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PROLOGUE

ONLY HOPE WAS LEFT

FEW YEARS AGO

My mother suffered with stroke. My father divorced her and failed to pay maintenance because DNA tests confirmed that I was not his child and my mother believed that she said she never been involved with anyone besides her husband, that was hard for my mother she couldn't take it. Nobody wanted to contribute or help us. I became my mother's full-time caregiver and a mother to my younger brother he was only a year old. I

became independent at the young age. I looked at her on her dying bed.

Ma: Sonto angikaze ngibe nesoka eceleni. Padle komyeni wami. Ngifunde kwenye indawo imiphumela ithi ilebhu ingahle ibe nephutha ngandlela thile. Amaphutha angenziwa yilebhu nakho kungaholela emiphumeleni enganembile. Kulinganiselwa ukuthi kanjani. *(I've never had a boyfriend on my side. Besides my husband. I read elsewhere that the results say the lab may be flawed in some way)*

I brushed her dry loosen hair.

Me: Mama dad doesn't want me it's fine. Let's focus on your health.

She shook her head.

Paternity tests can falsely exclude someone who is truly the child's biological father for a variety of reasons. One major reason is simple human error. Paternity test can be incorrect, because one is trying to commit paternity fraud. But we done

several tests and they claimed that I'm not Mr Mabuza's daughter only Musa who is 99% Mabuza's son.

Ma: I love you Sonto and I believe in you.

I nodded and let out a loudly cry. The first person who said that to me.

Me: Mom!

She started coughing blood. I panicked I went to get the bucket.

Me: Should I get you water.

She kept on coughing I knelt down next to her I was so worried. I started praying asking God to save her, heal her.

She stopped coughing she hold both my hands.

Ma: Sonto you are a beautiful girl. Please take a care of your brother don't let anyone to take him away from you.

I cried.

Ma: No matter what life throws at you but remember I will be always there for you and Musawenkosi.

Me: Mama please don't leave me.

Ma: My time has come Noma I have to go.

She asked me to go get her water. I didn't want to move away from her, she took her last breath and left me there crying.

A WEEK LATER

We laid her to her final place it was too much to take my father didn't even come, not alone his family. My mother's family wanted to take Musawenkosi away from me. I made a promise to my mother.

While reassuring, the numbers also make plain why this one specific type of loss is so feared

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painful, and stigmatized. My mother left me who would I be without her. Losing a mother is one of the deepest sorrows a heart can know. But her goodness, her caring, and her wisdom live be a legacy of love that will always be with me. I thought her love will surround me and bring me peace. Mother's hold their children's hands for a while, but their hearts forever.

Me: Whoever is taking my brother I'm coming with.

They looked at me.

Aunt: I can't take both of you.

Me: Then he's not going anywhere.

They shook they heard

Uncle: What will you feed a year old child.

Me: My father will come back.

My aunt clapped her hands...

Aunt: He failed come mother's burial what makes you think that he will come back.

Me: My father will come back.

I was so sure that he will come back. They got up and left me there with my little brother.

My name is Nomasonto Mabuza. I'm 27 years old. This is my story I hope you will enjoy it. I was only twelve years when I became a mother to my little brother. Life has never showed me it's brightness side. I became a mother at the young age. I had to take care of my brother, I had to make sure that we were well taken care of. Hurricane sucked my happiness, I was never a happy child. I only had hope.

01

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO MABUZA

FEW YEARS LATER

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in us, whom we have received from God. We are not our own we were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with our bodies. Script from 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Life without a mother is like a desert that doesn't have sugar. I became a prostitute after mama passed away. I struggled with my brother it was hard for us to have food. My father hasn't step a foot ever since he disappeared while mama was still alive. I tried to reach out for my family from his side they didn't even try to help me with Musa. I had no choice but to become a prostitute because my life was up and down. I had no plan but to make sure that me and my little brother had food to eat.

Though I became pregnant with my first child by a regular client he was my first virgin breaker, first lover and the father of my daughter. I couldn't have him because he's married plus it won't be fair of me to use my baby. Why do I say a lover my

business with him is complicated sometimes he treat me like a client who he buying my services and sometimes he treat me like his girlfriend. Yet I'm his baby mama he doesn't even know and I was not willing to let him know, he might take my daughter away from me.

