top of the desk and moves towards the girls.

Bishop: as per tradition or common practice of this church. I'm usually in charge of discovering the holy ghost within any of you but not any earlier than 18 years. But because you guys have proved to have wisdom, I will be performing the ceremony a little earlier than other for you. You see those two bottles over there, we're gonna use those to anoint you, to evoke the holy ghost within you and open your third eye. This may not make much sense right now, but after everything you will understand why I have to do this.

Them: yes, bishop.

A FEW DAYS LATER

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

After a restless night Lesego enters the bishop's office complaining about bad pain on her abdomen. The reoccurring dream about snakes too has been bothering her. The salts and oils don't seem to work anymore.

Lesego: I think something is wrong with me, I have not been feeling well for a few days now and I'm getting worried.

Bishop: what's the problem?

Lesego: I keep have reoccurring dreams of a snake, blood and other horrifying things. Its hard falling asleep at night. I even fear falling asleep.

Bishop: the things I gave you, have you been using them...did you tell anyone about them or us?

Lesego: only my friend, Cindy... she happened to visit my house and saw them, so she asked. I did not know that was a big deal.

Bishop bangs the desk with his fist and stands walking quickly towards Lesego. His hand lands on her neck in seconds and he keeps it there choking her for a good minute.

Bishop: see what you made me do?! Do you see what the hell you just made me do?!! I thought I made myself clear. I chose you because I trusted you, because I thought we would have something special, how can you be so careless...with everything?! With us?! Lesego!!!

Lesego: I—I'm sorry, I didn't mean to.

Lesego shakes in fear as the bishop raises his voice every time he speaks. She gasps and hold back her cough with her hands still on her neck. The man huffing and fuming with anger besides her scares her that she wants to leave the place. In attempt to ask to be excused, the man puts his hand on her thigh and squeezes it tightly with force making her whimper in pain.

Bishop: I want you to bring your friend with you here tomorrow evening.

Lesego: but---

Bishop: the rules?

Lesego: never question the bishop.

Bishop: because?

Lesego: bishop knows best.

Bishop: thank you, now leave. I have a visitor coming in soon.

Lesego: yes, bishop.

Lesego pulls her skirt down hiding the marks on her thighs and leaves the room feeling her breath shortening. A memory of Itumeleng plays in her mind relentlessly. She gasps for her defeated and leaves the premises.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Boipelo looks in the mirror one more time before she leaves her bedroom. She steps out and is met by a crazy looking Reitumetse in the living room. She looks thoughtless and stuck in her own world, so she approaches and shakes her shoulder.

Boipelo: what is wrong with you, you've been quiet the whole day.

Reitu: just missing my sister that's all.

Boipelo is taken aback by the comment as she did not expect it. She sits down for a second and tries to take the conversation further, but Reitu closes up.

Boipelo: I miss her too, sometimes I even hear her voice, her laugh and even smell her even though she's not around. I pray every night that I see her in my dreams. I know you miss her too baby. We will be okay, I promise, I may not know when, but we will get there. For now, let's take baby steps.

Reitu: I know... and I'm happy we're at a stage where we can finally talk about her, say her name and keep her memory alive without breaking.

Boipelo: I am happy too. I am happy that I have such an intelligent, warm and understanding daughter. I know I have been very hard on you, especially during the mourning days, I was very unreasonable and closed you out even though you were hurting just as much as I was if not more. I disregarded you and focused on my pain, I was selfish and only thought about myself. I am sorry you had to be the parent at such a moment.

Reitu: I understand MA and thank you for the apology even though it was not needed.

Boipelo: I just wanted to say it... get it off my chest.

Reitu: understood, but--- where are you going at this time of the evening, it's almost dark outside?

Boipelo: oh, I have an appointment with the bishop.

Reitu: what? Why?

Boipelo: something about me going back to work and other things you don't have to know...

Reitu: Ma?! But why his house though? Couldn't you go to the office just like everyone else who makes an appointment with him?

Boipelo: he's only free this evening and it'll be too late to go to his office by the time of the appointment. Either way what I want to discuss with him must be in the First Lady's presence, I'm their employee after all.

Reitu: the first lady?

Boipelo: the wife of the bishop....

Reitu: whoa... okay. Since I can't stop you, just go then. But please, be safe. I'll call to check up on you. I don't trust--- just be safe and pick up when I call.

Boipelo: I will be safe and back before you know it, but I won't pick up the calls. I'm the parent here, remember that.

Boipelo ups and leaves after having a light conversation with her second daughter. It hasn't been that long since her first daughter's burial. She still feels somehow but knowing she has Reitu consoles her

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a lot.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Mfundo wears an unreadable expression as she sighs making her way up from the basement. Something is clearly bothering her. She throws herself on the couch and call one of the helps to bring her something to drink. The bell rings and is answered before the guest is let in. an unexpected guest enters her lounge starting her a little bit.

Boipelo: Mme Bishop, good evening. How have you been?

Mfundo: great, the Lord has been amazing to my family. And how have you been holding up with everything?

Boipelo: it's getting better.

Mfundo: I can't begin to express the sadness I feel and how much my heart breaks every time I think about what happened. We had such great talent; your daughter was an amazing person, and I can't believe she left us to be a star in the sky. God's will really hurt us sometimes. She was such a bright young woman, with an amazingly bright future ahead, again, please receive my condolences and my pardon that we could not make it to the final ceremony.

Boipelo: there's no need to apologize for that, you are busy people. You have a flock to lead, and I am not complaining in any way.

Mfundo: you're such a wonderful soul. You are a great woman, not many are like you.

Boipelo: I feel blessed to get such compliments from the first lady.

The helper enters holding a small bucket with Mfundo's favorite wine and a glass in the other hand. She puts both the items on the coffee table in front of them and pops the bottle open. She pours out half a glass and hands it to Mfundo. Boipelo frowns at the sight but keeps her thoughts to herself as she's not here to judge anyone.

Mfundo; can she get you anything?

Boipelo: just water.

Mfundo: okay, bring her water please. The bishop will be here soon, we can chat in the meantime. He told me about your meeting.

Boipelo: oh...

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

The bishop sits amused as the young girl in front of him goes on telling the story of how things have been going in her life, sharing her feeling and her future plans.

Isabele: things have been great at school too, so I am really grateful.

Bishop: I see, so how have the things that I gave you been treating you?

The girl shifts uncomfortably on the couch and looks around the room. She keeps quiet for a good minute until the bishop asks her again.

Bishop: are you okay?

Isabele: they have been great--- they are g-good.

Bishop: you cannot be lying, right? This is the house of the Lord; we do not judge here. Matthew 11: 28-30 says 'come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest', what do you think this means?

Isabele: it means that God forgives and tells us we must come as we are to him and not hide ourselves.

Bishop: amazing! But most importantly, it also says we must show ourselves to Him, with all our guilt and sins and He shall forgive us. Understand?

Isabele: yes bishop.

Bishop: so, what do you want to tell me?

Isabele: I have been having sinful and unholy dreams for the past couple of days. My body has been feeling some way and I may have engaged in sinful activity in the name of reliving myself.

Bishop: sinful activity?

Isabele: mastu—rbat---ion.

She says and covers her face with her hands in embarrassment. Never in a million years did she ever think she would confess to

doing such in front of the bishop. The bishop walks up to her with a small bottle in his hands, he removes her hands from her face. She cups her face and makes her look directly into his eyes.

Bishop: that is nothing to be embarrassed about. That is perfectly natural. As much as I am a bishop, I was once a teenager and I understand everything about being one. The emotions, feeling and hormones are all over the place and that's what makes you perfect. You don't have to be shy; I can help you pray about it, keep using the things I gave you and you will be okay. Come see me every time these dreams occur or when you feel like you need to relieve yourself. I can help--- in many ways that one.

His hands move from the face lower to the chest, he unbuttons her shirt and removes what's underneath.

Isabele panics and tries to move away from the man but her manages to hold her in place.

Bishop: don't panic, it's okay. I will not hurt you. I am helping you. This is all for you. This anointing oil will help with everything, you will be more relaxed after. Remember, you are a special kid, the chosen one to serve the Lord, you are the

temple of the Lord. This is to help keep you safe and prepare you for your future duties as someone who is anointed by the hand of God.

He pours a few drips of the oil into his hands and massages her chest paying attention to each breast going to the back. he repeats the motions going back and forth until he is satisfied, he looks at her up and down and snakes his hand around her waist tying her down and leaning closer to her face.

Bishop: do you trust the bishop?

Isabele: I do.

Bishop: then good, all is well. This is all for the Lord. Relax.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

The bishop enters the house rushing. He greets his guest and sits to chat a little bit with both Mfundo and the guest before he invites the guest into his home office. He shows her to a seat and offer her something to drink, she politely declines and continues to start telling the reason for her visit.

Boipelo: something has been bothering after the funeral and everything. I contemplated a lot and sat on it for a while but in the end, it felt right for me to bring this back.

She takes out a small envelop from her purse and slides it across the table to the bishop's hands. With a confused look, the bishop takes the envelop and looks inside only to be met by a check, a signed check he'd sent as condolence money to Itu's family. He swallows and looks at Boipelo.

Bishop: Mme, this was due to you and your family to help with the funeral arrangement and everything that comes after it. seeing how you're here to return this, I don't know how to feel.

Boipelo: I'm sorry too. I know this may look insulting and very disrespectful, but it is in the purest form and with no ulterior motive that I am bringing this back. This is a lot. My daughter worked for the church and devoted her talent for the house of the Lord, getting such a big amount of money as condolence money kind of puts pressure on me. I don't want you to feel bad about any of this. I just cannot accept it--- it's just too much and I don't think Itu needs to be paid for working for the church, after all she was serving the Lord. I am really sorry to do this again.

Bishop: I understand where you're coming from. I would have like if you accepted this, at least it would make me feel better for missing the burial ceremony but if it's your will to do things like this, then... let me free you and accept the money back.

Boipelo: thank you so much bishop. May the merciful god keep on poring blessing upon blessing in your life.

Bishop: I wish and pray for the same with you and your family. The church has lost a great resource, your daughter was such a humble soul. Now I'm just sitting here wondering where in the world would I find another diligent and dedicated worker like her. Kids these days are very unattainable.

Boipelo: what if I were to suggest someone?

Bishop: do you have anyone in mind?

Boipelo: my youngest daughter, she's currently sitting and doing nothing. This would be a great opportunity for her, to learn something new and discover the Lord.

Bishop: that's great then. As long as she's good as her sister, everything shall be fine.

Boipelo: I will pass the news on to her and see where this lead.

Bishop: well, I'll wait to hear from you then but not any later than the end of this week.

Boipelo: yes bishop.

Bishop: well then if that's all, I'd like to get some rest and work through a few things, let me walk you out.

Boipelo: yes

Bishop: when are you coming back to work?

Boipelo: I talked to the first lady, and she gave me one more week.

Bishop: that's good news, I thought you'd quit.

Boipelo: how could I after everything you've done for me and my family...

They both walk out of the study a bit lighter than they had entered. Mfundo watches her husband as he ushers the lady

out of their house. It's a bit dark outside and she feels kind of bad that they did not offer to take her back

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but there's more pressing matter she needs to take care of in her home. The bishop makes it back in a minute and join his wife in the living room. He had this unreadable look on his face too. Quite smug and sneaky too.

Mfundo: what's happening with you?

Bishop: nothing... I just had quite a great day or so to say...

Mfundo: well, I didn't and it's because of you.

She lowers the high neck dress she's wearing so her neck shows. She has red bruises all over from the shoulders up. The bishop gasps at first glance and immediately looks around to check if anyone saw the. He takes Mfundo's hand and drags her to their bedroom to talk privately.

Bishop: what is that about? What happened to your neck?
What are those scars?

Mfundo: I said it's all because of you.

Bishop: what do you mean because of me? What have I done now?

Mfundo: you know what you have done. The master did this to me and he told me you know the reason. I got punished today for your wrongdoings. Tshepang, what happened today with that Lesego girl?

Bishop: what do you mean?

Mfundo: the master knows damnit!! He knows!! What the hell did that girl do? Do you know how hard I had to work to appease him? Do you know how painful it was handling being strangled for something you did not even do? Knowing how dangerous he can be and what he's capable of. How can you be so careless?

Bishop: I'm sorry... I apologize, I am sorry. I did not know she told anyone about us or the things we do. How was I supposed to know though, I am not some psychic for crying out loud!!!

Mfundo: how dare you raise your voice at me when you're clearly the person at fault here? Aren't you even a little apologetic? You know what I am not even going to try and reason with you!! You go face the master by yourself and work things out! Leave me out of it!!

Nomfundo storms out of the bedroom in flames leaving her husband behind. After suffering such torture and everything she has sacrificed for Tshepang she cannot believe he has the nerve to act like that in front of her or even have the courage to raise his voice at her. Just who the hell does he think he is?!!

LESEGO'S HOUSE

Cindy sits side by side next to Lesego a little thrilled about the news she's just told her.

Cindy: are you sure the bishop said he wants to see me?! I mean me. The whole me?

Lesego: yes, and it's nothing to be excited about. I wouldn't---

Cindy: girl stop. Don't try to dim my light. Do you know how many nights I stayed up praying for a day like this? This is a dream come true for me.

Lesego: you really don't know what you're getting yourself into, do you?

Cindy: do I have to know though?

Lesego and turns to sleep on her back. Memories of what occurred earlier in the bishop's office attack her. She abruptly springs up and leaves the room slamming the door behind her without a word.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Reitu sits gawking at her mother with a mad look on her face showing she's not very welcoming of the news she just shared.

Boipelo: this is for your own good. I don't want to hear stories or excuses.

Reitu: I really don't like that place. I don't see myself setting foot in that place!! The same place that stole Itu from us! I refuse!!

Boipelo looks at her and holds back slapping the living lights out of her. She sighs and stands up to leave.

Boipelo: I am not going to argue with you over this. You will do it! end of story!

She takes her cup filled with her favorite green tea and leaves the common room retiring to bed.

Boipelo: I'm heading to bed, don't forget to switch the lights off and the TV. And don't sleep on the couch. Lower the volume also.

Reitu: okay, so many things...

Boipelo: you know sitting still and not chatting back never hurts...

Reitu: I'm sorry, have a good night sleep. See you in the morning.

She disappears out of sight without an answer. Reitu adjusts her sitting position and focuses back on her TV show. A cold breeze attacks her nape, and she looks around feeling a little eerie mood before leaving to check if all the windows are locked. In the far darkness just next to the gate, she sees an unfamiliar figure. She adjusts her eyes to look at the person, but they disappear before she can take a second look. Scared and a little shocked, she switches off the TV and lights and goes to bed too.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

The bishop struggles to breathe as the half human half snake creature pins him against the wall chocking the living hell out of him making sure to break a rib or two in the process. The creature seems livid, something he has never seen before or encountered with when dealing with it.

The master: things were going so well; you just had to go and ruin things. Do you know how hard that girl works for you? You don't !! but you had the nerve to talk to her the way you did!! For your knowledge, out of the 2 of you, you're the one with the easiest task.

He lets go after a good 2 minutes of staying on his throat. Blood oozes from both his nose and ears showing the impact of the damage. The creature slithers back to its cage and leaves the man gasping for air on the floor.

Bishop: I apologize for my short mindedness. I shouldn't have and I never will. I get it now. Mfundo is just as important for this to work. From now on I will not move forward or act on anything without consulting the two of you. I will take time to think things through before I act. Tomorrow, please visit my

office around the late evening. I will have a gift for you. She's someone who saw and heard things she shouldn't have. I think you will enjoy her. It has been a while, I know... and Lesego too, you can have her if you want. There's already new fresh blood. This is my way of showing remorse... I apologize. Again, I ask for forgiveness.

The bishop offers his last bow and sits like that for a minute. He stands up and leaves the basement a little discombobulated and in pain.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Boipelo enters the kitchen finding Reitu already up and cleaning. She looks disturbed and nothing like she looked yesterday. Boipelo pulls a chair and sits down without saying a word. She observes her daughter's actions and finally speaks on them after a few minutes.

Boipelo: you don't have to push yourself to do the chores if you don't feel like it.

Reitu: I'm fine.

Boipelo: no, sit down I want to talk to you.

Reitu pulls a chair too and sits down facing her mother. After that mysterious shadow last night, she couldn't rest. She was up most of the time through the night, something was not right, and it was bothering her.

Boipelo: are you upset about last night? About the church and everything?

Reitu: not necessarily. You already decided on that, so I don't think I have a say.

Boipelo: that may be the case, but I would like to hear what you---

Reitu: I doesn't matter MA; I will do it.

Boipelo: that's not how I meant it. after losing your sister and everything, I had some epiphany about something. I realized how you're home all day and not doing anything, because the school part is not working so well, I thought you'd try something out in the meantime so that if going to school doesn't work out—you have back up and won't suffer as much should I die.

Reitu: why are we talking about your death?! Are you planning to leave me too?

Boipelo: that's not the case, I am just making an example. This is a situation you cannot avoid in the future.

Reitu: I know! But doesn't give you the right to prepare me for it so soon. MA, we just lost Itu not long ago, how do you think it makes me feel that you're already talking about your death and preparing me for it? how would you feel if I did the same?! How would you like it if I talked the way you are to me right now?! I don't want to talk about this now! I just can't---

Reitu storms out of sight leaving Boipelo confused and with a lot of questions.

Boipelo: I still had a lot to say...

LATER THAT DAY

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

Lesego who's in bad shape and hasn't been sleeping very well for a couple of days walks ahead of Cindy who's squealing with excitement as they walk closer and closer to the bishop's office.

Cindy: oh my God, Oh my God!

Lesego: will you calm down?!

Cindy: maybe if you tell me where you went yesterday...

Lesego: that's none of your business!

Cindy: as much as mine is not yours

Lesego: at least behave inside!

Lesego stops and inhales in front of the bishop's office. She takes a few seconds to herself preparing herself for whatever situations she may find inside. The last time she was here things didn't go too well so, coming back here again reminds her of very unpleasant memories. She knocks and enters the room after command to do so. Inside the bishop sits on his chair but with a visitor who seems unfamiliar but very comfortable with the place judging by how he sits. The man smirks at her and lets both the girl sit down. The mysterious visitor looks at her intensely making her a little uncomfortable while Cindy sits chilled with a very welcoming expression conveying how glad she is.

Bishop: oh, you're finally here, we've been waiting.

Lesego: oh... I did not know; I am sorry for being late. We had something to do before coming here.

Bishop: no, it is totally fine. The dreams? Are they still bothering you?

Lesego: not really.

Bishop: with that face you could've fooled me... so, this us Cindy? The friend?

Lesego: ye—

Cindy cuts and introduces herself leaving Lesego a little bummed and shocked

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but this sudden wave of energy Cindy is suddenly exuding.

Cindy: yes, bishop. It is an honour to finally meet you. I am Cindy Mahlaba, I have been by Lesego's side helping here with everything for as long as I can remember. I cannot believe I finally get to see you and have such a meaningful conversation with you. It has always been a dream of mine to sit this close to you and have a conversation. You really inspire me to be a better person every day.

Bishop: you reckon?

Cindy: yes. Every time I face hardships, I always ask myself, 'what would the bishop do?' in this situation. And every time I find the right solutions and leave the complications unscathed. I am so starstruck right now I am probably rambling but that's just another way to show I'm surprised I am to be invited into your presence.

Bishop: you really work hard, don't you?

Cindy smiles brightly looking at the bishop and a little lost on how to take the statement because it did sound a little insulting and somewhat a compliment at the same time.

Bishop: do you mind if I steal your friend for a moment Cindy, I have things to run past her before going home.

Cindy: not at all, bishop.

The bishop stands up faking a smile and signals Lesego to follow him leaving his office. Cindy sits side by side next to the stranger who was never introduced to them. She peeks at him, and he has a dazingly handsome face, an unfamiliar face, a face he's never seen in the congregation before. She shuffles and turns to the man to introduce herself.