I was only 15 years after three years of my mother's passing my friends were dressing very well and always had money to do their hair and buy nice things. I kept asking them how they did it and they refused to tell me until one day I cried and asked them, Do they like to see me suffer like that in poverty? All I wanted was to take care of my little brother. That night I had to go with them and I witnessed how they stood there beside the roads and sold their services as sex workers. I was shocked and desperate for money at the same time.

I took some drugs to forget the pain or embarrassment and did the same. That's where I met Victor Thabethe and fell pregnant for his child few months after that night. I'm not sure after how long but he was the only client I was selling my services to and the demanding client, that time. I had to lay low after learning that I was pregnant I was disappointed on myself, I disappointed my mother on the grave and I disappointed my little brother too. That's how my life turned out to be

prostitute. That is not the profession I chose, it's what I had to do to survive. I don't want to be a sex worker for the rest of my life. I would like to change my life one day. Life has never showed me its righteousness side

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Infact my life is like debts I'm trying to pay for the debt that I don't know off. Victor he was my best client and when he wanted me I had to leave everything that I was doing and attend him. He never disappointed me before.

Sometimes we see married men smiling but behind those smiles they aren't happy as we see them. Honestly each and every household has their challenges. I still live on the same shack where mama left me. I struggle during rainy seasons, I managed to buy a 3 room shack but I still feel like I didn't do anything. When it rains I have to make sure that I'm home to see what is going on. As a mother and a sister I have to make sure that the kids are well taken care of.

I was raped multiple times and left for half dead. I had multiple abortions not that I'm proud but life has never showed me its brightness side. I wasn't born a sex worker but poverty introduced me to it. Keeping my clients happy that's my

profession not my definition. In order for me to bring food at home I had to make my clients happy every time. Musawenkosi he's my little brother he is 14 years old and my daughter she's 10 years her name is Nelly I pray to God that my daughter doesn't turn up like me. I make sure that she's going to school every day. I must say I'm a proud mother because they never disappointed me before they understand that we can't have food every day.

MATSHIDIDISO

My life is incomplete, and it is on hold. My marriage was supposed to take place 6 months ago but it had to be stopped

due to the hospital stupidity. I grew up knowing that I had a wonderful family but no I was lying to myself. When I was 17 years I had to learn that my parents aren't my biological parents. The hospital gave me to the wrong family. How is that fair?

My fiancé walked in he sat on the couch next to me he rubbed my back. We met through a friend who is his sister 10 years ago his name is Zwelakhe Khoza we have a seven years old son who lives with his family at East London. Whilst I'm still searching for my family and working on my depression. I can't find a job because of my darkness clouds in life. The darkness that didn't formed by me.

Zweli: Everything is going to be alright.

The is nothing that will going to be alright. Someone out there she is living my life to the fullest.

Zweli: Tshidi we are in this together.

I nodded. It was easy for him to say that, his father gave him his company not alone his stepfather his a lecture at the highest institution at East London, his mother she's a founder of NGO which is running and have sponsors from other countries and she's also a board member of an NPO which has five branch already at East London. And he has his step sister and they get along very well. So he has nothing to worry. I don't know my family, my cousin's from the Radebe are distancing themselves from me.

Me: I just want this nightmare to be over.

Zweli: Look at me.

I did.

Zweli: Everything in this world happens for a reason and everything happened according to God's plan. The most important thing in our lives is to use our time wisely because lost time will not regained again and serve the living God.

Me: Zwe the is a girl who is living my life and you busy telling me that.

He shook his head.

Zweli: Baby what if she's also there searching for her family like you do?

Sometimes he can be annoying. He doesn't see the pain I'm going through. It's hard to feel lost.

Zweli: You will find each other believe me. Let's pray.

He started praying.

I'm Matshididiso Radebe, they call me Tshidi am a lost daughter of unknown family how is that fair? Where do I begin searching for my family? All hopes are gone The hospital that I was born in they can't help me either. The Radebes and my fiancé's family are supportive but they don't know what I'm going through. My step sister in law who happened to be my friend she's a lawyer she's also trying to help me. Though she doesn't

like Gauteng because it brings her bad memories of how she became a teen mother.

VICTOR THABETHE

Life is a series of peaks and valleys. By not only recognizing that there will be negative feelings along the way. I am a Marriage man but honestly I I'm not happy with my partner, she doesn't full fill my heart like Sonto does. I agree Sonto she's a sex worker but she fills the tank in me. She knows how to make a man happy. My name is Victor Thabethe I'm 35 years old married. I have no children I run a publishing company, and I have only one brother.

Mom: Sphelele he's coming back.

I nodded. My little brother was based on Stellenbosch since he was studying there he graduated 5 years ago and he got a job sadly the company that he was working for moved to South America. So he was forced to come back home.

Mom: Makoti please get me the butter.

Mavis: Ok Ma.

She got up, my wife she's beautiful and respectful but she doesn't make me happy. My father he's a pastor and his religious beliefs is affecting me. I have to keep my promises to Mavis even though I'm not happy. I could walk away but I vowed before God that no matter what I will stay in my marriage.

02

ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO RADEBE

Darkness is the absence of light.

Zweli: Darkness is not always a bad thing you know. Have you ever see the beauty of the moon?

This guy

Me: There is no way I could see the beauty of the darkness.

He laughed.

Zweli: Did you ever see the beauty of the moon in daylight?

Me: Yes it's brighter.

Zweli: Because of the dark, we can see the moon and stars. Without the dark, we wouldn't see the sunrise and sunset in our life.

He kissed me on the cheek.

Zweli: We all fear the darkness. Because we don't know what will happen in dark or there might be something that is lurking out in the darkness. I myself I was raised by a single mother at the young age I wanted a father on my side but when time goes I had to accept that my mother she was my everything. Then I had to learn the skeletons of my father when I was 21 I wish I should've stayed on the darkest life than the light.

Me: But at the end of the day you have peace.

Zweli: I wouldn't put it that way my love, you witnesses how my mother's aunt died. The light that I was craving for made my mother not to trust anyone in this world. My sister was raped.

Me: You don't understand...

He cut me.

Zweli: All I'm saying is let's let the creator take over our challenges. He's the only person who can fight for our battles. The only thing you should remember is that I'm right here for you.

His creator didn't do anything for me.

NOMASONTO MABUZA

My little brother was selling me dreams.

Musawenkosi: I'm telling you mom when I became a pilot I will buy you a big house that has a 10 rooms with furniture include a swimming pool.

As for ten room. He calls me mom because I have been on his life since he was a baby.

Me: Why ten rooms?

Musa: If you don't like the other room you will choose from other rooms.

I nodded.

Musa: That 10 rooms include the kitchen, living room, bathroom, store room and bedrooms.

Me: Ok boyzer you need to study hard so that you can get me that house.

Musa: Trust me mom I will study very hard just to take you out of this shack.

I do trust him but such big dreams can be shattered. I wanted to be scientist where I was going to face daily challenges during discoveries and while conducting the research. But in life dreams do fade away and hide somewhere behind the mountains or into the sea. Sorrows and pain are part of life. But sometimes fate has something else in store for us, other than shattered dreams.

MATSHIDISO RADEBE

I find myself in a corner feeling sorry for myself. My fiancé brought a girl into our house. She was wearing my langerin they both looked at me and giggled while I was standing on the corner watching them.

Zweli: What do you have in store me.

Her: A cooked beef baba.

He kissed her hand.

Zweli: Well cooked beef.

She nodded. My heart rate spiked. I was offended because I don't know how to cook.

He whispered something to her.

Her: I don't mind doing that.

They both got up and walked to the bedroom. My heart was filled with anger. I searched for an object the girl who walked to my bedroom.

30 minutes later I walked into that room with a knife on my hand. I witnessed the worst of my life. I stood there my heart threatened to stop right away. In my bed, my house and my langerin. I was running out of breath.

Her legs were spread apart, her arms outstretched. I stood there and cried instead of attacking them I just watched them.