Cindy: the bishop is such a great man, isn't he?

Guy: maybe.

Cindy: yeah... I am Cindy by the way as you've probably heard. I've been with the ministry for as long as I can remember. I do trivial work around here with my friend Lesego, the one who just got out with the bishop. But I've never seen you here before, are you related to the bishop or do you go here too, or maybe you're new?

Guy: none of those and also...you'll never ever see me again.

Cindy: excuse me?

Guy: look into my eyes.

Cindy hesitantly looks up at the man's eyes. Within a second, she passes out falling on the floor. The man like creature reverts to its original form and starts hissing surrounding the girl.

FROM THE WINDOW

The bishop has his one hand over Lesego's mouth and the other on her neck forcing her to look directly through the window to witness what is happening inside the room.

Bishop: say a word, and that could be you! I meant it when I said keep your business with me a secret. Running away won't help you. You can die just by a snap of my fingers. I won your life now. Don't think of doing anything stupid. What to you think happened to your friend, Itumeleng? Bitches who don't listen meet their fate a little earlier.

Lesego muffles on the man's hold as she can't breathe properly with the hand over her mouth. Tears stream down her cheeks as she thinks of Itumeleng. Her head starts to ache a little bit as her memories are scattered all over the place. Her mind drifts off to her life before the church and the bishop, she hyperventilates as a panic attack overcomes her taking all power from her legs and will to stand on two feet. Guilt eats her up and she feels herself fading away slowly until lights out for her.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Reitu stares blankly at the small diary in front of her, complex thoughts of opening it or respecting the deceased privacy make it hard for her to decide what to do. She looks at the small book for a while, picks it up and puts it down before making call.

[on call]

Reitu: I'm sorry for calling so late, I just didn't know what to do.

Kwanele: it's fine, I totally understand. As someone who's been where you are, I totally get the anxiety.

Reitu: I think I have found an objective for us to enter that hellhole... but----

Kwanele: wait, what?! Does your mother know about this?

Reitu: she literally is the person who proposed that I go work there so...

Kwanele: proposed? Does she know about your sister and what we have been talking about?

Reitu: no... I haven't had a proper chance to sit her down and talk about it. I have been hesitating and I think I'm slowly leaning towards not telling her and just going ahead instead. I don't know... I feel confused.

Kwanele: honestly, I wouldn't blame you. As I've said before, whatever decision you make... I'll root for you and support you because I know how hard this is.

Reitu: yeah, so I was thinking of going there tomorrow and see everything before infiltrating the place.

Kwanele: I don't know why I'm so nervous like I'm the one going. I'm consumed by sudden fear but I'm ready to give this another shot and succeed this time.

Reitu: yeah, me too--- I think I am kind of prepared. Your sister... how'd she... you know, how did she--- you know what never mind, you didn't have to tell me.

Kwanele: it's okay, I can...

Reitu: no, no... I mean, I have to get the door. Talk later or maybe whenever, I don't know. Bye.

[call ends]

Occupying Itu's room happened without any plan or thought. After hearing the news about her depart, naturally Reitu occupied the room because it was the only place, she felt closer to her sister, the only place that held many memories of her and the only place that witnessed her darkest and most down moments. After perusing through her belonging for a week, she came across a diary which by no doubt belonged to Itu.

Reitu stashes the diary away before leaving the room to the living room only to find her mother with some girl almost her age, her cousin--- Seipati!! What is she doing here?!

Reitu: you?! How long has it been?! 8 years? What are you doing here?

Reitu runs to her for a hug. Seipati hugs her back, a bit tighter. Boipelo smiles to herself as she puts down the few things she got while in town.

Boipelo: ok, alright.... we get it, you missed each other. But first you have to help her with the luggage and sort these out. Prepare for dinner, I brought take aways.

Reitu: are you kidding me? Why was this kept a secret from me?

Boipelo: it was never a secret, but you stormed out on me before I could say anything...

Reitu: I am sorry about earlier MA; I am just under a lot of stress and pressure lately.

Boipelo: which is why I brought someone for you to play and work with, hope the stress gets better. I need my daughter back...

Reitu: roger that!

Seipati: I'd love to rest, it was a long way here so...cuz, can you help me pack first. I have a lot I'm curious about.

Reitu: not as much as I am... let's go, the room is this way.

Boipelo packs the few groceries she brought back and prepares the dinner table while the girls laugh away loudly in the room. Having Seipati over is proving to be a good thing in such a few minutes

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she sure will be great influence and might just be the guest they need to heal and move on from everything.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

The bishop suffers as she moves Lesego's body to the office she regularly occupies. He puts her on the chair and leaves the room. He goes back to his office finding the master already in his human form. He looks at the floor and it's spotless, not a single drop of blood, he looks at him with confusion, but the creature is too satisfied to be bothered.

The master: the little girl from last week, I caught her scent on her, they must be related, so for a clean job with no loopholes I decided to disintegrate her body and eat very single inch there is to her. We can't have two people at the same time in the same family, getting rid of one is better. Besides, she was the weakest link, that girl--- we still need her.

Bishop: you mean the schoolgirl... how did I not know?

The master: well, better now, isn't it? no need for a funeral, no need for any other casualties...

Bishop: but what about Lesego, she saw everything. She witnessed it.

The master: then let me get to her too then.

Bishop: no, no... isn't that risky? You just had a whole human now, another one? Isn't that too much?

The master: then let's bring her home...

Bishop: much better, also I have other news that may interest you...

The master: about the other daughter?

Bishop: yes...

The master: Mfundo already briefed me on her... for now, let's just slow down on that family. I'll let you know when it's time to get her.

Bishop; well, that's all then... shall we?

The master: by all means... where's the other girl?

Bishop: I'll go get here, find you in the car...

The master: so long...

CINDY'S HOUSE

Isabele hides under the bed after locking the door shut as she hears her father's footsteps coming closer and closer to her room. It is nights like these that she misses her mother, the only person who cared about her in this house. No one was in the house when she returned from school, Cindy, the big sister was not home and obviously their father too. Ever since their mother dies, he developed a habit of drinking out all day long and come back at night to take out all his demons on them. The amount of beating they both had to take from him is uncountable.

The man bangs the door loudly and swears at the top of his voice.

Father: how dare you lock doors in my house?!! Is this what that bitch mother of yours taught you?!! Is this how you treat your elders?? Open this goddamn door now or I'll kill you.

The little girl cries, covering her ears under the bed.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Seipati stands in the middle of the room calling out to Reitu who is still dead asleep when the sun is already up and shining.

Seipati: come one, this is getting a little embarrassing now... just wake up already.

Reitu opens her eyes and looks around the room a little lost. Her early morning bed cousin opens the curtains and windows at the same time.

Reitu: you are out here proving me to be a bad daughter, aren't you?

Seipati: I'm sorry cuz, Aunty told me to wake you up. She said you had something out of the house today and I must go with you. I like getting this done early so...

Reitu: give me 5 more minutes... please.

Seipati: no, it's way past 10, I can't wait any longer, come on... you're not going to die. You can do this! You've done it plenty times before.

Reitu shuffles out of bed and goes to the bathroom. She comes back to the room to find the bed already made. She trudges to the kitchen and finds her cousin already doing dishes. She takes a look at her and saves her intrusive thoughts and makes herself a cup of coffee.

13

THE POLICE STATION

Seipati looks at her cousin confused and a little annoyed.

Seipati: this doesn't look like a church to me? What are we doing here?

Reitu: I have business to take care of before going there.

Seipati: wouldn't it have been of courtesy for you to inform me before coming here?

Reitu: what are you so mad about? I'm sorry I didn't tell you, but seriously I felt no need to.

Seipati: you know what... I'll just---

Words fade away as she gets stuck in a montage as the person, they're presumably here for approaches them. She starts liking the idea of coming to the place, after all it is not so bad. Reitu shakes starstruck Seipati a few times before she answers.

Reitu: what is wrong with you now?

Seipati: nothing...

Reitu: anyway, this is the person I'm here to meet. You can wait at the lobby in the meantime.

Seipati: can't I come with?

Reitu: I'm sorry.

Reitu turns to leave with Kwanele following behind her while Seipati stares at them walk away but only focusing on the other person.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Reitu: I'm back, sorry to keep you waiting. Let's go.

Seipati: who was that? Your boyfriend?

Reitu: no! just someone I know...

Seipati: does he have someone? I like him.

Reitu: I don't know him that much that I'd know about that part of his life.

Seipati: can you link me up with him? Set us up on a blind date or something... introduce me to him.

Reitu: I'm not cupid!

Seipati: please... you don't like him, do you?

Reitu: can we not talk about this... if you have anything you want to do with Kwanele, knock yourself out! Just don't involve me in any of it!

Seipati: what are you mad about!! There's no need to get upset or shout... I'll cupid myself into his arms if you don't want to.

Reitu: just hurry up...

Seipati trails behind now mad Reitu. Something was rubbed off the wrong way in her after Seipati showed interest in the detective.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

The bishop stands up nervously to go answer the door after avoiding the first two knocks which seemed a little urgent. Appalled at allowing the visitor in, he quickly lowers the blinds after checking if anyone saw the person who just entered the office. The young girl rushes to his chest as he turns from checking the window. She loses all sanity as she cries her lungs out until she hiccups. Shocked and now very nervous bishop brushes her back as she cries, feeling a little bad and at fault. The little girl does not say anything and continues to cry.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Bishop: you know you cannot just show up here and start crying without explaining to me what's happening? Aren't you supposed to be at school? Why are you here?

Isa: I don't know... I didn't have anywhere else to go. This is the only place I could think of, you're the only person I could think of... I'm sorry if I am inconveniencing you.

Bishop: I am inconvenienced, very inconvenienced. This is my place of work, I am expecting someone soon, which is why you cannot just show up here without command. I though we talked about this, and you understood...

Isa: I am sorry, I had a long night, a bad night. My sister didn't come home last night. It is unlike her to stay out and not notify me at least. She--- she---

The bishop gulps and feels himself sweating before looking the girl straight in the eyes.

Bishop: I am sorry. I understand your pain. I don't know what I can do to help--- but whatever it is, just name it and I'll do it... isn't there someone else at home? Someone older?

Isa: no, my father is—he is not a good person.

Bishop: I see. I'm sorry this is happening to you. I remember going through the same thing when I was just about your age. It was hard but I prevailed...see where I am today--- you'll be fine too.

Isa: really?

Bishop: yes

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and I feel I overcame all that so that I can have this moment... with you. So, I can meet you. You're the most brilliant, beautiful

and strong young lady I have ever met. I thank the Lord everyday for making me meet someone like you, someone so young yet intelligent... someone I've grown to respect and love over such a short period of time. I lie awake some nights and wonder just how blessed I must have been that I got you, that I was lucky enough to have you as someone who made me realize the reason why I am still alive...

Isa: am I that important to you?

Bishop: you have no idea.

Isa shuffles closer and closer to the bishop on the couch. He pins her down and runs his hands all over her body making sure to leave his scent and mark all over her. He runs his hands up and won her thighs a little impatient going up and sliding between her thighs. He lifts the small school skirt she has on and rubs her underwear. He detaches his lips from her's and kisses her neck, sucking on it and leaving a mark. He continues going lower and lower but is disturbed by an urgent knock on the door. He cusses under his breath and leaves the girl on the couch trying to catch her breath. He adjusts his bulge before checking who's on the door then later opening it.

Reitu enters the office and looks around with a very displeased look on her face. She looks the man up and down and then greets, further extending her hand to the young schoolgirl she finds in the room who immediately looks at her in a way she

cannot comprehend. She catches a glimpse of her neck and looks back and forth between the girl and the bishop. The little girl bids her goodbyes and stands up from the couch running out like she's being chased out.

Bishop: please, sit down. I have been waiting for you.

Reitu shuffles to the couch without a word. She looks intensely at the man sitting across and decides to loosen her expression.

Reitu: bishop, it is an honour to finally be in your presence. I have been waiting for this day.

Bishop: it is an honour to meet you too. Your mother told me all about you. I thought I was ready to meet you but when I saw you, I saw her--- your sister. She was such a bright child...we really lost a gem there. Again, condolences. How is the family holding up?

Reitu: not fine, but we're getting there. Thank you for asking.

Bishop: no need to thank me. I am doing the Lord's work and it is in His name that I lead this flock to waters of peace and righteousness. So, about today... I believe your mother already briefed you through everything but just in case she didn't I'd like to---

Reitu: no, I am well aware why I am here, thank you very much.

The bishop looks at her very perturbed. No one has ever cut him off before, except for Mfundo. Reitu's energy is certainly very different from Itu. She has this fierce look on but hides it here and there in order to seem soft and polite. She's nothing like her big sister and that is kind of intimidating to him.

Bishop: okay... well if that's the case, I'd like you to meet someone who'll be helping you going forward. I cannot be involved in every nit-picky detail there is to this work.

Reitu: already? No questions about school and everything else, like nay interviewee would ask?

Bishop: no. I trust your mother and most importantly I see your sister's vigour in you, you will do well. You are just fine. This way please.

Bishop leads the way out of his office to another just a few doors away from his. A place where Reitu will spend most of her time while here and training. The office that once belonged to Itu, her deceased sister.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

THE OTHER OFFICE

The bishop pulls opens the door and walks in followed by Reitu who has been scrutinizing every corner of this place the moment she set foot on the premises. Surprised, he looks at the people in the room and then shifts his gaze to Reitu who also has a look on her face.

Seipati: hey, cuz... so this is the place. I was invited in while strolling outside.

Bishop: excuse me?

Reitu: ok—aay.

Bishop: would you mind explaining what's happening here?

Seipati: this adorable, handsome man saw me walking outside and asked in and offered me a tor around the church, it was great, I learnt a few things and I hope to learn more.

Reitu looks at her cousin a little disappointed. She can't understand her at all. She's different from the curious and cautious little girl she once knew. When did Seipati grow to be such a materialistic and forward person.

Bishop: so...uhh--- this is--- his name is---

The young man extends his hand to Reitu and introduces himself, saving the struggling man who can't find a name for him.

Ntando: I am sorry if I offended anyone. I just thought it'd do her some good to see what's going on around here. Ms Reitu, we have been waiting to meet you. I'm Ntando, I have been working around her as your sister's assistant for at least 2 years now.

Reitu: assistant? my sister never said anything about an assistant...

Ntando: yes, that is because I have been juggling this work and school. I'm barely here so she wouldn't have said anything about me.

Reitu nods, looking convinced.

Bishop: well, then. I guess my work here is done. You can now lean on Ntando here, he will show you the ropes and how things are done around here.

Reitu: I guess I'm thankful too.

Seipati: does this mean you're staying here? Aren't we supposed to go back home?

Reitu: you can, if you want to. I think I'll stay. I must. Excuse me for a second, where's the bathroom again?

Ntando: oh, just out the passage, fourth door on your right.

Reitu: thank you.

Bishop: I have work to do too so, I'll get going now. Ntando, can I have a moment with you...

Ntando: yes, bishop.

Bishop: right this way to my office please. Ms. Cousin, it was nice meeting you.

Seipati: likewise, Bishop.

Seipati gets comfortable in one of the chairs in the room while she waits for her cousin who went to the bathroom. Bishop leaves the room followed by Ntando to his office. For some reason she gets a little curious and bored while waiting and starts reading the files on display on the desk in front of her.

Seipati: wow! This place has money, doesn't it?! I guess I'm staying now.

THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Bishop: what was that about? I thought we discussed this and reached an agreement. Why are you being like this?

Ntando: like what? Are you scared? Why are you even raising your voice at me? You must have forgotten who I am. And you know I am going to allow that just because I'm in a good mood.

But never again will I take insults and tones from you. I delegate, I'm the one who knows how things will go. You ask, I give. I do not answer to you, you answer to me. I'm starting to think I have gone soft on you. Should I remind you who the hell I am? Is this disguise fucking with your damn mind?!!

Bishop: no! No! I apologize. I did not think that through. Of course, you're the master. I am at your service. I don't question your ways and never will I. That was a moment of foolishness that took over me, never, and never will I put your methods on doubt.

Ntando: that'd better be the truth. I can end you any minute I want to. You belong to me. You owe me your life. All this around you are my works. Without me, you wouldn't have this congregation, such large number, such power, and such deep pockets. Remember your place!

Bishop: I am grateful! I acknowledge your work!

The bishop gets on his knees and gives bows to the master who's been a little out of control and difficult to handle since his last visit here.

Ntando: and... I think I've changed teams now... I like the cousin better than the other girl. You work on an angle at that and bring me here. That Reitumetse girl--- no... she is not it. she's too glum, for now, get me the cousin.

Bishop: master, I thought---

Ntando: again, the thoughts... I thought I warned you about that!!

The master unravels his tail disappearing the human legs. He swings the bishop across the room with one whip. He goes further and starts covering the man with the rest of his bottom making sure to suffocate and choke him with his strong hold in the process.

Ntando: you get me the girl!!! And that is final!! I don't want to hear a word from you! And that little girl you tried being sneaky with this morning without my permission!! She must go!! Its time!

The master throws him back down and he lands on his face. He immediately gets in a bowing position while trying to catch his breath and pleads for mercy on his knees while the creature in front of him reverts to human form and leaves the office.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Mfundo sits on the only chair in the dark room while flipping pages through a magazine. She looks at the girl tied up in the corner and scoffs. She stands up and strides towards her. She shakes her a couple of times to wake her up.

Lesego: please--- I'm sorry. Please let me go... I will not blab a word about this. I am sorry... please---

She stops in the middle of a sentence and looks at the person in front of her. Her eyes widen as she realizes who the person is.

Lesego: Mme Bishop!! Mme Moruti!!! Please!! I am sorry--- I will disappear--- I will stay away from your husband... I will never do anything with him again!! I promise I wil—

Mfundo: darling, hush...hush. Hush child! What is this whole havoc for... of course, you will be set free. Tonight. Don't worry, for now, just get yourself clean, and wear this. This is the perfect attire for your sendoff.

Mfundo slides a small bag with lingerie and perfume across the floor.

Lesego: se-nd off... what do—what does that me—mean?

Mfundo: we're letting you go; you've done your part. Isn't that something to rejoice about/ you'll meet your friend finally! Well, friends!

Lesego: what—no! No! please don't kill me!! I will do anything... anything at all!!! Please save me!! I am begging you...

Mfundo: honey, this is the 'anything' you can do. Now go get clean, the master is almost here. And make sure to wear that. I'll come back to check.

Lesego shrieks and falls into despair crying her lungs out as Mfundo ascends the stairs not giving a care in the world.

THAT EVENING

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Lesego wakes up to a figure hovering over her after spending the past couple of hours crying that sleep eluded her. The throbbing headache she has makes it hard to open her eyes, but she can see that there's something or something standing over her. She tries to speak but her voice is hoarse, her throat is dry, nothing comes out. As she's about to fall back to sleep, the person runs their cold hands on her arm, brushing her lightly but with no affection hence bringing her back to sanity.

The Master: I cannot say it has been a pleasure but thanks, I guess.

The frightening and very unfriendly words make her heartbeat faster closing up her chest. After crying for so long and begging, no one has come to her rescue, maybe, just maybe if she prayed with her heart things would've turned out okay- but what's the point when things have gone as far as this, she thinks to herself as all she can see is a shadow of the creature in the dim basement. She feels something entering her down below, excruciating pain attacks her abdominal area, and she feels warmth filling her up, blood oozing from all holes she has in her body, even the eyes. She takes her last breath and loses

herself in the pain and prays for herself as she feels her should detaching from her body.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

After a long day of trivial work and arranging files at the dusty storage Reitu plops herself on the bed and scrolls through her phone. She clicks on the contact of the person who's been on her mind all day. She calls the number, and the call is answered on the first try.

[on call]

Kwanele: I was just about to call you, something weird is going on...

Reitu: you think?

Kwanele: can you come by tomorrow?

Reitu: I don't know. I don't think so...