He was on-top of her pumping in and out.

Her: Ahh-Zwe.

Zweli: Yes baby.

The contempt I felt collected as a sour bubble of anger in my stomach, inching its way up to my throat.

Her: Please don't stop.

I experienced my own fiancé having sex in my bed with another woman. They didn't even care that I was there. After their session they used my towel to wipe themselves. Bed licks on-top of another.

He kissed her.

Zweli: My Lord took his time creating this for me.

He always says that God do things on his time. He looked at me his tooth grin he then kissed her forehead

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like I didn't exist in that room. I started counting from 0 to 10 and tried to ignore them but the sore muscles on my chest was like he took the same knife that I was holding and stabbed me right on my chest and pulled up the knife again. It was hard to catch my breath.

Me: Zwe.... Rra Sami, Zweli!! (Samu's father)

I screamed. Our son's name is Samukelo.

Him: Baby!

He shook me, I kept on screaming his name. I quickly got up from my sleep and looked at my hands they were trembling. I realized that I was dreaming. But still, I was shaken my sweat poured down my body as I was trembling.

Zweli: My love is just a dream.

I shook my head.

Zweli: Let me get you a glass of water.

Me: Are you cheating on me or still thinking to do that?

He looked at me confusedly. There was a bitter taste in the back of my mouth that I couldn't seem to get rid of. I had mixed emotions that I couldn't describe.

Zweli: Baby you is just a dream.

Me: The dream was really.

He lied on his back and brought me to his warm embrace I lied there feeling his heart beat.

Zweli: Tshidi I will never cheat on you, you are the only woman in my life. I might look like my father but I didn't take his foot steps my heart is meant for you and our son.

His 10 times productive than his father, I'm not saying his perfect but he never made me to doubt his love for me. I dozed off on his warm embrace.

The following morning. Zweli was getting ready for work. I was still shocked by the dream. Honestly I can't cook nor to carry

other house duties. Besides of washing dishes. He's the one who does the cooking and other stuff. Mr & Mrs Radebe spoiled me forgetting that they had to groom me to be somebody's wife. There I was couldn't do anything for myself, because on my younger age there was a maid at home who was doing everything for me. I wouldn't say I'm lucky to have Zweli because sometimes when he's tired he just sit and instruct me what should I do yeah I'm leaning that way but he doesn't like my food.

Zweli: You are shaking.

Me: Honey please if ever I'm not making you happy please don't bring your girlfriend in my house.

Zweli: Tshidi I won't do that, you are the only woman who is making me happy.

Yet I know that his mother she is followed by his little sister who's 11 years old now, then his cousin, me, his step sister and his aunt from his stepfather.

Me: I don't know I'm just scared to lose you.

Zweli: I'm right here for you and our son.

To be continued

03

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

My little brother helped his niece to put on her school tie.

Musawenkosi: There you go.

There were once babies who they could fit on the crook of my arm, there are now children who have quadrupled in size.

Nelly: Best brother ever.

He smirked. I tried to tell them that they are not siblings but they don't get that in their heads.

Musa: Mom we are ready.

I can kill for him. I mean I can fight my father à if he dare try to take him away from me.

Nelly: Mom!!

Me: Okay let me get my bag.

The is this client who called me earlier he wants to meet up with me.

The is always a heaviness side of life, I'm feeling the heaviest more acutely and more often. I grieved like a widow. I had more worries about what the day will bring. My duty to protect my brother from my father. That's an honor to my mother, but it was also so heavy because he needs a father figure.

AZOLA

Thobile: Sister I will see you later.

I nodded. She took her bag and walked out. She's a lawyer and also the Co founder of my sister in-law's NGO. Moving to Pride Kingdom was a blessing in disguise. I'm not yet married but madly in love. My mother passed away 5 years ago and my father he's old and can't do anything for himself and my sister she's couldn't accept mama's dead she's mentally ill that's what forced my sister in law and my brother to move to East London permanently with the my neice, Thobi's son and Zweli's son. Yeah this is life never miss treat anyone because you will never know what life will bring tomorrow. My sister never liked our sister in-law for some reason now she's the one who is there for her. The one who's making sure that she is well taken care of. My brother chose the woman among the women.