Kwanele: why?

Reitu: I have work remember; I work at that place now!

Kwanele: oh, about that. Totally forgot. How did things go? Found anything?

Reitu: not sure, but I called about something else but before I say anything. What did you want to call me for? What is that weird something that happened today?

Kwanele: today, two cases with a common factor were reported and if you can guess... yes, it is that church!

Reitu: what?!

Kwanele: yes

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I was just as shocked. I always knew that place was up to no good.

Reitu: wait...what?!

Kwanele: hard to process I know. Apparently there two cases are about two young ladies who were regulars there, they've gone missing, and it's been a couple of days now. Something doesn't feel right.

Reitu: come to think of it, no one mentioned to me where the last co-ordinator/secretary had gone when I visited that church. They talked as if they hadn't had anyone work as their secretary since my sister. I bet one of the missing people worked at their office. Did you get their names?

Kwanele: I'm not on their cases but I heard from a colleague. One is Cindy Mahlangu and the other is Lesego something... I forgot her last name.

Reitu: oh God!?

Reitu's phone slides off her ear and falls onto the bed at the mention of a name she is kind of familiar with. She takes a moment to breathe in disbelief and then gets back to the call after calming herself down.

Kwanele: hello?! Hello? Are you still there?

Reitu: I'm sorry, I was a little shocked. I think I know one of the missing people. Her name is Lesego right? Last name probably Semenya if I'm right. She is my sister's... well ...was my sister's best friend until she was not. She didn't even attend her funeral.

Kwanele: this just got more complicated.

Reitu: I know... listen, I must go. I'll call you back.

Kwanele: I will get back to you, since you called first. What did you want to tell me again?

Reitu: yeah, about that... we'll talk later. There's something I have to check really quick before I forget.

Kwanele: well then, talk later.

[call ends]

She looks up and meets eyes with Seipati who's standing by the door with her hands on her waist, legs crossed.

Reitu: how long have you been standing there?

Seipati: not long...why?

Reitu: just asking... did you perhaps overhear me on the phone?

Seipati: I didn't. would it be a problem if I did?

Reitu: no... just asking.

Seipati: okkaayyy... but I feel that's not all. Why do you have so many secrets?

Reitu: what do you mean secrets? I don't have any secrets.

Seipati: but you told me not to tell aunt about our visit to the police station? Why? Is that guy your boyfriend? Are you in trouble with the police?

Reitu: no... I already told you I'm nothing with him! Stop asking and please excuse me if you can!

Seipati: alrighty! But remember, whatever you're hiding will always catch up to you. I'm off to start preparing supper. Come out and help me if you want to.

Seipati turns to leave and closes the door behind her, Reitu gets off the bed and rummages through the drawers in the room looking for the diary looking book she saw a few days ago. She finds it and places it on the bed and stares at it for a while. She gathers all courage in her and opens it slowly saying a little prayer and starts flipping through pages.

Reitu: sis... please forgive me.

It looks old and looks like it hasn't been used in a minute. The entries are all over the place, only occurring a few times in a year. It dates back to at least 3 years ago. The difference between the most recent entry and the old entry is at least about 10 months. The last entry was 2 months ago. Reitu reads through the last and final entry but finds nothing suspicious, there's not that much information about the incident and the perpetrator but only expression of emotions. No names, only emotions. She closes the diary and puts it on her chest a little sad that she had no idea all along that her sister who was always smiling was going through such things.

SOME TIME LATER

DURING SUPPER

Boipelo: so, how did it go at church?

Reitu: nothing fancy... I got to start today.

Boipelo: that's good, at least you're doing something now, because I don't want you---

Reitu: can we not go there again Ma? please.

Boipelo: okay, okay, you don't have to fight me.

Reitu: I wasn't fighting. I'm just... you know what, its fine. Yeah... all good.

Boipelo: your face says otherwise though, why are you so sour?

Seipati: maybe it's because of the visit we took to the police station.

Reitu: cuz?!

Seipati: what?! I'm sorry but I can't keep this---

Boipelo: you girls... what's happening? What about the police station? Reitumetse? Seipati?

Reitu stands up and leaves the table a little annoyed at her cousin who continues to sit and eat like nothing happened.

Boipelo: Seipati?

Seipati: nothing aunty.

Boipelo continues to eat and drops the conversation that everyone is clearly avoiding. Seipati smirks and scoffs to the side and continues to eat delightfully with her aunt.

16

THE FOLLOWING DAY

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Boipelo enters the kitchen and finds Seipati already up and cleaning. She greets her and sits on her favourite chair. She contemplates whether to ask what last night was about but decides against it.

Seipati: I made some porridge aunty, or would you prefer your tea?

Boipelo: do we have vinegar?

Seipati: I made sure.

Boipelo: give me a bowl then.

Seipati: coming right up.

Seipati hums happily while scooping out the porridge for her and her aunt. She stops as she picks the third bowl, she puts it down and sighs making sure she's heard by Boipelo. She adjusts her face and tone and serves her aunt before taking her bowl also and sitting next to her.

Boipelo: this is good.

Seipati: thank you, it's mother's recipe... I don't know if you noticed.

Boipelo: oh, I did... I certainly did. I knew I knew the taste.

Seipati: is it good?

Boipelo: way better than hers... but don't tell her that.

Seipati: my lips are sealed.

Boipelo: your mother is so lucky to have you. You're such a responsible daughter and cheerful kid. Do you know how many times I wished I'd at least pass a recipe to my daughters too--- or at least have them ask for it. but they never did. They probably just didn't care, or my food never tasted so good that they'd ask for one.

Seipati: well, that's on their poor taste buds and judging for what's good and what's not. Ever since I came here, I've been having good food repeatedly. The stew you made last time, I don't know how many bowls I had of that... and also, I have been gaining a little weight! I'm a very picky eater but when it comes to your hand, aunty, I cannot put my spoon down. Hell, I even wanted to ask for the recipe but was too scared.

Boipelo: I'm flattered.

Seipati: you really do know your way around the kitchen... my uncle was certainly a fool for leaving you.

Seipati looks up too late and puts her hand over her mouth. She looks at Boipelo and then back at the table fidgeting with her

fingers. She keeps her eyes glued on the table and starts sniffing.

Seipati: I'm so—sorry aun-ty. I shouldn't have. It is none of my business I know. I let my tongue run wild when--- I am sorry. I will pack my things and leave--- I don't deserve to---

Boipelo: its okay... he did leave me. You saying it is not going to change the fact that he did leave. It was not your place to say, yes. But it's the truth. There's no need to be hasty, we still enjoy your company here so please--- don't leave. Stay. I understand you.

Seipati: no, I disrespected you, aunty. I can't take---

Boipelo: leaving would feel more like a disrespectful act than what you've just said. Now, sit up and let me see your pretty face. Pretty girls don't cry.

Seipati: i—I'm sorry.

Boipelo: stop apologizing and eat, please.

Seipati sighs out loud and smiles a little to the side. She lifts her head and looks at Boipelo with puppy eyes and continues to eat.

Boipelo: now

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Patty, about last night--- I'm really sorry to bring this up but I could not sleep. What happened between you and Reitumetse, really? Is there something I should know?

Seipati: no, aunty. I certainly don't remember having any problems with her, but she must have some with me. I mean, I came here right after ausi Itu's passing... maybe to her it seems like I am trying to replace her sister. But I am not... I know I'm only 2 years older than her, there's no way I can ever be ausi Ituemleng. I know that and I wish she'd know that too.

Boipelo: you mentioned the police station--- did you guys perhaps fight? I know you're not teens anymore but---

Reitumetse appears out of nowhere ready for work and answers her mother's question, the question she has been avoiding since last night.

Reitu: we did not fight!!! I went there for a totally different thing. I will talk to you later MA, alone.

Boipelo: oh, Reitu. Morning...

Reitu: morning MA, I'm sorry for last night.

Seipati: cuz, I made some porridge, you can have some before you leave.

Reitu: no, I'm good. I don't usually eat breakfast.

Seipati: come on, you're a working lady now. You must! We don't want you getting sick.

Seipati stands up and fixes a chair for Reitu. She pulls her to the chair and immediately prepares a bowl for her. Boipelo smiles to herself looking at the two girls bond. Reitu can't hide her annoyed expression but decided to obey for her mother's sake. She accepts the bowl and takes a few spoons before standing up. She looks at her phone and excuses herself.

Reitu: I can't stay any longer. I'm already late. Bye.

She rushes out of the house as if she's being chased and ignores the following comments as she disappears out of sight.

Boipelo: she didn't even take 5 spoons of that.

Seipati: now I'm worried.

Boipelo sighs and stands up from her chair clearing her bowl and Reitu's. She puts them in the sink and disappears out of Seipati's sight.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

Reitu enters her office walking a little discretely praying no one is in yet and no one notices her. She puts her bag on the table sighs out of relief finding the place empty. She sits down already drained and say a little prayer before starting the day. She makes a mental note to meet the detective after work to

talk about what they couldn't finish yesterday. She rummages through the files in front of her but can't find exactly what she's looking for. She stands up and goes to the small storage room this office has but is frightened as she finds Ntando sinking his face on some girl's neck who seems to be quiet and reactionless for a person receiving such stimulation.

Reitu: oh my God, I'm sorry... I'm sorry. I did not know you were here.

Ntando turns a little flustered too and a little annoyed. He makes sure to hide the girl from Reitu's sight at all costs as he turns.

Ntando: I apologize. Sorry.

Reitu: no need, I was just here for--- the--- the... please get me the box on the top shelf if you can, I'm here for it.

Ntando: oh, this one... okay.

He struggles to get the box as his main goal is to hide the person from Reitu. After a few seconds of multi-tasking, he finally gets the box and slides it across the floor for it to reach where Reitu is currently standing.

Reitu: oh... yeah... thank you.

Ntando: and please--- don't say a word about this.

He says pointing at the girl whose face is deeply buried on his chest. Reitu makes a gesture zipping her mouth and throwing away the key. Ntando nods as she leaves the confined room. He kicks one of the shelves in anger and plops the body to the ground thinking of a way to sneak her out of the place.

LATER THAT DAY

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

Reitu dusts her blazer and puts it on, switches off the lights in the office and rushes off the church premises. She walks clutching her bag unconsciously through the echoing corridors of this church. There's something eerie about them, there's lights on but she still can't shake off the uncomfortable feeling. The lights in the bishop's office are still on meaning the man is still in. She stands still passing the office contemplating whether to knock or not. She stands for a few seconds but decides against it as she's about to knock, someone creeps from her behind making hairs stand still from her nape. She looks back, it is the bishop.

Bishop: want to come in?

Reitu: no, just wanted to say my goodbye. I'm off.

Bishop: why so late?

Reitu: couldn't put the papers down. I can't believe I'm saying that.

Bishop: Ntando?

Reitu: long gone... he said he had plans, so I excused him.

Bishop: excused him... okay, well then. Go safe, see you tomorrow?

Reitu: will try. Have a great evening bishop.

She walks right off before the bishop says anything more. The bishop shakes his head and gets in his office. Reitu halts a taxi she sees in distance, she gets in, sits and gets deep in thought. She yells her stop as she sees the place in distance. She gets off and presses something on her phone before getting inside the premises looking to know exactly where she's walking today.

THE POLICE STATION

Kwanele lifts his head at the knock on his office door. He instructs the person in- it's Reitu. Gina looks at him as she packs her stuff. The lady gets in and greets before she sits down. Gina looks at them and excuses herself.

Gina: I'll be off before I disturb anything. And you—please don't cause any trouble. Lady friend---please don't leave him here. He must go home today. Bye.

Gina leaves the office closing the door behind her. Reitu looks at Kwanele who's suppressing a laugh. He chuckles instead. He sorta looks good today and when he smiles, and his desk is clean... not messy.

Kwanele: she's crazy.

Reitu: so, you say.

Kwanele: yeah, so... about yesterday? Anything new?

Reitu: no, not really.

Kwanele: you can go first; I'll say my piece after you.

Reitu: there's something really weird going on in that place. I know we've been saying that forever but no—there's this eerie energy about the place and some suspicious people. Today I found my assistant in a storage room in a very compromising situation with some girl I couldn't even see the face of. She looked, still—very still for someone who was receiving such stimulation. At first, I thought she was just embarrassed, or my ears needed some cleaning but no—later on, the man, my assistant couldn't move any inch without clutching onto her as if he was pulling her into a headlock. Her face was buried in his chest the whole time, she did not look like she was breathing too. She was carried throughout the whole debacle, and I left the room without seeing her face. Ntando even asked me not to tell anyone about what I saw. Like it was a big deal, he looked serious when he said it, very serious.

Kwanele: Ntando?

Reitu: oh—he's ... he was my sister's assistant and now works as mine but also my superior. It's weird I know.

Kwanele: anything more?

Reitu: about yesterday, on my first day there I walked in the bishop's office and found him heaving and breathing loudly with some little girl---a schoolgirl. They both looked flustered to see me

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especially the little girl, she's light skinned so I could see how flustered she was. Besides that—she had a hickey, a frickin' fresh hickey on her neck. No doubt it was that man! That filthy old funky geezer hiding behind the name of the Lord!! He gave a little girl a hickey!!!

Kwanele: what?!

Reitu: yes!! Only if I had caught him in action. I can't believe there's so many people blind trusting that pig with their lives while he sleeps with children. He deserves death!

Kwanele: calm down...calm down. I get it, you're angry, and so am I. I'm in shock! Hell looks like we have a huge storm going. We have to put our emotions aside in order to beat those people. We cannot be weak and moved by every single deed they do. We'll probably see and experience way worse on the way. For now—let's move on, we can't arrest him anyway. We don't have any evidence. Trying anything now would just put us at risk. Those people are dangerous, they'd kill us without

batting an eye. Especially you, you work for them. So, please... let's be calm and go through what we have rationally.

Reitu takes a few moments to herself trying to calm down. A tear escapes her eye, she wipes it immediately and sighs out loud. Even she did not recognize that's how angry and hurt she is by the whole situation.

Kwanele: everything is going to be alright. It may not be now—but I promise you, we will be okay.

Reitu: I know.

Kwanele: should I take you home or you want to hear more about what I had prepared for today?

Reitu: take me home please...

Kwanele: okay, let's go then.

He opens one of his drawers and takes out his car keys and some sweets. He hands them to Reitu and walks upfront.

Kwanele: you're gonna need those. They always help me. Take one, you'll feel better.

Reitu: okay, thank you.

She takes one, opens it and throws it in her mouth, its sweet and she does feel a little bit better. She follows behind the man trying to catch up. He has long strides; it is not until today that

she noticed how tall he is. Kwanele opens the car door for her, and she gets in sitting on the passenger seat, feeling a little shy now.

Reitu: are you going to go back to the office?

Kwanele: yes...

Reitu: but your lady friend say you must go home! She said I must make sure you go home... how many nights have you been spending at the office?

He stops for a while and raises his fingers one by one as if he's counting. He stops and look at her.

Kwanele: err... a few?

Reitu: see? You're not even sure. She was right, you must spend tonight home.

Kwanele: but I have work to do... besides there's facilities to my aid at the police station should I feel the need to rest.

Reitu: so, you're relying on government issued poor labour rooms to get a decent sleep? Please... can't you just accept defeat for once. You're the one who said we need to be rational about this... sleep is important and is part of taking things rationally. You must go home and rest, in your own comfort, just for tonight.

Kwanele: I'm convinced, I will go home.

Reitu: thank you...

Kwanele: address?

He punches it in as she tells her, and he brings the engine to life. They set off, in the beautiful evening, with each in their thoughts.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Mfundo paces up and down as her husband sits on his chair also frustrated with his hands clasped together, elbows on his desk.

Mfundo: what do you mean he is not here? Where is he?

Nomfundo shouts on top of her voice showing rage.

Bishop: I don't know, but as I said he is not. I last saw him before the sun went down, he was in the office with that girl. From there on, I don't know what happened.

Mfundo: shouldn't you be surveying his movements? What if he's discovered somewhere and people--- oh Lord! What if they----

Bishop: could you stop thinking the worst. He's not human! There's no way there's any other creature out there powerful enough to subdue him. So, can you please stop acting like a kid and sit the hell down, you're driving me crazy with all the pacing.

Mfundo looks at him with rage and lands a slap on his face continuing to slap him repeatedly until he retaliates. The bishop holds both her hands and forces her to stop, forcing her to sit

down on the couch. She breaks down and cries hysterically looking at her husband. She looks at him kneeling in front of her and stands up, leaves the office and makes sure to slam the door behind her. The bishop goes back to his seat frustrated as hell and tries to think of any places the master must have disappeared to.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Headlights shine through the front window as Seipati and Boipelo sit enjoying their dinner with a guest after giving up on waiting for Reitu who was supposed to be back a while ago. Seipati excuses herself to go check from the window whose car is it revving next to their yard. To her surprise her cousin gets out of the car all giggly and smiling but she can't see the driver. She hurries back to the table and sits already spilling the beans as Reitu knocks on the front door and lets herself in.

Seipati: its Reitu, there's a car dropping her off...

Boipelo: a car? Whose car?

Seipati: I didn't really see the driver but her comes Reitu, she'll explain it herself.

Reitumetse gets in and greets, a little confused by the third person on their table this evening.

Reitu: Ma...cuz... and Ntando? What are you doing here?

Boipelo: you don't get to question my guest when you have answering to do yourself. Who was that just now?

Reitu: can I sit down first?

Seipati: I'll dish up for you.

Seipati stands up and gets busy while Reitu sits down not very amused by her mother's question and further embarrassed that there's her colleague at the table and she's about to be told off. She eyes her mother, but she doesn't take the hint. Seipati serves her and she starts eating immediately trying to avoid the question.

Reitu: this is so good... I can't believe I didn't know I was this hungry.

Seipati: steady...steady cuz, I did warn you this morning. You should've finished your breakfast.

Reitu gives Seipati a look and ignores her. She looks at her mother then back down on her plate. No one says anything, all quiet, each focused on their plate.

Seipati: who just dropped you off? Whose car was that?

Reitu: someone from church...

Seipati: anyone specific?

Reitu: I wouldn't know, it's only my second day there. Who am I to know anyone there?

Seipati: don't fight me, I'm just asking. Lord!

Reitu: not fighting, just saying.

Boipelo: girls?!! Not when there's a guest! Please...

Reitu: sorry Ma, Ntando... I thought you left the office early because you had something to do, how come you're here?

Ntando: err... I did, I did. I--- I came by to.... The thing is---

Boipelo: he brought over some of Itu's things that were left at the office.

Reitu: why bother? You could've just handed those over to me.

Boipelo: he couldn't obviously and that's why he's here. You're not an easy person to get friendly with.

Reitu: really, oh... I didn't know that.

Ntando? Do I make you uncomfortable?

Seipati: stop asking, of course he can't say that in front of you.

Ntando: no... it's okay, sometimes you do scare me a little bit. And after you know--- I couldn't really come to you.

Reitu: oh, sorry. I'll try being more human going forward...

Ntando: that'd be better.

Reitu: well... that was good

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I'll go bat. I'm beat. Don't worry about the dishes, I'll do them before I turn in.

Seipati: no, no, you're a working lady now. I'll do them. You rest.

Boipelo: I'm turning in too, Reitu bring my tea.

Ntando: and I'll help with the dishes.

Seipati stands up and smiles at Ntando who helps her clear the dinner table. Boipelo disappears to her room while Reitu does the same, leaving Seipati with Ntando in the kitchen.

30 MINUTES LATER

Seipati puts back the last plate in the cabinet before turning back only to be met by Ntando who's breathing very close to her face. His eyes turn luring her closer and closer. He hisses as he extends his tongue to her pushing it deep past her mouth into her throat. He keeps his eyes on hers and does so for a few seconds before he retracts it and breaks eye contact with her, returning to normal.

Seipati: now, that's done. Thank you for helping.

Ntando: no problem, the dinner was amazing.

Seipati: yeah... so you're leaving now?

Ntando: I have to. It's not like I can sleep here.

Ntando chuckles nervously as Seipati approaches him and brushes his arms lightly pulling him closer with a dishcloth she has on her hands.

Seipati: I wish you could stay.

Reitu comes into the kitchen disturbing the moment. Seipati immediately let's go of the cloth and distances herself from Ntando who looks around confused and not knowing what to do.

Reitu: just here for tea...

Ntando: I should go, it's late. See you tomorrow Reitu.

Reitu: tomorrow it is...

Seipati: be safe out there...

Ntando: always.

The man turns and leaves the kitchen striding towards the front door. Seipati follows behind and accompanies him to the front gate and watches him as he leaves not even turning back. she locks the gate and sighs as Ntando disappears in the dim light from the streetlights.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Mfundo sits with her legs crossed, wine on one hand and a cigarette on the other. One wine bottle lies on the floor, she's on her second bottle and she's had half of the bottle. The bishop watches her without a word as he sits opposite sipping on whiskey too.

Mfundo: you know, maybe this is for the best--- maybe things will be better if this whole empire crumbles. On the brighter side, we won't have to kill people anymore. No more insane sacrifices. We'll live normal lives--- we'll be just like everyone else!

Her voice gets louder as she proceeds rambling off and repeating the part about living a normal life, seemingly to cringe as she thinks about being a normal person, a peasant!

Bishop: anything but that! We have to think Mfundo! We can't let this happen my love! Any thoughts? what would father do? Has this even ever happened before?!

Mfundo: I don't know!! I don't know! The Master has been in the family for as long as I can remember but he has never pulled such a stunt before. He has never disappeared! And my father is dead--- how can he know anything!! Fuck!!! I hate this!!!

She throws the glass across the room, and it hits the wall on the other side of the room, leaving wine stains on the wall. The

bishop gets a little scared but composes himself. He looks at his raging wife and leaves to get her another glass. In the meantime, the front door opens and here come in, the thing everyone was waiting for. Mfundo immediately gets up on her feet with the wine bottle on her hand. She attempts to throw the wine bottle on the master but fails.

The Master: it wouldn't be wise of you to do that.

Mfundo: where the hell have you been?!!

The Master: that tone too... I don't appreciate it! go get some sleep, you don't look too good.

Bishop: I'm sorry, she was just so worried, I'll get her to bed but---

The Master: let's not forget our manners and our ranks. I don't answer to you. I delegate, you do, and I reward you. I was with friends... you must get used to this because there'll be more of this in the future. So please... get yourselves out of my face before I do anything I will regret!

The bishop looks at the master one more time before turning to collect Mfundo from the floor and leaving for the bedroom. He wishes life would've led him down a different path, he hates it when things aren't merry.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

REITU'S OFFICE

Ntando looks at Reitu intensely as she flips pages of the files in front of her looking to be very engrossed and focused on her work. After last night, he hasn't said word to her, he feels kind of queasy and unsettled around her, her aura is suffocating him, there's something he doesn't like about the girl, but he can't really point it out.

Ntando: I feel I ned to apologize for last night.

Reitu doesn't answer him, let alone look at him or stop to show he's even listening to him. With anger building up a little he approaches her and holds her hands scaring her in the process.

Reitu: Jesus! Your hands are cold...you scared me. What do you want?

Ntando: I'm sorry, I was just- look, about last night, I'm sorry.

Reitu: what for?

Ntando: I came to your house, unannounced and uninvited and almost got you in trouble with your mother. I didn't think things through, I just wanted to get your sister's stuff out of the office to make space for other things.

Reitu: I get it. you don't have to apologize. It's all good.

She gives her answer with no thought while concentrating on work. Ntando looks at her and snickers getting a little annoyed that she did not even care to look up and sit still when answering her, she doesn't fear him, and she makes it very obvious and known to him too.

Ntando: you know... I'm not trying to date her. I apologize about that too.

Reitu: what?

Ntando: your cousin.

Reitu: oh, that. It's none of my business I believe, whatever you guys do concerns me not. You're grown so... you can do whatever really.

Again. The half-hearted answer with no emotion or care.

Ntando: hope, you'll keep the same energy when she dies.

Reitu: what?

Ntando: nothing...I must rush... what do you want for lunch?

Reitu: don't worry. I brought myself something.

Ntando: I'll go my 'something' then.

He leaves the office while organising his thoughts about what to do with Seipati. Lats night, that was him putting her under a

spell to control her every word and move. She became his spy to keep an eye on Reitungetse and report to him. After this, she definitely will have a change in attitude, after she's done with her, she won't even recognize herself and that's if he lets her live!

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

The breakfast table is quiet, only utensils scraping against plates. After last night—no one seems to be in their right state of mind.

Mfundo: I have decided.

Bishop: what? On what?

Mfundo: I'm going to see someone about him...

The bishop's face goes ice cold and there's a hint of worry in his eyes as he leans in on Mfundo to speak more discretely.

Bishop: isn't that taking things too far. It's dangerous...please, I don't think that's too good of an idea.

Mfundo: no, I'm going to see things through. I am done.

Bishop: but what about us? The church? And everything we've worked so hard for? Please, my love... don't do this.

Mfundo: do you know how death worried I was last night after searching for hours and hours and not finding him. It has never

been like this before! He even dared and threatened to kill us!! Not that that's a first but he looked like he meant it!! he looked deadly. Him being in human form brought out the worst in him, he became the monster I always feared he'd become! Hell

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we even refer to him as human now—how is that making sense to you?!

Bishop: maybe we can talk him out of it or keeping a low profile for a while? It can't be that hard.

Mfundo: you do you, I'm over this!

Bishop: I think you're a little stressed honey, go see a therapist or something and please think this over. You don't want to .

The bishop looks at his wife a little worried. His chest burns, he hates the idea, he doesn't want to wake up and be a bum like he used to. What gives Mfundo the right to decide on something so drastic by herself! She must have completely lost it this time!! Come hell or high waters, he is not going to let that happen.

WEEKS LATER

ONE SUNDAY AFTERNOON

The Maleka's gather with the bishop in a small circle just after service swooning about how much they enjoyed the service, singing praises to the man.

Seipati: that was a wonderful service! Better than any I've experienced before. I can't believe I spent my first Sunday here not attending.

Bishop: less about the past but more about the future. So long you leave these premises happy, my job is done.

Boipelo: yes, bishop. I can't agree more. It was wonderful. I could feel the Lord embracing the room.

Bishop: is it? that's what I want to hear every time.

Boipelo looks to the side only to match eyes with Reitu who has a disgusted look on her face. She's standing still and quiet, her body language reads she doesn't want to be there.

Boipelo: Reitu, what did you think?

Bishop: I was just about to ask the same... you know, we must include all the sheep and lambs, we can't enter the kingdom if we aren't all in numbers. That is my job as the shepherd of this herd.

Reitu: nothing.

Bishop: well, that's fine as well, the truth doesn't dawn on all of us the same daughter; your days are numbered.

Reitu: I think the same about you Bishop, your days are numbered too.

Boipelo throws a very intimidating look at Reitu who doesn't even seem fazed or care. The bishop's face goes pale at the comment while Seipati suppresses a laugh.

Boipelo: Reitumetse!!

Reitu: oh, that came out wrong... I meant your work is immaculate bishop, noticed and admired by everyone. Your days will be lengthened... not numbered. I sincerely apologize for that... it was an unfortunate play on words. My mistake. Out of all the things I've heard and seen so far, one scripture from the Bible resonates with me, Jeremiah 23: 16-22 ...it keeps me going.

Reitu bows and leaves the bishop, her cousin and mother standing there.

Bishop: quite a special kid you have there.

Boipelo: not at all, but I am honoured.

They all look at her as she strides away off their presence. At a distance she looks back and catches them in a conversation. Things have been very hard these past few weeks. With Kwanele, they have been uncovering new truths. After going through the things Ntando brought back home the other day, she came across something very interesting- a flash drive that

she later gave to Kwanele to help decrypt as all files were locked. This morning, before having to go to that dreadful place she got news that the thing was now decrypted and Kwanele asked if she'd come see him after church. So, not giving a care and wanting to end it all already, she left the church.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

REITU'S OFFICE

Ntando sits shyly on the other side of the room while Seipati relaxes and heavily sighs sitting on Reitu's desk. After a long service and chat with the bishop Ntando asked if they could hang out for a while before she goes home and she said yes without thinking twice. Now seeing how he's suddenly shy and straying from her she feels a bit impatient and somehow ticked off by this behaviour.

Seipati: I thought we were on the same page. Why the cold and mixed signals suddenly? I thought you liked me.

Ntando: I do.

Seipati: then what is this baby, huh?

Ntando: I'm just a little nervous.

Seipati: and I'm running out of patience. It's been a whole 3 weeks for crying out loud. You've been ignoring me. I thought you enjoyed my company as I did yours. And here's something you don't know—I usually don't chase men, I attract—not chase. This is a whole new thing for me. I've never been so desperate to be wanted and loved. I mean I can get over you, but I just don't know how...

She gets off the table and starts walking towards the man crumbled up on the on the other side of the room. She kneels before him and intensely look him deep in the eyes, her hands running all over his crotch area.

Seipati: I can't help but cling onto you, I'm addicted to you, your everything, hell I even smile by myself when thinking of you. You haven't even laid a finger on me but my body itches for your touch, my back arches involuntarily for you.

Ntando: but—

Seipati: I'll take care of you.

Ntando: no, the door...

Seipati: already took care of it.

Ntando: well then...

Ntando sighs with relief and cups her face making her look directly into his eyes. His eyes immediately change to that of his true form, his tongue snails out of his mouth and slithers all over Seipati's face.

Ntando: so, how's the family? How's aunty?

Seipati: she's alright. She has been very happy these days. She's also going back to work tomorrow.

Ntando: and that bratty cousin of yours... how is she?

Seipati: she's still very closed off... we don't talk much lately but she's fine as far as I've seen.

Ntando: any suspicious acts?

Seipati: no.

Ntando: has she been up to anything lately?

Seipati: nothing. She goes to work and back home, nothing much.

Ntando: her attitude?

Seipati: unchanged.

Ntando: that's good then, you're doing so well. I'll think of a reward later.

Ntando finishes his string of questions and hypnotises the girl inducing sleep by staring directly in her eyes again. He puts her on the chair and leaves the place without being seen.

KWANELE'S PLACE

Reitu: glad I was not called into the police station this time; I was starting to feel like a criminal a little bit.

Kwanele: hectic. I'll make sure to remember that next time. Here.

Kwanele hands his guest some snacks and sits down on the couch next to her with a laptop open in front of them placed on the small glass coffee table.

Reitu: thank you.

Kwanele: my pleasure... so, before we start, anything new?

Reitu: nothing, did you find anything in there?

Kwanele: a lot. Look...

He inserts the flash drive on his laptop and starts going through the many files in it saved by different dates, years and dates.

Reitu: whoa... it's like a diary...

Kwanele: that's because it is, your sister was a very smart person. I can't believe she did all this.

Reitu: what are all these files?

Kwanele: there's 10 of them and notes on each. Together they all spell a name, Alena Smith, registered under the American Government, age 28, and currently living somewhere unknown.

Reitu: Alena Smith? What does that have anything to do with what we're looking for and what we want?

Kwanele: the letters... solely poses as a foreign bank account for some charity involved with the church.

Reitu: and?

Kwanele: each month there's a constant deposit made to each of these account or charities. This has been consecutively happening for the past 7 years.

Reitu: great... so, this is just a bunch of notes about some of the good deeds bad those bad people actually do? They do charity and donations. So what? How is that going to help with our investigation?

Kwanele: that's because these are all fake, they're only written on paper, the money goes to one account, the one registered under an Alena Smith—this is fraud! Those people pay money into a foreign account to avoid taxes and that's illegal. With this we can get them audited, get their stocks and properties seized, we can actually get them in jail but—

Reitu: but what?

Kwanele: but it's not really enough all on its own.

Reitu: of course

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it's not! We can't lead with this, we were going for the sexual assault and murder cases, we have to prove that first, we have to find evidence they can't rebuke. There must be something somewhere... or someone who knows something.

Kwanele: I know...

Reitu: this auditing and tax thing can be the last nail in the coffin, we must lead with the other allegations.

Kwanele: but how? The guy's immaculate.

Reitu; yes, but he's human—there's gotta be someone who knows something. He can't be that careful, humans make mistakes all the time.

Kwanele: that's right, I can look into some old cases involving that damned church then. I'm sure there's many.

Reitu: how did it go with the missing people from the last time?

Kwanele: dead end. Noth cases went cold, there's nothing at all. Cindy was last seen with Lesego who was last seen at that church and never seen again. So, whatever happened to them must have happened while they were in that place... only if we could prove that. Things would be some much better.

Reitu: I know. But still, I have hope. This is just the start, at least we have something on them. We sure still have a long way to go.

Kwanele: yeah, we do.

Reitu: thank you... for this and the snacks and for last time.

Kwanele: no, thank you.

Reitu: modest I see.

Kwanele: mom raised a gentleman.

Both fall into comfortable silence while one scrolls through the endless files on the laptop, with the other indulging on the snacks. A perfect Sunday afternoon it is.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

REITU'S OFFICE – AN HOUR LATER

Seipati wakes up from a deep sleep she's been induced to feeling all queasy and lost. She looks around, stands up and stretches her body while reaching for her bag to get her phone. She checks the time and it's in the evening, 16h25 to be exact. She tries to recall how she got there in the first place, but nothing comes to mind. She collects her stuff and leaves the strange room with sleep leaving her eyes. Her phone vibrates from her bag, she retrieves it and checks the notification—it's a text from Ntando.

[on text]

Ntando: miss you, hope you enjoyed the service today. Wanna hang this weekend?

Seipati: missed you too. I enjoyed the service. Sure, let's hang.

She smiles to herself and replies to the text immediately before putting the phone back inside the bag leaving the place all

merry and giggly forgetting that she was just worrying why she just woke up from an office she doesn't remember entering.

THE FOLLOWING DAY

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

The bishop stretches his arms and turns from his side of the bed waking up. He gates on his feet though his body tempts him to go back to bed. he looks on Mfundo's side and she's sound asleep. He leaves for the bathroom and comes back all fresh, a clean face and clean teeth. He shakes Mfundo trying to wake her up.

Bishop: we have an appearance to make today, the school tours pop-ups have started. I don't want to be late, I'm sure you don't want to be late too. So, please wake up.

She doesn't respond let alone move, his heart starts racing fast, his mind runs wild. He shakes violently but there's no answer.

Bishop: Mfundo! Hon!! Honey!? MFUNDO, ARE YOU OKAY?!!
Honey, wake up!! Honey?!

His mind goes back and forth recalling the conversation they had weeks ago about executing the master. He remembers passing the news to him without Mfundo's knowledge and he was not very pleased and swore retaliate one way or the other. His mind goes blank as he sinks on the floor feeling breathe escape him rapidly and his chest closing.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

The house feels a little unfamiliar and cold this particular morning as Boipelo walks up the stairs to the room where she usually starts her day. She walks past 3 more rooms and knocks on the 4th door. A disturbed looking man opens the door and keeps it on his hold not letting her get inside or get the slightest look inside the room.

Boipelo: oh, Man of God, good morning. Am I disturbing you?

Bishop stands still, guarding the door and looks too zoned out to even answer Boipelo's question. Her smile disappears as she looks at him with confusion and worry. He doesn't look the same, he doesn't look like he usually does, and normally, he's not here at this time of the morning.

Boipelo: is something perhaps wrong?

Bishop: no...no, just give me some time. You don't have to change the bed sheets or clean the room today, or at least until I say so. There's been a few changes. You can be dismissed.

He shuts the door on her face and goes back inside and throws himself on the bed facing the ceiling. Boipelo leaves the door with confusion driving her a little fuzzy. Today is not going to be a good day.

INSIDE THE ROOM

The Master: what is this mood? I thought this is what you wanted. I'm a little disappointed you know...

Bishop: are you being serious right now? Really?

The Master: what?

He laughs fuelling the now widowed man. The bishop charges at him with a golf club in his hand. He swings it towards the master but fails as he grabs it and throws it on the floor.

The Master: that's not so smart of you. That better be a mistake because I won't allow that again. You get ready, you have school kids to entertain.

Bishop: you son of a bitch!!

The Master: yes, I am. Stop being pathetic and pull yourself together. Nomfundo is not the first woman to die. She's not the only one whose blood is on your hands. Stop being a sissy and prepare for the long day you have ahead.

Bishop: but—but... she did not deserve this. I did not initiate this; this is not what I meant. This is not what I wanted.

The Master: there's nothing you can do about it now. it's not like I can resurrect the dead. You get ready, I'll see what I can do about the body.

Bishop: what do you mean?

The Master: exactly what you're thinking right now.

Bishop: no... no! I'm not allowing that.

The Master: then what do you propose, have your pathetic helpers come in here and see here like that. Then I'll have to kill them all. I'll have a feast then, let them come. It'll all be on you.

Bishop: don't touch her!! I won't have anyone come in here. I'll figure something out by myself. Just don't do to her what you did to the others. That's the least I can do for her please...

The Master: oh, that... that's not what I meant. I meant I'd stage something, a car accident rather to disguise her death. I long finished with her. Why do you think she never wanted kids? Hell, you're gullible!

Bishop: what?!

The Master leaves the bedroom back to his basement careful not to be noticed. He gets a glimpse of Boipelo in the kitchen humming and stops to watch her for a few seconds and leaves just before she turns to leave the kitchen for the laundry room. Meanwhile, the bishop lies thoughtless and out of body next to Nomfundo's body. He sits upright and cups her face, her body has gone cold, she looks pale but still admirable and beautiful like she's going to open her eyes. He looks at her for the longest time before he leaves for the bathroom.

LOVEDALE HIGH SCHOOL

After yesterday's announcement about the bishop's visits to her school, Isa sits anxiously biting her nails as it's only a few minutes from assembly time. A person she did not expect enters the room and passes past her without a word. The same girl who was her friend just a few months ago, Emihle, the same girl she visited the bishop's office with. She turned on her and dropped her and their friendship leaving her hanging high and dry. After that one evening at the bishop's office, things never returned to normal between them. They're just as good strangers now.

Isa: you know this look doesn't suit you.

Emihle looks at her and says nothing. She puts her head down on her desk and naps. Isa walks up to her and pulls her by her hair making her to face her.

Isa: ignoring me?! I'm talking to you!!

Emi: I'm sorry... please... let me go... I'm sorry. I didn't tell anyone—I won't!! Please let me go!

Emihle rushes out of the classroom after grabbing very much unneeded attention towards Isa. She looks around and goes back to her seat annoyed and feeling betrayed by her ex-friend.

Isa: what the fuck re you looking at?!! Go back to your seats!!!

The bell rings and the learners shuffle all across the school walls making their way to the assembly hall.

THE ASSEMBLY HALL

Things are a little different today because everyone's favourite hero is coming to school. Within a few minutes the hall is filled to maximum capacity by the population of Lovedale High School. Screams, whistles, and applause fill the room as the bishop walks out up front onto the stage, followed by 2 other people he brought with him. The school principal stands by the bishop's side and takes the mic, introducing the man and his companion later handing the mic to the bishop to say a few words.

Bishop: Hello Lovedale!!

Again, noise fills the room as the crowd welcomes the bishop with warm hands. They settle down after a few minutes as the bishop begins his speech, later playing Bible trivia with them

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and awarding some with gifts and so forth.

LOVEDALE HIGH GIRL'S BATHROOM

Emihle stands holding onto the door as Isabele stands in front of her, throwing some very hurtful words at her disguised as an apology.

Isa: oh God! Will you stop crying? It's not like I did not apologize. I did! I did! I am sorry, okay? I shouldn't have, I don't know why I did that. Maybe it's because I am so angry with you but still miss you. You ghosted me, disappeared on and avoided me everywhere. You stopped sharing a desk with me, stopped talking to me. What did you want me to do? What did it do to you? Why did you stop hanging out with me? Why did you stop being friends with me?!