My brother took his early retirement from teaching few years ago because he was falsely arrested of sexual assault. Which made him to give up on teaching but when you love to do something you love it he's now a lecture at UEL (University of East London) is the public university that comprises three colleges, College of Applied Health and Communities, College of Arts, Technology and Innovation, and College of Professional Services. Teaching run on his brother.

I and Thobile we are the ones looking after the NPO

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we have 17 employees, 198 beneficiaries that stay at the center then 350 beneficiaries that have home's but they need daily support and we are blessed because we have sponsors to sponsor our beneficiaries. I must say being here helped me to see the light behind the darkness. I have discovered the love I have for people.

I'm Azola Mazibuko 35 years old woman I am a photographer, videographer and the voice to the voiceless. I'm madly in love with Ndumiso Sikhakhane sometimes he can be annoying but we are madly in love.

NOMASONTO

The is absolutely nothing wrong with being a single parent. Single parents are essentially thrown into the lion's den with responsibilities, parenting, bills, and foregoing of a social life. However it has helped me to demonstrate how valuable I am to my daughter and Musa. I have a client that wants me to accommodate him to his business meeting. I will meet him in an hour from now.

Me: Cross.

Musa grabbed Nelly's the crossed. I don't know what did Nelly forget she was to crossing back to me. I always cross walk them, but today it wasn't busy.

She was distracted by car hotter and she distracted the driver of a Rage Rover which ran the red light. The next thing the were to many people on the scene. She was sitting there snakingly.

I rushed to her she was crying.

Me: Nelly what's wrong with you? (Shouting)

Voice: Calm down, I will take her to the hospital.

I looked at him.

Him: We have to make sure that she's not injured.

He was well dressed and handsome. He lifted her up and carried her to the same range Rover that wanted to take her life. He didn't give me a chance to speak. I followed him.

Me: I'm her mother.

I was so scared and shaken by the incident. Honestly I was confused.

Him: Let's go than.

Before I could get in the car Musa ran to me.

Musa: Mom I'm coming with.

Me: Just go to school boyezer.

Driver: The is no time, get in. I will drop him to school.

Musa got in the car I did the same. He drove off.

Musawenkosi and Nelly don't attend the same school. Musa he's in high school and Nelly she's still in primary school. He dropped Musa first.

My phone started ringing. The client was the one who was calling me.

Me: I'm sorry I won't be available.

Him: You can't cancel now.

Me: I'm sorry I have an emergency.

He just hanged up.

Nelly: Mom I want some water.

Finally she spoke. He gave her still water. He looked at us through the mirror.

Him: Any pains?

She shook her head.

Nelly: It didn't hit me.

Him: I know but only doctors can confirm that. By the way Princess I'm uncle Zweli and you are?

Nelly: Nelly Mabuza

He focused on the road.

Him: Nelly what a wonderful name how old are you?

Nelly: 10 years old.

VICTOR THABETHE

The is nothing that makes a mother happy than seeing her children in the same roof. Sipehelele got here last night. He joined us for breakfast.

Me: I believe we have a Makoti on the way.

Sipehelele: Yeah sis Mavis she's here.

We laughed.

Dad: He is not talking about him and Mavis. He's talking about you.

Sipehelele: Victor you such a tractor.

We laughed again.

Sipehelele: Mama ufuna omunye uMakoti? (*Mom do you want another bride?*)

Mom: Definitely.

Siphelele: Ungakhathazeki mama kungekudala uzoba nomunye uMav ocasulayo endlini yakho. (*Don't worry mom you will soon have another annoying Mav in your house*)

Mavis: Wow really?

We laughed.

Mavis: Ngiyacasula? (*I'm annoying*)

Mom: Kancane nje. (*Just a little bit*)

Mavis: Babu Thabethe what do you say?

Dad: Count me out.

She looked at me.

Me: Count me out.

Siphelele: Victor I will get married when you get me a niece or a nephew.

Me: You think kids fall from the tree?

We laughed.

Siphelele: It takes two to bring one to the world.