Emi: I'm sorry. My aunt... my aunt said that—I am sorry...

Isa: Emi!!!

Emihle breaks down again and cries. Only this time she cries without letting a sound out. An unexpected visitor interrupts them. Isa backs away from Emi and looks at the person entering the bathroom. It's the same person she once saw at the bishop's office. Her chest and throat go dry. She coughs wandering her eyes around the room trying to avoid the person, but she approaches her.

Reitu: it's you right... it is you, isn't it?

Isa: you have the wrong person.

Reitu: what person?

Isa looks away realizing she just lost the mind game and gave it away that she does recognize Reitumetse.

Reitu: the girl from the bishop's office. I know your face. What are the odds that we meet again?

Isa: well... I don't really care. I have to go. Bye.

Isabele rushes out of the bathroom leaving Reitu a little surprised and shocked. Emihle walks out of the bathroom stall looking lost and a mess. She goes to the sinks and washes her hands, patting her face dry to look representable before leaving the bathroom. She encounters Reitu as she's about to leave the place.

Reitu: are you friends with her?

Emi: y-yes... not anymore.

Reitu: do you perhaps know why—

Emi: please... please... don't hurt me—I promise I won't tell anyone, I did not tell anyone—please...

Reitu: hey, hey... I am not going to hurt you. Relax, you're safe with me. I am not a bad person. Come here.

Reitu holds the little girl close and hugs her so tight that her own sorrows subside. Her heart shatters as the girl keeps crying, now audible on her chest. She rubs her back trying to calm her down before they both leave the bathroom going to a quieter space and not the assembly hall anymore.

45 MINUTES LATER

LOVEDALE STUDENT'S LRC OFFICE

Reitu: you're such a beautiful being, in and out... I am sorry that such a thing happened to you.

Emi: thank you aus' Reitu, that means a lot. I haven't had the time to talk about this with anyone besides my aunt, but now that you've heard me. I do feel a little better.

Reitu: that is what I am here for. And if you need anything just--

Reitu's phone vibrates bringing her to a halt in her speech. She checks, and it is a text message from Ntando reading, 'where r u? the bishop is done, it's time 2 go'. She reads the text and sighs putting her phone back in her pocket.

Reitu: uhm... I have to go, that was my colleague just now.

Emi: okay...

Reitu; but you know you can call me or text me anytime, right? That is what I'm here for. I'm looking forward to this weekend.

Emi: me too, I'll talk to my aunt and get back to you.

Reitu: okay, then... I'll wait to hear from you. Bye... and please—anytime, call me if you need help.

Emi: thank you, I will.

Reitu stands up and leaves the room, she stands by the door one last time and looks at Emi, she closes the door and leaves

rushing to where the bishop and Ntando are currently waiting. She whips out her phone and scrolls through her contacts and texts someone.

[on text]

Reitu: I think we may have found something.

She puts the phone back in her pocket as she approaches the car. She gets in ready to get scolded by the bishop, but he doesn't say anything.

Ntando: where were you?

Reitu: hanging out with a friend. I met someone I know. Sorry.

Ntando: well, it would've been better if you alerted us before disappearing like that.

Reitu: again, I'm sorry.

Ntando: fine.

Bishop: just drive. Stop fighting and drive.

Reitu takes a glimpse of the bishop who looks so drained and out of enthusiasm. He looks different, he looks—empty. No emotion or whatsoever. She sighs to herself and minds her business while Ntando brings the engine to life taking them back to church.

LATER THAT DAY

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

It's dinner time and one person at the table is playing with their food while staring blankly at the wall. She looks disturbed and deep in thought. Reitu looks at Seipati, she eyes her back, and they look at Boipelo at the same time.

Seipati: is there something wrong with the food... aunty, are you okay?

Boipelo: oh... yeah, y-yeah... just had a long day. The food is great. I just have an upset stomach; it may be indigestion... I had a big lunch.

Reitu: are you okay? Do we even have medicine for that?

Reitu gets on her feet quickly and starts rummaging through the drawers and cabinets for anything that'd help with pain.

Seipati: aunty...

Boipelo: I'll turn it early, I think I'm--- you know what... I am alright. Don't worry. You guys finish up here and go to sleep too. I won't be needing tea tonight.

Reitu: MA, Ma?

Boipelo leaves the table without a word and goes straight to her bedroom.

Seipati: do you think it's serious?

Reitu: what's that supposed to mean?

Seipati: nothing, just asking...

Reitu: don't try to jinx things.

Seipati: sorry.

Reitu gets back down and continues to eat with a little less appetite as she worries about her mother. She stops halfway and gets busy with the dishes while her cousin giggles away on her phone. She cleans the kitchen spotless and leaves for bed too, today was eventful enough for her and she needs to recharge for tomorrow, because there's a whole lot ahead that she must fight.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

An unbothered creature and a frustrated man fuelling with anger sit across each other. One is trying to bargain with the other, while the other is not even invested in the conversation. The losing party gets on his knees and begs feeling a lump in his throat and unending rage.

Bishop: please... please. I beg of you. Let me bury her. She does not deserve this. What will I say to the congregation. What will become of me?

The Master: I can take care of the congregation part... the other part no! that's not what we agreed on... Nomfundo will not be buried! And that's final!

Bishop: I will do anything!! Just about anything... let me have this.

The Master: no... bargaining won't take you anywhere. Stop embarrassing yourself and stand up. I thought you were expecting a visitor.

Bishop: I—

The Master: I'll make myself scarce. Enjoy yourself as much as I will!

The bishop springs up from his knees at the sound of the intercom indicating there's a guest at the gate. He takes a single look at the person through the front camera installed at the front gate and rings them in before opening the front door to open them in.

Isa: wow!! Your house is this big?! My house has nothing on this!! Oh my God!

The young girl rushes into the house and immediately runs her eyes on every wall there is in this house scrutinizing everything.

Isa: how much did this cost? It's so big. I wish I'd live in such a place someday.

Bishop: you would, if you weren't so hyper and energised to even listen to me.

Isa: I'm sorry, when you invited me here, I didn't think your house would be this gorgeous. The pictures online are not doing it any justice.

Bishop: calm down, will you?

Isa: oh... is she here?

Bishop: who?

Isa: uhm... the first lady.

The bishop feels his mouth run dry. He swallows the lumps on his throat and blinks back the tears threatening to escape his eyes.

Bishop: no...

Isa: she doesn't deserve you and all of this. How could she even do that do you? She is a vile woman.

Bishop: it's all over now so you don't have to curse her out.

Isa: I'm here for you, you don't need her. She will regret ever leaving you. I will make her regret it.

He looks at her intensely feeling a little sorry that he's duping her and lying to her. She's still so young and has a lot ahead of her. Maybe if he had kids with Mfundo one would at least be this girl's age. Had circumstances been different he wouldn't be out here giving his body

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mind and soul to the devil while dragging a lot of other people into it, breaking up families and causing such pain, but who is he? He doesn't have a choice, things have gone too far, they can only go forward from here, the end isn't so great, but this is the path he chose. No one else is gonna lie on the bed he made besides him—so...

Bishop: I want a baby.

Isa: what?

Bishop: she never gave me kids, she always denied me one, she refused no matter how long and hard I begged. Only to find out later that the guy she ran away with was the father of her kid. She had a child with someone.

Isa: I'm sorry... I did not know.

Bishop: it's okay, it's not your fault. Just say you'll do it.

Isa: okay...

Bishop: are you sure?

Isa: let's have a baby. We'll raise him to be great, he's gonna be the next leader of the ministry. Life will work out just well and we'll forever be happy. I can't wait!!

He approaches her with a sad smile on his face and hugs her close and tight stalling to blink away his tears. She unravels the hug and pulls the man to her face with much hunger and vigour. The bishop lets in and forces himself to enjoy the company as he was instructed to.

THE FOLLOWING DAY

THE MALEKA HOSUEHOLD

Reitu sits across her mother as they sip on their respective hot beverages before leaving for work. Boipelo still doesn't look too good, she has gone a little pale too. She looks like she's forcing herself to move. Reitu looks at her once and swallows her words.

Boipelo: say it.

Reitu: say what?

Boipelo: what you're thinking... I know you.

Reitu: I don't want to upset you.

Boipelo: save it then... I also don't want to be upset.

Reitu: but Ma—are you sure you're good to go to work? Your face doesn't look too good.

Boipelo: maybe I'm coming down with something... it's not a big deal.

Reitu: but last night you said you had an upset stomach.

Boipelo: that too but I'm better now.

Reitu: if you say so...

Reitu gets on her feet and puts the cup away, gets her bag and gets ready to leave for work.

Reitu: see you later...

Boipelo: have a great day at work.

Reitu: not looking forward to it but thank you... you too.

As soon as Reitu steps out the door Boipelo let's out a cough she's been holding in her presence. She has her hand on her chest, covering her mouth with a handkerchief as not to spread the particles any further. She looks as if she's in pain. As if that's not enough, she rushes up from her chair to the bathroom in a flash where she kneels and lets it all out, all bloody. She assumes the position for a good minute before standing up to rinse her mouth and wash her hands before flushing. Her eyes meet Seipati's as she turns to leave the bathroom.

Seipati: aunty...

Boipelo: Patty...

Her voice comes out as a defeated and pleading whisper while Seipati's trembles and tears fall as she stands frozen at the door not knowing what to do.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Isa shuffles in bed next to the bishop feeling much better about herself and more elated and freer this morning than usual. She looks at him as he sleeps and thinks to herself just how lucky she is that she was blessed with such a man. She caresses his face and kisses his forehead before trying to sneak out of the bed careful not to wake him up but fails.

Bishop: running away, I wouldn't blame you.

Isa: no... I just didn't want to wake you up; I was going to the bathroom.

Bishop: ohh... it's the second door on your right from here.

Isa: thank you.

Bishop: school?

Isa: I'm cutting school today; I feel I won't need it anymore.

Bishop: can't dispute that.

She gets up and leaves the room while taking peeks back at the man who looks like he's being tormented and in pain. She worries about him, a lot more than she thought she'd ever---

maybe after last night something changed in her. She feels way different about him now—it might just be... love?

Mealy 2 minutes she comes back to the room running, screaming and crying for her life. She gets in the room with a flash looking a mess and throws herself in bed covering herself with the bed sheets. The bishop looks at her confused but she's too alarmed to say anything. She keeps stuttering while crying and heaving for air to breathe. He takes the covers off her head and tries to get her to talk, also getting angry now.

Bishop: what is?! Talk to me?!

Isa: she--- she--- she... i- she's dead! There's a dead... someone is dead!!

Bishop: what?!

Isa: someone is dead in the other room!!!

Bishop: hell!!!

The bishop slides out of bed and goes to the master bedroom he shared with Mfundo just a few nights ago. The door is wide open, and someone is standing in front of the door looking to be contemplating on their next action. He rushes towards the person in full force and anger and grabs them by their neck.

Bishop: is this your work?! Is this your fucking work?

Ntando: no!! hell no!! why would I?

Bishop: then who? Who did this?

Ntando: let me go... let me go first! Or this won't end well.

Ntando forcefully removes the bishop's hands from his neck.

Bishop: I made sure to lock this room.... then besides you—who the hell opened the room?

Ntando: maybe you didn't lock it.

Bishop: are you fucking with me right now??!!

Ntando: well... it's open now. Your little visitor decided to snoop around without permission. I'd like to put his one you, but I won't... I guess I have some damage control to do then.

Bishop: really? now is the time? What the hell is wrong with you?

Ntando: I told you not to use that language with me?!!

His emotions get the better of him as he knocks the bishop down unconscious and leaves him lying on the floor going to the room with the guest. He enters the room finding the girl shivering in the corner covered with the bed sheets.

Ntando: you were right... you weren't meant for school. You were right by cutting school too today. I guess I'll be going to the office after all.

He removes the blanket over her head and looks into her eyes which shiny and glow with tears. She still shivers but is too mentally disturbed to even make sense of what is happening. He places her on the floor and reverts to his natural form followed by a lot of hissing. He enters her from beneath going up inside her body while blood oozes from her nose, eyes, ears and other parts of her body.

THE HOLY GRAIL MINISTRIES

REITU'S OFFICE

Reitu sits anxiously on her chair looking all anxious and nervous while she whispers talking on the phone.

[on call]

Kwanele: it would've been if you called alter if this is how this call is going to go.

Reitu: it can't wait, I'm sorry. I can't work with so much in my mind.

Kwanele: okay, fair... so—the text, what did you mean by that?

Reitu: yesterday, I met someone who knows someone who might know something about the Holy Grail murders and other bad deeds.

Kwanele: what?

Reitu: yeah... some young girl.

Kwanele: how did you meet her? Can we even trust her? isn't she on their side or something?

Reitu: no! She's not with them, I bet my life on it.

Kwanele: err... I don't know Ree.

Reitu: come on... this is on me; you can trust me and not her then! This is something I tell you.

Kwanele: ok, okay... I hear you, so how is this going to go?

Reitu: she agreed to talk to her aunt... meaning the other person who knows something. We might just be invited to their home this weekend if things go well.

Kwanele: I have work.

Reitu: this is work... plus this will be your chance to let any doubts you have subside, we might really be on something. My gut tells me so!

Kwanele: I hear you; I'll get ready then.

Reitu: I'll keep you updated on how things go.

Kwanele: right...things are moving faster than I had anticipated.

Reitu: yeah...but I don't want to be too excited, she may change her mind. I don't want to come off as negative, but I just can't help it.

Kwanele: I fully understand. But let's have hope.

Reitu: it's going to be a little hard though

the girl told me her aunt doesn't talk, she can't talk ever since what happened to her 10 years ago.

Kwanele: we'll try our best, we have to. For all those that place has harmed in any way.

Reitu: agreed, bet we'll need prayers too.

Kwanele: very agreeing on that part.

Reitu: I have to go; I'll check on you later.

Kwanele: totes!

[call ends]

Reitu sighs heavily as she puts her phone face down. She stands up from her table aiming for the outside to get some fresh air. She pulls the door handle opening the door only to be met by someone she did not expect to be here—Ntando. She anxiously and awkwardly smiles at him trying to read his emotions and expression to see whether he heard the call or not.

Reitu: Ntando...? I thought you asked for the day of... why are you doing here?

Ntando: my other plans were cancelled so I decided to come in. hope I'm not getting in the way of anything.

Reitu: oh—nothing... nothing at all. I was just getting some fresh air.

Ntando: this early? the work must be driving you insane.

Reitu: right... uhm—let me get that fresh air then.

Ntando: yeah...

She passes him and leaves the office taking a few looks back here and there only to be met by his eyes gawking at her as she strolls down to the corridor. She wonders as she walks just what the hell did he hear?!

LATER THAT DAY

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Seipati looks at Boipelo with pity in her eyes. She has been following her around and monitoring her every move since the morning. She even took it into her hands to message her work and make a plea and pardon on her behalf asking for a day off. Of course, Boipelo refused since she did not want to be babied just because of her condition but Seipati was too eager to be stopped so Boipelo finally caved in and stayed home for today.

Boipelo: stop looking at me like that. You're making me feel bad about his.

Seipati: but aunty... she has to know. She must know. You must tell her. She deserves that much from you.

Boipelo: but how—we just lost Itu. I can't do this to her too. I just can't.

Boipelo stands up and leaves Seipati who's all tear eyed. She goes to her room feeling tears sting and locks the door. She gets on her knees and cries hard, letting all her anger out, praying in the process too. Meanwhile Seipati wipes her tears and focuses back on peeling the carrots in front of her as she

sees Reitu in a distance approaching the house. She gets inside the house in seconds, greets her and goes straight to her room looking all jolly. She comes back with the same atmosphere looking all ready to help, Boipelo comes out of her room the same time too.

Reitu: Ma? How come you're here already? I came home very early today... are you supposed to be here?

Seipati: she--- uhh... she—

Boipelo: I took a day off, the cold was trying to get me down, but I shook it of... I'm going in tomorrow.

Reitu: are you okay though?

Boipelo: fine. I am okay baby.

Boipelo eyes Seipati with pleading eyes, she nods and gets back to what she's doing trying hard to keep it together and be her usual self but it's just too hard and not the same anymore.

Reitu: cuz... you're oddly quiet today...sick too?

Seipati: my throat is a little patchy, I might just be coming down with something too.

Reitu: what's wrong with the people of this house? Sick... could never be me.

Boipelo: I'll go season the meat.

Reitu: I'll start with the rice.

Everyone gets hands-on preparing dinner, each of them in their thoughts and their own world.

THAT WEEKEND

THE NCUME HOUSEHOLD

Reitu sits nervously next to Kwanele who looks a bit too nervous that she is. The same elderly woman who welcomed them in just a few minutes ago puts a tray with drinks in front of them as per courtesy of any black household. She smiles at them and goes back to the kitchen. Another lady looking to be in her late 30s- early 40s is wheeled out by Emi who's too elated to even make sense of how serious the situation they've visited her house for is. She introduces the woman as her aunt, Namisa, the woman they've been dying to meet and excuses herself.

Reitu: we're honoured and happy to meet you. Thank you for aggreging to see us.

The lady smiles back but her smile becomes stern as she retrieves her tablet from under the small throw she has over her legs. She unlocks it and types something looking a little different from how she did a few seconds ago.

Namisa: Akhona Dikana?

She puts her hand over her mouth and tears slowly fall down her cheeks as she looks intensely at someone in the room. Reitu reads the words but looks confused until she looks at the man sitting next to him who looks like he's about to lose it all.

Reitu: you--- your s-sister?

Kwanele nods and lets them fall. After so many years, never ever had he thought he'd run across someone who knew her late sister. He feels relieved, grateful and somewhat sad. A whole load of different emotions, but relief surpasses them all.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

The bishop wakes up from a banging headache and dehydration only to realize that he's binded to a chair. He looks around, recognizes the place and spots The Master looking directly at him. He wiggles in his chair trying to break free from the hold but can't. He looks at the creature with anger written all over his face.

Bishop: so this is what things have come to? You tying me up and treating me like a hostage in my own damn house!!?

The Master: correction you're in my vicinity now. Remember? The basement is mine.

Bishop; get me out of this!! Untie me now!!

The Master: and there's the temper... the tone I don't like. I thought we understood each other on that. what are you so mad about? It's not you didn't know things would be like this.

Bishop: why are you doing this? Why?

The Master: because you saved me an unwanted trip. You know I had my doubts about you at first... but after you told me

about what Mfundo had planned, I began to trust you just a little bit.

Bishop: and no? Where did that trust go? When did the flame go out? Its still me. Please...

The Master: I have somewhere to be today.

Bishop: I promise to behave. I won't act stupid. I'll stay home all day.

The Master: and that's why I don't believe you. I can't risk you making a stupid decision ...

Bishop: get me out of this goddammit now!!

In a flash his hands lands on the bishop's neck choking the living daylights out of him. The chair falls backwards and he gets on top of him as he keeps his hands there digging his nails deeper into the skin while his tongue finds its way into his mouth with his fangs out excretion a slimy liquid that goes into the bishop's mouth making him scream his lungs out.

The Master: things didn't have to come to this but you deliberately provoked me!!! You did this to yourself!!! The tone

of your voice!!! I don't want to have to remind you who I am to you every time we talk!!! It ends here, right now and today!! Hell!! See what you made me do?!

Bishop: please... just untie me...

His voice comes out coarse and harsh and as a pleading cry.

The Master: no, thank you. I won't.

He pulls the chair back up to its original position and looks the bishop directly deadly into his eyes.

The Master: we won't have this talk again. This won't happen again. I have somewhere to be, behave!!

Before leaving the basement he armours himself and changes form to that of the bishop's appearance just in case he runs to one of the workers. He ascends the stairs whistling and completely ear blind to the man he leaves behind who screams for help. He gets out of the house and on his thoughts to look

more human, he gets one of the cars and drives out while on the phone with his date.