Between me and my wife I don't know who is a barren

UNEDITED

04

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

When we got to the private hospital. The hospital had to follow the procedure they took his car registration number. They checked her the car didn't touch her, it was the waste of time. He should've let her go to school. What makes me angry is that I lost the client. That means I have lost my income too. Sometimes I just wish my father could just come to check on us nothing more.

The doctor told us that she's not injured.

Me: Ngikutshelile, that we shouldn't worry. *(I told you)*

I told him that it was a waste of time to go there. Because man thinks that they have what it takes to tell women what to do. But anyway not every man is like my mother's lover.

Doctor: The car didn't even touch her, the x-ray outcome doesn't show any signs of injuries.

Me: Thanks doc.

Zweli: I had to make sure doc.

Doc: Indeed Mr Khoza, this things happen, sometimes we get injured without noticing the injury until the it's to late. That's because our bodies are generating adrenaline and endorphins. These two chemicals operate to super-charge our bodies and even block pain.

Zweli: That's all?

He explained more.

Doctor: If she experience pains Khoza I'm a call away.

Zweli: I will do that doc.

VICTOR

Mavis asked to talk to me privately.

Me: There is nothing scarier than being called for private session.

She sat on the bed.

Me: Are you alright?

Mavis: I think we should do fertility tests.

Me: Mav konke kwenzeka ngesikhathi sakho (*Everything happens in a certain time*)

Mavis: You seems relaxed about this.

We've been trying for years without any success.

Me: It's not our fault

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but God's will.

Being marriage means supporting each other. But being supportive can mean different things to different people.

Me: I'm sorry can we talk about this when I get back?

She nodded.

MATSHIDISO

Later on.

The house felt lonely as always, when he's at work. I watched TV, read and find it boring. If I knew what did I do in this world to get. Probably I was going to ask for forgiveness in order to be punished like this. Truly I was going to undo that. Hope seems to be far then hopeless. Sometimes I wish I could be a baby again. Life was incomplete on my side. Sometimes when I walked to the restaurant or doing something, I wish the will be someone who would say. *"You look similar, with my sister, aunt or mother"* but no that doesn't happen. And Zweli will keep on

only God will make that happen. Only God will answer our prayers.

My phone started ringing. I checked it was Mr Radebe.

Me. Rra (*Dad*)

He kept quiet

Me: Dumêla! (*Hello*)

Rra Radebe: O tsogile jang? (*How are you*)

Me: Ke tsogile sentle, wêna o Jang? (*I'm good and you*)

To Be Continued

05

ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

I was still on call with Mr Radebe.

Me: Ke tsogile sentle, wêna o tsogile jang? (*I'm well and yourself*)

Him: We are not good at all.

Me: Why?

Him: Your mother she's hospitalized.

Me: The is nothing new.

The was nothing I could do. The is nothing I can offer to change her situation. Sorry is just a word. I gave up about life. I don't care about anyone. The only thing that is keeping me strong is Zweli though he can be annoying sometimes.

Dad: Tshidi I know this is hard for you, is hard for us as well.

Me: Rra the is a girl out there living my life. And I'm stucked here with Someone's life. (Dad)

Rra: That's impossible my daughter nobody is living anybody's life get that in to your head. (Shouting)

Me: She is living my life.

What annoyed me is that they use to do everything for me, now I'm on my own, I can't even get a simple breakfast done for my fiancé. Their daughter she's out there living the life I was supposed to live.

Rra: No one can drive your car unless you give them the keys. That means nobody can live your life my daughter, you are worth life Tshidi. I know it's hard for everyone, but only God can answer our prayers. Let's not lose hope.

There we go again God this and that .

Me: But I'm not worth living Rra. (Father)

Rra: Tshidi you need to consider yourself lucky, you have a loving family and a man who loves you.

Me: And I'm grateful for that.

Rra: Stop feeding your brain with rocks. Stop wanting to be someone else. What if the person you want to be doesn't exist. Come on Tshidi you are a mother now.

Beside being a mother I'm a lost soul that's the fact about me *'LOST SOUL'*.

Rra: Nobody else can live the life you live. And no human being is perfect, we always have problems.