THE NCUME HOUSEHOLD

Namisa dusts a box and opens it while everyone else watches with intrigue and curiosity of wanting to know what exactly is inside the box. After an hour long conversation taking them on trip down memory lane on her days at Holy Grail Ministries, her friendship with Kwanele's deceased sister, Akhona and how things fell off one evening, she looks much more better and more stable now. She opens the box and retrieves a diary from, a small memory card and some old documents. She puts the stuff on the table and starts typing on her tablet.

Namisa: the diary belonged to your sister, Akhona. She started entering some events after the bishop started violating her. She'd heard about stories of other girls before her, hence these old documents. The grand bishop, Nomfundo's father started all this. It was not until later that the current bishop was initiated and instated after the old one fell ill.

Reitu: there were other girls?

Namisa: yes... there were.

Kwanele: and where did you get these? Why have you been quiet all these years? Why now?

Namisa: because I still dream of that day. Because that man attacked me and left me for dead. Because I was afraid for my life. It was better to lie low than try to do anything when I knew that those people have connections everywhere and would hunt me down if they knew I was alive.

Reitu: I'm so sorry. I can't lie and say I relate but I know your pain. My sister died the same way.

Namisa: my condolences.

Kwanele: the memory card? What's in there?

Namisa looks at them with tears glowing in her eyes. She looks traumatized and in pain, again.

Namisa: a video. Footage of Akhona's murder.

She says those words and bows her head letting tears fall without shame. Reitu looks at Kwanele who's holding tears back and feels a lump on her throat too. Things are going so well but the pain that comes with uncovering old wounds is impeccable. They're all sitting here for one cause, they're victims of sorcery and dark forces. What are the chances that she even got to meet these people and actually be able to trust them and go this far with them, Reitu wonders to herself.

Namisa: I kept all this all these years knowing such a day would come. I'm sorry that this brings unpleasant memories. I know it's like putting salt on a wound but—if that's what it will take for us to bring those people down and heal

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I'd rather deal with the temporary pain. I've been through a lot, you've been through a lot, we've been through a lot. Now is our time—let's take them down and make them regret to have ever settled here.

Kwanele: it's gonna take a lot. After today, we'll be closer than we were yesterday and it's all thanks to you. Thank you very much Miss.

Reitu: truly, we're immensely grateful to you.

Namisa: I'm grateful that people like you finally found your way to me. This weighed on my heart for so long. I feel a little better to have met you.

Reitu: we'll be fine. We will be okay, this is only the start.

Reitu scoots closer to Kwanele and holds his hand tighter as if ensuring him they're almost there and everything is okay. She feels his heartbeat stabilizing at her touch and a warm feeling fills her chest. She feels assured too and calm.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Seipati gleams with joy as she sees a car halt at the front gate. After texting back and forth with Ntando she couldn't wait for him to finally come. Being in the house with Boipelo was not very encouraging let alone bright, she was sick and getting worse day by day. Weirdly enough she had the perfect facade to hide everything when Reitu was present. She has been taking tons of pain medication that she dosed herself to sleep a few minutes ago. Before the car beeps, Seipati writes a note

and leaves it on the table. She steps out of the house and sighs with relief.

She meets Ntando halfway and he opens the door for her. She gets on the passenger seat a little nervous but steadily calms herself down and she settles and the car starts moving.

Ntando: where to Miss?

Seipati: our hearts desires.

Ntando: affirmative.

He brings the engine to life leaving nothing but dust behind as they set off to their “heart’s desires”.

SOME RESTAURANT IN TOWN

Ntando plays with his food as he waits on his date to finish eating so they can leave. He was never devoted to this, he never wanted to do this. He's forcing himself to do this.

Seipati: the food not do your taste?

Ntando: no, I just have a lot on my mind.

Seipati: you know I can help with that.

Ntando: yeah... but not here

Seipati: I would have loved it better here but, if you say so... let's leave.

Ntando: are you sure?

Seipati: a 100.

Ntando: well then...

He hails a waiter into their presence and settles the bill while Seipati packs her stuff up after asking for her unfinished meal to be packed also. The waiter leaves the table and comes back with her take away and hand in hand, they leave the place.

Seipati: your hands are cold... are you sure you're okay?

Ntando: sure.

Seipati: you know my mother used to tell me that people with cold hands and feet are dying soon. It's people whose death is calling them since blood doesn't flow in their bodies anymore.

Ntando: really now? So you think I'm dying?

Seipati: not you, I'd die. You're not just any human—in fact you're not human---

He stops on his tracks and lets go of her hand perturbed at the sudden comment about his nature. Seipati looks at him a little confused and continues talking since she was rudely disturbed.

Ntando: what?!?!

Seipati: you're more like a dream come true to me.

His nerves subside and he exhales the breath he was holding. He looks at her one more time and open the car.

Seipati: oh, it is a little cozy here, don't you think? The restaurant was a little cold... or maybe it was just me.

Ntando: it was just you.

Ntando presses some buttons and the car's windows suddenly go opaque. Seipati looks at him with a mischievous look. He turns to look back at her with his eyes changing to that of his true form.

Seipati: your--- your eyes... are you—

She faints before she can even finish her sentence. Ntando raises her bowed head and elongated his tongue deep into her throat. She comes back to consciousness, he looks her deep in her eyes and subdues her before he begins questioning her.

Ntando: your cousin?

Seipati: she's been acting sorta out of pocket, I think she has some secrets.

Ntando: what secrets?

Seipati: I don't know... but she always talks to someone on her phone every night. But I don't think it's her boyfriend—the speech is always formal.

Ntando: and your aunt?

She sniffs and tears escape her eyes. A suppressed voice from within comes out as a dry cry. Tears fall involuntarily confusing the creature with her.

Ntando: your aunt?!!

He raises his voice this time annoyed and not knowing what to do. Seipati wails louder at the question again. Even though she's subdued and put under a spell, the pain and emotions of reality come through. Damaged one to the soul surpasses the degree of the spell she's put under. Ntando looks at her growing livid each second. He starts the engine and drives like a madman out of the parking lot with complex thoughts.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Ntando parks the car in a burry and comes in busting making his way to the basement. He finds the bishop sleeping after hours of screaming. He slaps him once waking him up and unties him. The confused half sleepy man rubs his face in confusion and anger.

Bishop: what was that for?

Ntando: we have a problem!!!

Bishop: oh really?

Ntando: now is not the time to be petty... we have to do something. We need a plan.

Bishop: so mow you see it... After I've done told you we need to get the bodies out of this house!!!

Ntando: you think this is about the bodies?!?! I don't give a flying fuck about the bodies, they can rot in here for all I care. But we need to survive! I think that girl is onto us.

Bishop: what are you talking about?? Can't you calm down so I can understand you?

Ntando: I am calm!! I am calm!

Bishop: okay, okay... you don't have to shout at me! Just tell me slowly what exactly is happening. Who's this girl we're talking about?

Ntando: the girl from office.. Reitumetse. She's onto something and it just doesn't feel right with me.

Bishop: what?! How do you know that?

Ntando: is that what you're curious about right now? In this situation? You've gotta be kidding me.

Bishop: sorry.

The bishop wears a worried look in his face as his mind wanders off already thinking the worst that can happen. His body shivers at the thought. He gets up from the chair and slowly leaves the basement looking all haggard.

Ntando: and now?

Bishop: sitting here and worrying won't fix the problem. I have to go and find out just how much the girl know, that's if she knows anything.

Ntando: what the hell?!?!

Bishop: then what?! Do you have a better plan. If not then, it would be very wise of you to let me handle this the only way I know how while you do some cleaning. The bodies—you have

to get rid of them. She might have called the police on us for all I care. Just get rid of the bodies, I'll be back soon and we'll talk.

Ntando looks at him with doubt at first but let's things be. Things have become stickier in just a short space of time. He watches the bishop as he leaves while he wonders just how the hell did he not manage to suspect that Reitu was onto something. Her attitude was always off, especially when the bishop was around. Although that was not evidence enough to suspect her, it was a step in the right direction. He rubs his face in frustration and hurriedly follows after the bishop after realizing that Seipati is still in that car.

He runs after calling out to him as he approaches the front yard.

Ntando: wait!! The c-car .. there's someone in the car.

Bishop: what?!

Ntando: earlier I took the car and I—

His eyes widen as the least of his expectation suffice right before his eyes. Seipati comes out of the car looking all lost while she rubs the rest of the sleep she had off her eyes. She looks around for a few seconds and realizes she's at an unfamiliar place. Her eyes roam reading the faces around her, she exhales after noticing she recognizes the faces. She

approaches Ntando shameless passing the bishop who is just as confused while standing next to the car.

Seipati: I fell asleep I'm sorry... but what the hell—you should've told me you're related to the bishop! I'm so embarrassed right now.

She whispers into his ear as her hands clutch around him locking their arms together.

Bishop: and this? This is how you handled things? Really?

Ntando: I'll deal with it!

The bishop shakes his head and gets in the car and drives off not giving a care of what's about to become of Seipati. If this is what it'll take to fix things then so be it. It is her family after all who pushed them into this point.

Seipati: what was that about?

Ntando: just family stuff

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come on in.

Ntando trudges upfront as anger consumes him. Things have just gotten way out of hand now. Seipati follows after Ntando not convinced a little bit about what he just said.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Boipelo pulls herself together and wears a smile on her face as she welcomes the bishop in her house. She serves her tea and baked goods as she awaits to hear the reason for the bishop's visit to her house because not even one has he ever shown up not even for Itu's funeral.

Boipelo: I'm sorry the house is a little shabby, I haven't had the time to thoroughly clean. I've been sick.

Bishop: you don't have to explain Mme. I came up unannounced in your territory, and don't worry about the house. It is alright.

Boipelo: oh... how have you been Man of God? And Mam' Bishop?

He clears his throat and takes a sip of the tea before answering the question that caught him off guard.

Bishop: fine.. we've been fine. But that's not why I am here, I came here to meet your daughter—I have things to run past her.

Boipelo: oh Reitu—she's not home. She kept early this morning.

Bishop: err... do you have any idea when she'll be back?

Boipelo: these kids don't tell me anything so I don't really know.

The bishop cusses under his breath grinding his teeth together. He pushes the tray away from him and stands up preparing to leave. Boipelo looks at him reads his face.

Bishop: I have to go. I'll try to contact her later and see if she can come see me.

Boipelo: is it anything urgent? I can pass the message to her...

Bishop: its confidential so I can't really tell you. Thank you for the warm welcome. I really must dash. See you on Sunday.

Boipelo: I—wi-

Boipelo holds her stomach as she coughs covering her mouth with one hand. The bishop looks at her as if wanting to ask if she's okay. Before he can even utter a single word she falls on the floor with blood all over her hand and mouth. The startled man takes a step back from her and inspects her from afar. He tries calming down but it just doesn't work. There's just been a lot of people dying this week in his presence so mentally he is very unstable. He approaches her and shakes her slowly leaning towards her to check if she's still breathing. He accesses a faint pulse and immediately runs to his car to prepare it to transport her to the hospital. He goes back to the house and suffers on his own as he tries to transport the woman to the car, his nerves shooting out of the roof.

KWANELE'S PLACE

Kwanele softly and carefully runs Reitu's back trying to calm her down after watching the video she got from Namisa.

Reitu: I don't know why I'm so worked up when it's not even my sister. I'm sorry.

Kwanele: no one understands you better than I do. You were there for me too when I was a mess. And thank you for that.

Reitu: I just can't —I can't make sense of all this... why? Why are humans so evil?

Kwanele: wish I had an answer to that.

Reitu: so... do we have enough? This should be enough, right?

Kwanele: with this... we do. Now he can be charged with murder topped with fraudulent acts.

Reitu: how's everything looking then? Life sentence? Is that even possible?

Kwanele: I can't say but—I need to talk to someone about this.

Reitu: who?

Kwanele: Gina from work?

Reitu: so you've been feeding her info about all this?!

Kwanele: just to be a move ahead of the enemy. I mean we don't know what can happen...so I—

Reitu: so while you were busy telling me not to utter this to a soul you still went behind my back and shared every single detail with some chick from work?!?!? Why do I feel so betrayed all of a sudden??! You too? I did not expect that from you... not you.

Kwanele: I don't get why you're so worked up about this!! I had to!! Those people are dangerous... what if something happened to me? What would happen to you then? You were so desperate for this... we did it and now you're angry at me that I thought of your safety and put you first before everything else??

Reitu: I don't want to fight you—I dint want to fight. I'll leave.

Kwanele: Reitu!? REITUMETSE!!!

His word fall into thin air as Reitu ignores him and goes for the door slamming it behind her as she leaves the place fuming. He falls back into his couch and calls Gina to discuss things further and also to prepare for arrest.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Seipati muffles and wiggles trying to get off the chair she's tied to. The man he trusted with all her being turned on her. She watches him with tears as he paces up and down looking to be in deep thought. He keeps checking his phone every now and then.

Ntando: fuck!!! Fuck!!! Fuck!!!

His voice gets louder and louder each passing cuss scaring her further.

Ntando: this is all your fault!?!? This is all your goddamn fault, had you done your work better.. had you played your role better I wouldn't be in this mess!?!? You wouldn't be in this mess too!! You brought this upon yourself!! And for that—you're not leaving this house unscathed. You will pay for this!! I will make you wish you never met me!!

Tears flow off her eyes like the Nile. Her heart beats out of her chest as her breath hicks here and there. She sits there wondering what her sin is and why does she have to be the one paying for something she doesn't even know.

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Reitu throws her bag to the side and gets under covers feeling betrayed and angry. She tries to force sleep by nothing comes. She rationalises with herself and gets ahold of her phone to try and call or text Kwanele. She looks at the contact for a long while and slams the phone back under her pillow. She gets comfortable and organizes her thoughts thinking back to her conversation with Kwanele. Her phone rings bringing her out of a trance. She retrieves it and reads the caller ID, takes a moment to herself before answering.

[On call]

Bishop: this may be an inconvenience to you and I'm very sorry but you have to come to the hospital right away!!

Reitu: what?!?

Bishop: your mother has been admitted...I can't talk long. Just come.

[call ends abruptly]

Reitu gets out of her bed faster than the light and leaves the house looking like a mad woman. She texts Seipati on the way feeling a little bad that she didn't check on Boipelo when she came back from her own adventures. Her heart races like mad and her anger builds up again, her head going haywire with thoughts and many what ifs that may just jinx everything.

THE HOSPITAL

Reitu rushes like a headless chicken through the hospital corridors after being shown the way by the receptionist. One thing reigns prominent on her mind and that is a prayer for her dear mother. She has so many unanswered questions and worries that she's brought back to reality by someone yanking her arm and pulling her to his side. Alarmed and annoyed she looks at the person and fury engulfs her thoughts.

She yanks her arm from the man and rushes to her mother's side with tears falling involuntarily.

Reitu: why? Why?

She wails louder each passing second while she violently shakes Boipelo who is sleeping peacefully.

Bishop: the doctor said she's going to be out for a few hours. Don't worry my child, she is going to be okay, she is a woman of vigour, a fighter, she will definitely overcome this.

Reitu's look throws daggers at the bishop. She looks at him for the longest time with the nastiest look ever, exhales and starts going off at him.

Reitu: what are you even doing here? Why are you here?!?!?
Why the hell are you standing there fine and untouched while

my mother lies here!?!? What the hell are you doing here, huh?!?!?

Bishop: I—I happened to be at your house when your mother collapsed.

Reitu: what were you doing at my house? What business do you have with my family?!? You didn't even attend aus' Itu's send off!?!? Why now?!?

Bishop: I went to--- I was there to find—err... your mother has not been coming to work so I wanted to know if – okay, I get that you're angry and hurt but that doesn't give you the right to talk to me as if I'm your child!! I'm trying here goddammit!! Don't fight your demons using me, don't take out your frustrations on me!! If this is what I get for trying I might as well leave because its clear that I am not welcome here.

Reitu: very well!! You just saved me from chasing you out even... get the hell out of here. You don't deserve to be here after everything you have done!! To my family, my sister and those other women!! Get the hell out of here you devil!!

The bishop takes hits as Reitu goes off about everything she knows concerning his ministry and his bad deeds. He slowly backs out of the room that's started to feel a little claustrophobic. He drags his feet feeling power leave his legs. He runs his hands all over his head and faces frustrated and

with a hot head. He searches his pockets and takes his phone out and immediately makes a call.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

After converting back to his true form, he slithers in rounds, going around Seipati saying the most scary things.

The Master: don't think it's time we end it—I mean its not like you're gonna knave this house unscathed. You have entered my den and you're not going to live.

Seipati: p-please... please spare me. I won't tell a soul...

The Master: so far I have never spared anyone, of course you can be the exception but... no—not happening. We're gonna have a little fun before I send you off. Don't worry it'll be peaceful, I won't cause you any pain. After all you confessed your feeling to me—you said you liked me. Do you still do?

Seipati: y-yes ... I still do.

The Master: I would've been fooled. Just look at your face you're shaking like a leaf, you look at me like you want to kill me. Where's the look you had just hours ago—that desperate look you had, the look that said you wanted me to rip you apart.. you see—

The phone rings disturbing his speech.

The Master: what now?!

The creature shifts back to human form and approaches the phone, he smiles showing his fangs out as he reads the caller ID.

The Master: I think your family is dead now...

[on call]

Bishop: the bodies—did you get rid of the bodies?!?!

The Master: why are you yelling?!

Bishop: you were right!! We're in a tight spot... pack our things, we're leaving!!

The Master: what the hell?!?!

Bishop: the police might be there as we speak!! This little bitch knows everything... we're fucked!! We must leave now!!!

The Master: I'm not gonna run away like some pussy... I'll handle this my way!!

Bishop: well count me out!! I'm gone..

The Master: you've always been a weakling... I can do this without you!! I don't need you!!

Bishop: good riddance!!!

[call ends]

The Master: change of plans.... you know your cousin's suspicious partner, take me to him.

Seipati: I- I don't know...

The Master: you're telling me you don't know anything about a cop... I thought you'd be useful... well then let me just—

Seipati: Kwanele!!! Kwanele... he's a detective she's been close with... Detective Dikana...

The Master: there she is!!! Now you're exactly what I wanted you to be... let's go...

Seipati: please don't kill me...

The Master: shut up!!! Stop whining and walk to the car...

The Master yanks the rope around her snapping it to pieces while Seipati shrieks from the pain.

The Master: don't do anything stupid... I can end you any minute!!

Seipati: I won't...

The Master: to the car... run!!

Seipati pulls her legs upfront and runs like her life depends on it!! She gets to the car and opens the door at alert after the car is unlocked. She claps her hands together as if praying while she watches the creature she once thought was human drive. He

still looks deadly, drop dead handsome if not gorgeous even in this situation. Her hands tremble as she watches the road ahead thinking of the worst.

THE POLICE STATION

Gina and Kwanele go through the details of their most awaited arrest one last time before laying things out and going out to catch the perpetrator of such heinous crimes.

Gina: it has all paid off... I can't believe you finally did it!!! So proud of you.

Kwanele: glad to know at least one person is proud of me...

Gina: okay... I sense sadness... the princess doesn't think so anymore?

Kwanele: I'd rather not talk about it. That's just another can of worms I don't want to open.

Gina: you fought didn't you?

Kwanele: work... please...

Gina: okay, I'll stop... I'm done.

Kwanele: alright... this looks just about right. The APB is out, warrant ready... I need some coffee before everything. I'm going to the get some, do you want anything?

Gina: some doughnuts...

Kwanele: I'll be right back... and G...if anything happens... anything at all, go ahead. Don't wait for me.

Gina: what the hell is that about?

Kwanele: just do as I say... the cafe is 20 minutes away... if I don't contact you in that time span... go ahead and handle everything.

Gina: you know you're jinxing things, right?

Kwanele: I don't believe in that... just do as I say and we'll be good.