Me: Okay.

Rra: If something is meant to be it will happen at the right time, we will find the family Tshidi.

NOMASONTO

He drove us home. I didn't want to show him my house but he insisted.

I unlocked the door. We entered, no man has ever step his foot on my doorstep. He bought her some fruits and juice. He's a gentle man.

Me: Anything to drink.

Zweli: Water please.

Nelly: We don't have tap water uncle.

Me: Nelly!

Nelly: Mom I'm telling him the truth.

Zweli: Where do you get the water then?

They have been chatting like friends or they have known each other for long time. I walked to the cupboard.

Nelly: There is a tank next to Hlabathi's tuck shop.

The poor man doesn't know Hlabathi's tuck shop. I get the glass from the cupboard and get the water from the bucket

Zweli: Then Nelly will go get me water.

I walked to them. I gave him the water.

Zweli: Where did she get the water?

Nelly: From the bucket.

He drank the water. I sat down.

Me: Thank you.

He nodded.

Nelly: Will you come again to take me again with your car?

He nodded. My girl she's forward sure. He got up. And looked at her.

Zweli: I will baby.

Nelly: Can you be my father then?

Oh my goodness Nelly won't can give a stranger my bank card pin. He smirked

Zweli: Where is dad?

Nelly: You are dad.

Jeez why did I had this child. I felt defeated and jealous too.

Me: Nelly!

She shrugged

Zweli: Okay I'm now Nelly's God father, how is that sounds?

Nelly: Yeap now I can celebrate father's day like other kids.

I know it's painful as it is to hear other kids talking about their father but I had explained to her that her father lives on the other world. Now she's asking strangers to be her father. She hugged him poor man just let her

Zweli: Okay princess I will see when I'm free.

She smiled. I just let them have their conversation. They became friends overnight.

When a girl child is craving for father's love how much more to a boy child. Can't he live my place already.

Zweli: Mama ka Nelly! (Nelly's mother)

Me: Dude why are you shouting?

Zweli: I'm sorry.

I nodded.

Me: It's okay, I'm the one who should apologize, you were saying?

Nelly: He said you must give him a call when his Princess needs something.

She was overwhelmed by the tittle princess, she gave me his business card.

Zweli: Please take care of her just for me.

I nodded he walked out. Did he say just for him? Where is he from?

Nelly: Bye-bye.

Him: Bye princess.

She smiled

MATSHIDISO

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil

Advertisement

to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Yet he knew me and brought shameless world and hopeless. I cried, prayed, went to the hospital where I was born but the is no results. The numbness comes because I couldn't handle what I was thinking and feeling, because the too much for me to deal with, so I shuttered everything off so I don't have to feel that way any more. All I wanted was to die. The this voice I kept on hearing.

Voice: You are unwanted.

Me: Argh go away.

I closed my ears but the voice kept whispering.

Voice: You are alone, you have no one accept it.

The voice has been part of my life for years, no body seems to believe me. There are those times where I feel like I'm a walking corpse. There are times I see my corpse lying down there that makes me believe that maybe death is what I deserve.

Voice: You are worthless.

Yet Zweli and his mother like to say I'm worth it. Worth what whilst I'm alone.

VICTOR

Later on

The will be a book show taking place this weekend. I have a contract with NSP (*Natural Splendor and Peace*) it was Khoza's natural splendor peace florist before the boy took over he changed everything because his business doesn't only deal with flowers it deals with catering, Florist and wedding venues. He's young yet he's business minded. My father like him.

Me: Hi!

Her: Hello.

Me: Is it possible to see Mr
Khoza.

She took the phone and called him.

Her: Sir there is somebody-

I think she was cut. She looked me.

Her: Okay sir I will send him.

She put the phone down and directed me to his office.

I walked to his office, he sagged slouch down the chair.

Me: Seems like someone is carrying the world over his
shoulder

He looked at me and sigh.

Zweli: You can say that again.

I took a seat.

Me: All ears.

Zweli: Something bad wanted to happen this morning.

Me: What happened?

Zweli: I think I should visit my grandparent's grave this weekend.

Me: You can't do that.