Gina: okay...

Kwanele leaves the office not feeling so good, his kind is still stuck bad on his fight with Reitu. He feels Abad because that's not how he had planned the night to end. He's tired and so over everything, his only wish is that everything ends and goes according to plan so that he can finally tell her how he feels and explain the misunderstanding she probably has about him and Gina.

Headlights from a car nearby blind him as soon as he sets foot off the police station. The car starts moving towards him with speed increasing each passing second. He tries hailing the driver to slow down but the car moves out of control as if driven by an intoxicated person. He tries dodging the car and moving out of the way but its too late as he topples over after

landing on the windscreen of the car destroying the thing to a million pieces. He lies flat on the ground with blood oozing all over his body. The driver of the car reverses back in full speed and crashes into the street.

30 MINUTES LATER

THE HOSPITAL

Reitu wakes up from her nap finding her mother still asleep. No doctor has come to see her or check on her mother ever since she arrived here. She stands up to go to the reception and ask for help before her mother's situation deteriorates. She greets the lady she finds there and states her please with the little energy she has left before they're rudely interrupted by paramedic wheeling a bloodied and seemingly patient—wait... patients in. She looks over the rushing workers and spots faces she knows. She sinks to the floor as her legs turn to jelly unable to carry her any longer.

THE HOSPITAL

An army of nurses try to stop Reitu and calm her down as she follows after the patients being wheeled in. She wails louder as her eyes land on both Seipati and Kwanele who look way too bloodied to even be alive.

Reitu: that's i-is my cousin!! I am family!! I am her family... please let me in... please let me in!!

Nurse: Miss, I'm sorry and we understand but you have to wait outside. Someone please come and get her!

Reitu fights through and through following Seipati to the emergency room while she screams grabbing attention from all civilians in this place.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Tshepang holds his breath and pinches his nose as he rummages through the room passing all the scattered clothes on the floor trying to reach for where the safe is. Out of all the safes there is in this house, there's only one he's sure he can reach and knows the code to—and that is the one in his bedroom... the room he has been hesitating to enter for a few minutes now but because he hasn't a choice finally did.

He retrieves the heavy metal box and drags it across the floor scrapping the floor in the process. The house has been quiet ever since he came in and he doesn't seem to care. After getting the box outside, his only mission is to safely transport it down the stairs but because it is too heavy, he pushes it and it rolls down the stairwell and lands on the bottom of the staircase. He follows right down in a hurry and goes to check the basement first. It's quiet, dark and cold and there's nothing at all. He rejoices to himself and cracks the code to the safe to properly check the contents before stepping out of the house he's abandoning forever.

Bishop: I guess this is it then... finally free.

He says his last words while his eyes wonder around the house, not feeling even a hint of sadness nor sympathy or remorse for all his bad deeds. He drags the heavy safe to his car, packs it in the backseat and drives out of the mansion not looking back, leaving it open for the outside in the dark night.

THE HOSPITAL

Reitu gawks at the monitor on the wall as it's been a little too long since her cousin was wheeled into the surgery room. No doctor or nurse has been in or out in almost an hour. She holds her hands together and for the first time she abandons her atheist acts and prays.

Reitu: our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. For years on I have been sceptical, uneducated and not acknowledging that there is a higher power out there. Losing my sister just shortly after that made me close my heart off and distance myself from anything that has to do with the word of God. I was angry, hurt and felt deserted. I was angry at everyone and everything. I was hurt and spiteful and needed answers. I couldn't bring myself to understand why my sister had to go through such misery when she devoted her early youth days worshiping You. Why did all the things that happen to her have to happen? Why did she dies so young when she had a whole lot ahead of her, why did You let that happen? My heart shatters and bleeds as I stand right before You this moment. But after finding a few scriptures in Your word, I found myself slowly letting in people and starting to believe that You exist out there and You are fighting for me. I am still very new to this and not even sure that I am doing it right but please—please save my cousin, I pray for my mother too... and Kwanele. I am desperate, I have no one to turn to, please show your mercy even on a heathen like me. Amen.

After a couple of words she's not even sure reached who they were meant for Reitu opens her eyes. She looks at the clock on the wall reading the time off of it and realizes it is a new dawn. She looks at the doors leading to the surgery room and it is still quiet. She exhales and goes back to Boipelo's ward feeling

heavy. Minutes after she settled down holding her mother's hand for dear life, a nurse comes in and asks for her to follow her. She stands up and follows the nurse who leads her to the doctor's office.

THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

She's offered a seat as she looks around the room looking a little lost.

Doc: its okay Ms. You can sit. I'm Doctor Reanetse Mokoena, and I've been attending to your mother, Mrs Boipelo Maleka ever since she started visiting our hospital.

Reitu: I'm Reitumetse

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the daughter and also guardian.

Doc: uhm... OK. So, I called you in because I have a few things to discuss with you. I would like—

Reitu: but first, I have a question Doc... why was my mother admitted?

Doc: uhm... you don't know?

Reitu: what is there to know... wait—is my mother dying?

Doc: Ms. Maleka, please... its not that.

Reitu: then what?!

Doc: your mother fell into a hypovolemic shock this afternoon after suffering severe pain on her stomach which is a symptom of late stage 4 stomach cancer, she was diagnosed with it a few months ago. I did the diagnosis. Now the reason I brought you here is---

Reitu: not my mother!!! No! Not my mother?!?! Not her too--- she's okay, you must be mistaken... mom has never once complained about any pain or said anything about being diagnosed with such so... I'm gonna leave now because surely this has nothing to do with my mother. My mother is Boipelo Maleka, are you sure that file in front of you reads her name?? Did you even do your diagnosis correctly!? How many years have you been working as a doctor? How many patients have you diagnosed correctly? This is just not right?!! This is not it!!

Doc: Miss... Miss!!!

Reitu ups and leaves slamming door behind her. Out in the cold hallways of the hospital she sings the same thing over and over in her head that 'it's not hers, my mother is okay'. Finding it too much and too hard to wrap her head around everything, she runs as fast as she can with tears blinding her view. She runs as fast as she can away from the hospital and away from everyone until she feels her chest burn up with power leaving her lower body.

THE MOHLALA HOUSEHOLD

Sirens wail louder waking up neighbours as authority cars go one after the other into the bishops house. Nosy neighbours taking videos while some leave their homes to get a closer look at what is happening and probably get a hint of what is going on.

Police 1: we found the gates open... he must've already fled. The house is empty too.

Police 2: what a damn nice house.

Gina: we're here to work guys, not simp over the flashy thing in here.

While others search downstairs others head up. One officer calls from upstairs while his search partner reaches and gags leaving a certain which they found uncomfortable to go through any longer because of the stench.

Officer: there's a dead body here... bodies, I mean. Someone call forensics!!

Gina: what the hell!?!?

Officer 2: these are not just any bodies, these people have been gone for days if not weeks.... lord!!! I can't handle the smell!!!

Officer 1: ok... we get it!!! Now please remove yourself from here. You're not being helpful, let alone professional.

He gags further while the other one removes him from the scene to prevent him from contaminating the crime scene any further.

THE AIRPORT

Tshepang walks clutching to one bag that he has with him. He pulls his cap down to cover his face and walks towards the check in point.

Lady: Greeting Sir, where to?

Bishop: one way ticket to Manila.

Lady: oh, one way ticket to Manila, the Philippines. Oh God, such an exotic destination. Are you perhaps going on work related issues or you're going on vacation?

Bishop: err—work. Work!

Lady: oh, can I have your passport please?

He wipes his sweaty hands before handing the passport to the Stewardess with his heart beating out of his chest.

Lady: Mr. Tshepang Joseph Mohlala...

The lady reads the name out loud as she scans the passport, the bishop smiles awkwardly nervous as hell. The scanner beeps a couple of times raising his anxiety in the process.

Lady: I'm sorry, these old machines. This happens from time to time. Don't worry. I'll try again.

She puts the passport back to the scanner and runs it through a couple of time with no avail, she looks at the bishop and chuckles awkwardly as if forced.

Lady: please wait here I'll be back...

He looks at her as she disappear out of sight while his mind goes awry from thoughts. He takes off his cap and rubs his head with anxiety taking all over his body. He looks around and scans the place looking for a safer direction to escape as his mind tells him to run away as he feels he's done for and its only a matter of time before the police come busting in.

28

THE EARLY MORNING

THE AIRPORT

Bishop taps his feet with anxiety while he scans the place. Someone unexpectedly taps his shoulder, he quickly fixes his cap back to his head before turning to attend to the person. He sighs in relief seeing a familiar face. It is the Stewardess.

Lady: the issue is fixed, please come this way please.

Bishop: thank you.

He follows the lady unsuspecting anything. She leads her to some room and offers him coffee before turning to leave for her desk.

Lady: have some of this... sorry about earlier.

Bishop: no worries.

A knock followed by entry startles him but he keeps calm as he sees the people entering the room are nothing like those who would be on the lookout for him.

Bishop: gentlemen...

Man 1: Bishop Mohlala, the man we've been hunting down.
Damn, you're quick...

He chokes in his coffee and spits it back with all his eyes out looking at the man. He looks at the door but one of them is already blocking the way while the other seems to be in a mood to hold a civilised conversation with him. He scans the room before reaching for his bag and opening it.

Bishop: see? These are gold bars... I'm sure you've never seen these before. With just one of these you'd live the rest of your life comfortably. A lifetime of luxury and not having to work for a single day.

Man 2: your point is?

Bishop: I know they pay you peanuts for such hard work. You risk your lives everyday dealing with criminal only to get remains as a salary. Let me change your lives.

Man 1: so, you want us to help you?

Bishop: you're quick witted, I like you. You let me go, and I'll split this equally between the 3 of us.

Man 2: you're so desperate I can smell desperation oozing from you all the way here. Stop wasting our time and put your hands out. We have a long day ahead.

Man 1: hurry...

Bishop: you'll regret this!

Man 1: not before you regret what you did.

Man 2: bishop my ass...

Man 1: should I read you your rights or you're good.

Man 2: he's good, he's gonna need that gold to pay for a lawyer though.

Man 1: I'm enjoying this too much... I might as well tell his what his rights are...

He goes off and reads him the Miranda rights as he cuffs him while the other cop collects the bag from the floor and opens the door.

Man 2: damn, this is heavy!!

They leave the building and are attacked by press and TV as soon as they set foot outside. Camera click and lights shine while civilians show their anger throwing all sorts of things at the man. They hustle their way through the angry crowd and make it safe to the parking lot with help of airport security and some other cops they brought along.

Man 1: damn that was hard. You're indeed a man of influence, aren't you?

Man 2: how did they even know? Its literally a little past 4h00 am in the morning.

Man 1: what can we say, the press never sleeps.

The driver of the car brings the engine to life and drives out of the airport transporting them back to the police station.

LATER THE SAME DAY

THE HOSPITAL

Boipelo lies on her back as tears trickle down each side from her over sensitive watery eyes. She sniffs in silence suppressing the need to scream louder although that's what she wishes for. She has her hand on top of Reitu's who seems to be long gone and deep in sleep. She caresses her hand and cries to herself blaming herself for very thing that has happened. She can't stop thinking about Itumeleng as the TV plays in the background with the hottest and latest news on Bishop Mohlala's arrest this early morning.

Boipelo: I should've been a better mother to you but instead I sent you to that hellhole too. I am so sorry baby.

Her hand moves from Reitu's and lands on her head, stroking her and parting in lightly as if singing her a lullaby. She continues doing so for a couple of minutes until Reitu shuffles uncomfortably seeming to have woken up. She rubs her eyes and raises her head stretching and yawning. She looks at Boipelo and her now puffy eyes get all teary again. She throes herself at her and cries on her chest while Boipelo rubs her back softly.

Boipelo: I am so sorry baby, forgive me my child. I had no idea. Its alright now, it is all going to be okay.

Reitu stays in her arms as she calms down. She backs up and looks at her mother who has gone a little pail, thin and frail within just a few hours here.

Boipelo: I know and I'm sorry.

Reitu: why didn't you tell me?

Boipelo: I'm sorry baby, I just couldn't. I saw how hurt you were when I tried to bring it up as an example. I couldn't bring myself to talk to you about it any further. That's not an excuse I know, but I wish you'd accept it as one.

Reitu: I don't. But I understand you. We had just lost aus' Itu and I'm sure you did all you did to spare my fragile feelings.

Boipelo: yeah...

Reitu: so, did she know?

Boipelo: your sister? She did.

Reitu: okay...

Boipelo: Reitu... I—

Reitu: don't sweat it Ma. It is okay... let's just focus on you now and making sure you get better. We don't have that much time together, do we?

Boipelo: uhm...

Reitu: its okay... I'm fine. I'll be fine.

Boipelo looks at her daughter feeling a little sad but also a little happy to see how she's trying to accept the situation. Playing delusional and deviating is not going to help anyway. Even though her heart aches at the thought of leaving her young baby girl behind, she trusts she's going to make something out of her life. She's a string girl, she has always been and that puts her at ease a little bit. She vows on her sitting to protect her daughter at all costs and spend as much time as she can with her while she can. She knows she doesn't have much time left and the little she has she's going to dedicate it all to Reitu.

A LITTLE LATER IN THE EVENING

OVER THE TV

Anchor: BREAKING NEWS: It has been one eventful Sunday of all Sundays so far as the people's favourite Bishop was apprehended on the run with charges of cold blood murder and fraud. Bishop T.J Mohlala was caught by the local police at the airport in the early hours of this morning seeming to have plans to flee to another country. Lets welcome our reporter at the scene who will tells us more about the bodies supposedly discovered at his house, Mr. Severe, take it away.

Reporter Seleke: evening, Here in front of this humongous and luxurious home which was once a property owned by a man of God, bishop Mohlala himself. The forensics and police are still busy as you can see, two bodies of whose identity can not be revealed were found inside the house with signs of the people having have died quite close to a week ago if not more. It is not clear as to what purpose the bodies were kept for or what the motive of the murder was. Here with us we have the station commander Colonel Simon Zuka to tell us more about how things have been since the arrest. COL. ZUKA?

Col.: it has not been easy

we have been working since the break of dawn. We have discovered a lot of things. We're still trying to get through the perpetrator and find reasons for his actions but he's still quiet. It has been a few since we lived in piece, having such heinous crimes all of a sudden scares me but as the local police, you have our word, we will get to the bottom of this, we will leave no stone unturned.

Reporter: thank you Colonel. And that's it from me, until next time—back to the studio.

Anchor: thank you. Ladies and gentlemen that was our reporter on the crime scene with the latest events on site as we go through the day with the biggest mystery of the year so far.

Reitu gives Boipelo a minute to herself after news of her discharge reach their ears. It has been quite a heavy day for her. Her eyes are a little sore from all the crying she has been doing on top of that, she still feels guilty for not telling her mother what she has been doing with Kwanele. It was hard to miss that the bishop has been apprehended on the run, everyone was talking about it, but she on the other side—could not. She couldn't even bare to look at Boipelo when the news suddenly went on a full blast with headlines about the bishop and his empire. One person comes to mind when she thinks of how all the hard work paid off, but she's hesitant to even try and see if she can see him. It has been long since surgery, he sure must have gotten out by now. A nurse on the way to visit Boipelo runs into her and along passes some unexpected news to her.

Nurse: Ms. Cousin... Lady who is the other lady cousin. She's been out of surgery for a while now. It is vising hours so you can visit here.

Reitu looks at the nurse with complex feelings. She says the most unexpected and out of pocket thing in the situation.

Reitu: can i asm for a favor? I need a favor.

Nurse: as long as it's nothing illegal, shoot.

Reitu: you guys have wheelchairs here right, can just borrow one of those? Please...

The lady looks at her as if she's trying to comprehend what she just said. Reitu notices the look and explains further.

Reitu: its for mu mother. I want to take her to see my cousin, she doesn't know she is here too.

Nurse: well... I guess I can help then. Follow me.

Reitu follows after the nurse as she leads her to someone else who's a better fit to help her with her request. She's given the wheelchair and she wheels it back to Boipelo's ward after refusing help from the hospital porter.

Reitu: look what I got us. Bpipelo: why that though? I can walk.

Reitu: let me do this. I'll explain later.

Boipelo: I'll let you be, my guardian. Reitu: yes, yes I am.

Boipelo: now let's go sign those papers and get out of here.

Reitu: yes, before that... we have somewhere else to be.

Boipelo: hmm? Reitu: don't worry, it's right here.

Reitu wheels her mother out the ward with sweaty palms. She worries how hard Boipelo will take the fact that Seipati is also admitted and hurt. She also worries how her cousin feels and how she has been since surgery. Above all she worries about

Seipati's mother, aunt Kutlwano, she did not have the courage to call her later on. Even if Seioati is okay, it's still courtesy and the right thing to let her mother know. But how do you call another mother to tell her that her child is hurt and in hospital?

You don't. Reitu: we're here.

Reitu notifies her mother as she sees a doctor accompanied by the nurse from earlier standing at the door of the room looking to have been waiting for them. They exchange greetings before getting inside the room where Seipati lies soundless asleep.

Doc: we ran a few tests after the surgery and everything is well. The swelling on the brain has gone down, the bruises will fade later and besides that there's really nothing more except that—uh... Reitu: what is it doc?

Doc: I don't know how you'll take this but as her family I want you to know before she wakes up. She might wake up a totally different person than she used to be and I don't want you to be alarmed. Just treat her as you normally would that will help with—

Reitu: wait wait.. what?! What do you mean?

Doc: the patient suffered great shock at the times of the accident which affected her in some way. Physically she will be okay, there's no major complexes there but mentally—you're

looking forward to spend time with a 6/7 year old girl. Her behaviors from here on will mimic those of a kid.

Boipelo: what? How?

Doc: as I have said Ma'am, the accident had a great impact on her. She sure will get better over time but I cannot tell or promise how long this condition will last. What's important is to keep her around a more familiar environment during this time and she might just remember everything way earlier. Things vary from patient to patient, some take months, while some take years. Hang in there, it is all going to be okay. Nurse?

The doctor signals the nurse to take over and explain some more while he struts out of the room. Boipelo looks up at Reitu who looks back at her with a worried face.

Boipelo: why didn't you say anything?

Reitu: I- I—

Words fail her and she keeps quiet. She looks down on her mother who's focused on Seipati brushing her hand lightly and apologizing. Reitu rubs her mother's shoulders and sighs out loud feeling the burdens on her shoulders build up.

DAYS LATER

THE MALEKA HOUSEHOLD

Kutlwano throws herself at Boipelo the moment she steps inside the house. Her eyes are all teary and her breath is unstable. She cries engulfing her in a tight hug while she mumbles something no one can hear. Boipelo consoles her by rubbing her back feeling tears threatening to come out too. Kutlwano pulls out of the hug and sits down next to Boipelo holding her hands into hers gently rubbing them.

Boipelo: its okay... it is going to be fine.

Kutlwano: this is so shameless of me. You're the sick one, I shouldn't be crying in your arms. I should be the one consoling you not the other way round.

Boipelo: but you're human, right? I understand and relate to your tears. You can vent out on me.

Kutlwano: you're so strong. I admire you.

Boipelo: I learnt to be when I had no choice at all. We all are I believe, there's always going to be that one situation that's gonna crack it up for all of us.

Kutlwano removes her hands from Boipelo and looks her in the eyes. She sighs out loud, gets all teary but blinks them back.

Boipelo scoots next to her and hugs her this time. She pulls out of the hug and faces her.

Kutlwano: so, what did the doctors say again?

Boipelo: she suffered great trauma and shock from the car crash she was involved in which resulted to her hurting her brain, hence she's where she is now or who she is...

Kutlwano: I see...

She says showing no emotions at all and looks down.

Boipelo: but sesi... how do you feel?

Kutlwano: what can I say? I'm afraid... I fear a lot. My daughter has always been someone who loved things. I thought sending her here would tame her a little bit but look now—not that I blame you.

Boipelo: I hear you. What are you going to do?

Kutlwano: I'm taking her home with home.

Boipelo: but—

Kutlwano: I know... I went through a lot with my husband about this. I fought him with everything in me, he wanted nothing to do with her. He's too afraid with his fragile dignity. He's afraid people are not going to respect him because of this but—I can't burden you any longer.

Boipelo: I wish I had something better to say or even a way to console you but who am I? It's okay, you can take her.

Kutlwano: thank you for letting me do this.

Boipelo: you don't have to thank me for anything.

Kutlwano: but still...

Boipelo smiles faintly and so does Kutlwano.

Kutlwano: do you know who she was with when it happened?

Boipelo: no...

Kutlwano: not even the slightest idea?

Boipelo: I'm really sorry...

Kutlwano: it's okay, but you--- how are you feeling?

Boipelo: I'm in pain, I try to wear a neutral face around the girls all the time to mask everything but I am going through a lot. My sleep schedule is all over the place too.

Kutlwano sighs not knowing what to say and nods her head.

Kutlwano: where is she?

Boipelo: Reitu's room, let's go...

Kutlwano stand sup and offers her hand to Boipelo to help her up. She looks at her elated and takes her hand. She follows behind her, they knock in the now noisy room and enter. As

soon as Seipati sees Kutlwano she throws the doll she has on her hands and runs to her hugging her tightly and pulling her by the dress to come and sit down with her. She shows her the books she's been coloring and brags about other small things kids her 'age' would brag about. Kutlwano smiles at her and a tear drops from her eye. She quickly wipes it and focus on her 'little' girl.

Kutlwano: did one time successfully

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sure I can do it again. Maybe better this time.

Boipelo smiles at her and brushes her shoulders before leaving the room abruptly. Reitu looks at her mother and her faces drops. She decides to give her privacy and join her aunt and her cousin.

Seipati: this one, aunty bought it for me!! Reitu has the same. We're twins!!

Kutlwano: that's so pretty, do you think she can also buy one for me?

Seipati: no... she's doesn't have money any more.

Kutlwano: can you borrow me this then, I want to draw too..

Seipati shifts away from her mother close to Reitu. She whispers in her ear then comes back to her mother.

Seipati: here, you can have it. We'll play with our Barbies then.

Reitu smiles at her and chuckles to herself. Kutlwano accepts the pack of crayons her daughter hands her. She looks at her as she stands up grabbing her doll also pulling Reitu to the other side of the room to play.

THE POLICE STATION

Gina and one other detective look the bishop deadly in the eyes. He's been saying very less humanly possible things ever since he came in here.

Gina: so, you expect us to believe that you were forced to do everything you did. It was never out of freewill.

Bishop: how many times do I have to repeat that?!

Det.: I don't think you understand how serious this is.

Gina: he doesn't... he thinks we're playing here.

Gina pulls out multiple photos of women who fell victim to his evil ways. She places them on the desk one by one while saying their names in order of disappearance.

Gina: these are your most current victims. Your wife, a school girl, and 3 ladies who worked at your church. Do you have anything to say?

Bishop: everything I said before is true. These people were specially picked out by The Master. I executed his orders. You should be out there looking for him not here asking me senseless questions?!?!

Det.: you went as far as even killing your wife!!! You are not human!

Gina stands up to leave the room feeling a little frustrated with the man they're questioning.

Gina: the prosecutor will have a field day with you at court. You're going down! I'm gonna go to the hospital now because I cannot handle this anymore. You have fun! I'm done here...

THE HOSPITAL

Reitu stands nervously at the reception while trying to plead with one of the nurses to let her in to see Kwanele even if it's just for a second. The nurse who has been saying the same thing for over 5 minutes now gradually changes her tone showing her how serious the matter is.

Nurse: Ma'am, I do not care about your relationship with the patient. It is protocol not to let anyone see the patient except his caregiver. Mr Dikana is in a coma and we can't let anyone into his room. Please leave, I have to get back to work!!

Reitu: I know but—

Nurse: do you want me to call security on you? Because I will, trust me I will.

Reitu: can you at least have these displayed inside his room?

She tries to hand her flowers with a get well soon card but she pushes the away from her hand with her clipboard.

Nurse: outside environment is not allowed into— you know what, I can't do this anymore... security?! Security!?!

Their conversation is disturbed by someone she knows. She looks at her, she greets and goes on to talk to the nurse. The nurse disappears and comes back with a lady looking to be in her early 50s or so. The lady immediately hugs Gina and looks relieved to see her. Reitu takes her broken heart away from the scene and walks to sit down on nearby bleachers. She looks at Gina as she walks hand in hand with the woman into the ward she believes Kwanele is in.

The Nurse comes to her.

Nurse: I think it's time you really leave now... this isn't a good look on you.

Reitu looks the lady up and down and sits still not moving an inch. The Nurse sighs and shakes her head strutting away from Reitumetse.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Gina runs through the corridors to the first desk yelling for a doctor to come help while the pretty woman whom Kwanele looks just like runs behind her losing energy to keep in with each step.

Gina: someone please!?! Help!! Help!! Doctor!!! Nurse!!!

A doctor rushes to the scene followed by the nurse from earlier. The woman sinks down on the floor and cries while Gina tries to hold her back up.

30

2 MONTHS LATER

THE FINAL DAY OF THE TRIAL

OUTSIDE THE POLICE STATION

Reporters and other forms of press and media including bloggers and vloggers amongst civilians clamor outside the police station making one hell of a ruckus waiting for the bishop who's been the talk of the town since his apprehending 2 months ago. His first two visit to the court weren't peaceful but this one seems more intense than the others, solely because it is the last and the final part, the end to all his evil deeds which he seems to forget as days pass.

Officer 1: Lord, reporters are swarming out there, whoever called them is doing a good job.

Officer 2: what can I say, press never sleeps, right?

Officer 1: if I didn't know any better I'd say you're enjoying this...

Officer 2: you bet your ass I am!! Hell I haven't had this much fun in a hot minute!!

Officer 1: let's get to work then.

Officer 2: brace yourself, they're gonna rip you apart out there.

Bishop: and you'd better do your job and protect me... be useful after all those taxes I paid to make sure you get your wage at the end of each month.

The cops look at each other and laugh as if the bishop just said a joke. One stands up and cuffs him before pulling him in a very demeaning way to the door step.

Officer 2: what taxes? You're literally going to court for fraud.

Bishop: shut up!

Officer 1: well...

The officer raises his hands in surrender. He looks at Tshepang for the longest time before poking fun at him.

Officer 1: what happened to your face?

Officer 2: busted lip? The boys play rough don't they?

Bishop: fuck the both of you!!!

Officer 2: that's so not godly of you.

Officer 1: oh... Man, let's go, I'm tired of his ass.

Officer 2: let's get you convicted !!

The cops step out of the station walking on each side while shielding the bishop in the middle. The crowd roars as soon as they come in sight. There's still divided opinions about his

crimes. There's people literally protesting and claiming his innocence while others curse him.

Woman: there he is!! There he is!!

The crowd runs towards the 3 caging them in while the security try to make way and help the cops and the convict escape safely. Someone from the crowd throws flour on him followed by an egg and then a curse. Before they know it, a rain of eggs of thrown their way.

Reporter: Mr Mohlala how do you feel about today's court day? Do you still plead not guilty? Do you acknowledge your crimes??!

A lady shouts in the crowd while civilians throw all sorts of things at him. After almost a lifetime of a hassle they finally make it safe to the car. It's not until another 5 minutes of trying to fight the crowd off the road until they leave for court.

THE COURT

Mohlala sits unfazed after the judge is announced and orders everyone to be seated. As usual, the prosecutor is given the podium first. Mohlala looks at his lawyer and shakes his head.

Bishop: I know you're a state lawyer, but this is just not it. I would've done a better job at representing myself... not this!

Lawyer: be my guest.

The prosecutor stands up and walks towards the bishop and his lawyer with photo cards in his hands. He places them in front of him and backs up before questioning him.

Prosecutor: defendant, do you recognize the people in the photos in front of you?

Bishop: how's that gonna help with anything?

Judge: defendant!! Answer the question. We don't have time...

He looks at the photos one by one and snickers as he scans each one. A woman in the crowd throws a glass bottle his way, it misses him and breaks instead as it makes contact with the hard floor.

Judge : jury!! Please control the audience. This is my court, I will not tolerate such behavior!!

The judge bands the gavel trying to bring back peace and order into the room.

Judge : defendant, answer the question...

Bishop: what question Your honor?

Judge: prosecution?

Prosecutor: the photos in front of you, do you or do you not recognize the women in them?

Bishop: ohh... err—what if I do?

Prosecutor: this is not a game... we're not playing a game here. I will repeat myself one more time, do you or do you not recognize the women in those photos!?!

The prosecutor roars, her voice a little stern while she tries to suppress it.

Bishop: I do...

Prosecutor: at what degree do you know each woman? What was your relationship with each of them?

Bishop: err—we all had church together.

Prosecutor: church... okay, Did you kill these women? Ms. Isabele Mfula, a Lovedale High School learner 10th grader, Ms. Itumeleng Maleka, worked for you for a little more or less 7 years, Cindy Mahlangu and Lesego Semanya... of course not forgetting your wife Nomfundo Mohlala whose dead body was found in your house alongside Isabele's in an unspeakable condition...

Bishop: that's what you say and what you believe... there's always two sides to every story but mine doesn't seem to have the other side. Everyone is so biased and so eager at painting me as the bad guy—I did not kill anyone. Do you even have any proof?? Where the hell is the evidence that I did it?!! Where's the evidence!!

Judge: defendant!! Lower your voice!!

Prosecutor: Your Honor, I'd like to summon a witness to the stand. MS. NAMISA NCUME, a victim and survivor of the occult.

Bishop looks at his lawyer as his throat runs dry. His lawyer looks back at him and shrugs his shoulders.

Bishop: do something will you!? Who the hell is that?!?

Lawyer: Your Honor! I object!! My client and I don't see how the supposed witness is related to the case!

Judge: overruled.

The lawyer sighs as he sits back down disappointed after his request is rejected.

Namisa is wheeled to the stand, she reads and swears on the oath. The bishop looks at her not recalling a single thing. He swallows hard and looks at his trembling hands trying hard to stay still and poise nonchalant but his heart is against his mind. He sweats in his seat his nerves shooting out of the roof each passing second.

AT THE HOSPITAL

Boipelo breathes shakily while she listens to the live broadcast of the bishop's trial on the TV that's playing with a relatively low volume. Things have not been looking up for her so Reitu forced her that she be admitted against her will. She rather would've liked to spent her final moments in her house but she

couldn't say no to her daughter. This was as far as she can let her get her way with things, she settled it in her heart that this is the only and last wish she can fulfil of Reitu's—and with that thought in mind, she agreed to be admitted. The pain wasn't getting any better anyway.

OVER THE TV

Judge: with a unanimous decision and reviews from the members of the jury for public interest, this court hereby sentences Mr Tshepang Joseph Mohlala to life imprisonment on fraudulent acts, attempted murder and cold blood murder of multiple women. A death sentence is hereby issued for the aforementioned as per reviews and final decision of this Court. Let this be a warning to all of you, you cannot dodge the law, and certainly can never hide from God's eyes. Court adjourned.

The judge bangs the gavel twice and stands up to leave. Cheers and whistles accompanied by applause fill the court room as a crowd of happy people and families of the victims cry in relief seeing the perpetrator go down. An enraged crowd try to pass the boundary to reach the bishop but the officers are quick to remove him for the scene.

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Tears fall trailing down the sides of Boipelo's eyes as she let's them rest taking her last breath. Machines beep and go out of control as her chest goes up and down involuntarily followed by her whole body as if hit by a Shockwave. It is not until later that the doctor and a few nurses rush in finding the situation at a point of no return.

Dr Mokoena: time of death- 16:37 pm, August 17th .

The nurse takes notes while others unplug the machines and remove the IV on her arm pulling the sheet over her head.

Dr Mokoena: I'll make the call a little later. You guys can make necessary preparations in the meantime and move her.

Nurse: yes, doctor.

KWANELE'S WARD

Reitu stands up from the chair and pushes it a little to the back while she also puts aside the book she has been reading for the past 2 months. After that fateful evening

Kwanele's mother has since treated her like a daughter, she got permission to come and go as she pleases so long she takes proper measures. The rude little girly from the other day learnt to respect her and has since swallowed her pride.

Reitu: I thought we agreed you'd wake up after I finished reading this book. I've even went as far as analyzing it and

reading credits and post notes. Why aren't you awake yet? I have so much to tell you. The trial... the arrest... and how I've been doing, I'm also curious about how you've been doing too— don't you think you've left us for too long? Your mother misses you, she's such a nice lady—and I—I miss you too. I have so much to tell you... I won't tell you to take your time anymore... wake up or I'll never talk to you again, I swear I won't...

She sighs out loud and puts her hand over his. She massages his legs and arms thoroughly going back up and down repeatedly.

Reitu: they said that this will help... I hope it does... hope you feel better.

Kwanele's mother shuffles at the door disturbing Reitu. She looks at her and faintly smiles before going back to what she was doing. She does so for a couple of times before she stands up to leave the room defeated and out of hope, very drained and tired for the first time. The woman pulls her into her arms and hugs her tightly almost suffocating her. She feels tears threatening and snuggles closer to her. A phone call disturbs their moment, Reitu breaks the hug, apologizes and excuses herself to answer the call.

2 WEEKS LATER

She handled her mother's ceremony with the help of Kutlwano. That one evening, yes, that call was about her mother. The

words still linger in her mind, it has been very hard to get over everything. Kwanele too is still sound asleep, the last update she got from Grace, his mother was that he was now off life support and that was a week ago when things were the most hectic in her life that she didn't even respond to the message she received about the news.

Someone knocks and enters her room in her command. After a very tiring and sad day she went straight to her room to sleep her problems and worries off.

Kutlwano: aww... I don't even know what to say... I'm really sorry baby. I'm really sorry.

For the first time after a whole 2 weeks of not shedding a drop of tear, Kutlwano's words hit home and she let's them fall. A part of her feels relived while she still feels sad for the other part. Knowing she has someone on her side brings her comfort. She cries in her arms as she slowly rubs her back, Seipati busts into the room and joins in on the hug too. Yes, she finally healed—completely.

Seipati: I'm here for you. We will always be here for you.

Reitu: thank you... thank you a lot aunty...

A call disturbs the hug, Reitu retrieves her phone and checks the caller ID to determine its importance before deciding whether to take it or not.

- It's Grace!!

She immediately presses the accept button as she glues the phone on her ear. Her eyes widen as the caller on the other side talks as if she's about to run out of breath. Reitu shuffles around the room looking for her shoes while still on the call. She runs out of the room without saying a word. Kutlwano who already understands the situation sighs in relief and smiles faintly to herself while her daughter sits beside her confused.

Seipati: and then?

Kutlwano: she's going to be okay... she's going to be just fine. She's a strong one an admirable girl.

Kutlwano doesn't even have to repeat her words, Seipati looks at her knowing exactly what she means. She replies back in affirmation too.

Seipati: of course she will... that's my cousin right there.

They both sit in comfortable silence and relieved hearts that at least something is looking up for Reitumetse. A new era for her.

AT THE HOSPITAL

Grace leaves the room as soon as Reitu arrives. She smiles to herself as she watches her throw herself on her son wailing louder and louder each passing second.

Reitu: I begged and begged you a countless times to wake up dammit!!! Why the hell did it take you so long!?

She cries on his chest while Kwanele tries to console her.

Kwanele: I'm sorry, I'm sorry... I know. I tried my best but I just couldn't win. But I'm here now... that must count for something...

Reitu looks at him and says nothing...

Kwanele: when you said you wouldn't see me again, I really had to try harder... I was so stressed and frustrated. Thankfully you here now...

He playfully hits her arm and she looks at him and smiles.

Reitu: consider yourself lucky...

Kwanele: yes I do... I do. Now, back to the book you read me... I was so surprised at the genre—I didn't know you were into erotic novels... how the hell did you even—

Reitu jumps on her chair and goes to look outside to see if Grace is there. She sighs in relief finding the coast clear she goes back to Kwanele's side and puts her hand over his mouth giving him a look.

Kwanele: that's not how they did it on the book though...

Reitu: what?

Kwanele: that's not how you do it...

Reitu: W—what?

Reitu stutters as her mind registers exactly what Kwanele is talking about. She finds herself staring at him while he stares back with a look she can read. She moves back from him and covers her face with her hands blushing hard.

Kwanele: I'll let you off just for today—but be warned.

She pulls her chair and distances herself from Kwanele while trying to hide the smile she has on. He smirks at her thinking to himself what she can fathom.

Kwanele: and yet your choice in books says something else

Reitu: oh God...

MUCH LATER

Reitu and Kwanele both laugh while they continue filling each other on about recent happenings in their lives, Kwanele sharing all he heard while subdued in a coma for 2 whole months. Shocking headlines halt them in their conversation as they both instantly turn to look at the TV.

OVER THE TV

News Anchor: JUST IN- BREAKING NEWS: Tshepang Mohlala formerly known as Bishop T.J Mohlala commits suicide in prison

after suffering unbearable bullying and mistreatment from both inmates and superiors. This happens after the man was....

The TV continues off with the news while Reitu and Kwanele stay unmoved and utterly shocked the revelation. The room is quiet for a few minutes until Reitu comes back to reality.

Reitu: well... I may sound cold but I don't care! He deserved it! That's karma for you!

Kwanele: that bitch got off too easy... I wanted the boys to grease and grill him well, I guess he was a weakling after all.

Reitu: he has always been. I never expected any better from him.

Kwanele: not our problem anymore...

Reitu: yup...

They both fall into comfortable silence still processing the shocker. It is not until a few more minutes that they get back to their chit-chat and laugh again.

SOMEWHERE ACROSS TOWN

KB screams excitedly while she kisses her now fiancé who was once her friend then her boyfriend all over his face.

KB: oh God!! Oh God! I've always dreamt of owning such a home!! Thank you so much baby!! Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Kay: it's my pleasure. I thought I'd wait until after the wedding but I just couldn't hold the excitement in... so, how do you like it?

KB: I love it!! I adore it!! It's everything I've ever wanted!!

Kay: I feel like I've gotten myself competition ... I'm a little jealous... all that affection!

KB: no one can ever compare to you... no one amounts to you... I'm this happy, living this lavishly because of you. This house wouldn't be a home without you—so, never doubt my love for you or think you're never enough.

Kay: I'm convinced...but—I gotta go close off the deal. I'll be back in a few hours with some takeaways. We're sleeping here tonight, we're not going back to the apartment!

KB: I feel seduced...

Kay: that's because I was seducing you..

KB: okay Mr...

She pulls him in for a kiss that lasts longer than they both had anticipated. Kay pulls out and looks at KB with drowsy eyes adjusting his bulge. She laughs teasing him a little. He backs up

and leaves the house saying his goodbyes loud and clear before trouble transpires. KB tours the house by herself before she's disturbed by the intercom ringing. She goes to answer it.

[over the intercom]

KB: Hello?

Voice: oh, Ma'am hello... my name is Ntando, I used to work here as a gardener. I already talked to your fiancé and the agent a few days ago. I was instructed to report to the house as of today to start working and preparing the house for your move in.

KB: oh... okay... wait a second, I'll let you in.

KB opens the gate and waits on the front door as she sees the young man strut towards the house. He gets on the front door and greets her.

KB: Ntando right? Call me KB... you don't look like a gardener would... I'm a little surprised.

Ntando: oh, I cleaned up well today, you know first impressions and everything.

KB: oh, come on in then...

Ntando: thank you.

KB moves aside shifting for the man who looks ridiculously handsome, dreamy and too clean to be some gardener. She watches him as he struts in the house looking a little appalled at the whole interior and luxury. She gets on her phone and texts her fiancé while she orders some things she assumes they'll need for their night here.

.....**THE END**.....

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