Zweli: Why not?

Me: Don't tell me you have forgotten about the book show.

He smirked

Zweli: Oh that the team will be there, man the is this strange feeling I'm I don't understand it.

Usually he likes to say he sese or sense the signs if something is about the event.

Me: What happened?

Zweli: On my way my car almost crushed into schoolkid with a car.

Me: I don't wish to be you.

He explained what happened.

Zweli: The strange thing is that I'm connected with the same child, she even asked me to be her father a whole me being, a Godfather?

I didn't mean to laugh but I laughed, connected with the child not the mother.

Me: Dude stop playing.

Zweli: I'm serious, 'now I can celebrate father's Day like other kids.

Me: Are you sure you never planted a seed somewhere beside the Radebe girl?

Zweli: You said I should stop playing games, I stick to my word Thabethe I see myself with another woman beside my fiancée.

Me: You guys have been engaged for a long time now, what is on.

I remember that they had to cancel their wedding few months ago. But I didn't think it would be this long. He scratched his head.

Zweli: Sometimes I wish I can be that little boy, who knew nothing about life again.

Sometimes we think we are the ones facing life problems. Those big beautiful walls are hiding big problems. This journey called life has many hidden rooms

We discussed the event.

Zweli: How many guests are we talking about?,

Me: 400+

Zweli: On your package why don't you add the photographer and videographer that will help your business to expand?

Good suggestion. If they brought him on board long time ago I believe Natural Splendor and Peace would be somewhere else.

Me: I like the idea.

Zweli: You are saying I should add that to your package.

I nodded.

To Be Continued

06

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

[SATURDAY]

It was seven o'clock evening. The only thing I wanted was to be out of the brothel, because it was it was already late. Plus I didn't have e client to serve.

Me: Guys I will see you on Monday.

Them: See you then.

I bid them a goodbye. I walked out of the brothel. I started walking the streets of Hebrew it was still bustling with people driving and walking home from work, some were going to work. The streets were quietened, unlike Jo'burg. I can't do the night task unless it's a events. I wanted to see myself on my mother's shark. A police van drove past me. It stopped few meters away from me.

As I got closer to the van, I recognised the officer, I once had encounter with in the past three month.

Him: Hey you come here.

As for hey you. I walked passed the car but he followed me. In order for the state to protect sex workers they violate us, honestly they take much advantage because no body will believe us. I've lost countless times of being raped by police officers. He stopped and blocked my way with the police Van. His job is to chase criminals with that Van not to block my way.

Me: Iya kwa-brothel, bazokusiza. (*Go to the brothel they will help you*)

Officer: You know that I have the right to arrest you?

And I have no voice to voice my dissatisfaction about the way police officers are treating as sex workers. That's the message he was telling me.

Me: Arrest me for?

Officer: For breaking the law.

I giggled.

Me: Breaking the law with who's body again?

He got out of the car.

MATSHIDISO

We had to visit Zweli's place of birth. He usually go there alone, but then he said I'm danger to myself. He can't leave me alone.

Zweli: Come join me in the shower.

Me: Will the shower wash away all my worries?

I wanted to be alone.

Zweli: I wasn't asking you, I was telling you.

Me: Well Rre Samu I don't want to. (*Samu's father*)

It felt like I was throwing my hands and give up and say the word '***I give up***' in full without being scared. It's not me is the feeling inside me and the voice that keeps on telling me those things.

He walked out and in again.

Zweli: Talk to me, what is it?

I shrugged.

Zweli: I can't help you if you don't open up for me. Sometimes I wish to talk to that girl who got my heart melted, she would open up for me even though she never met me, but she was free to talk to me.

Things have changed. Tables have turned.

Me: I'm fine honey.

I wish I could talk to him but I had lost myself. I had no motivation to do anything because I couldn't see a future for myself. My everyday friend her name is Anxiety made me to believe everyone was faking their love for me. *'everything will be alright'* the worst nightmare anyone said to me. Those four words triggered thousands of horrible thoughts.

I wished my fiance knew how I feel but yet I didn't dare tell him because he would make sure that I meet someone who will think I lost my mind. Sometimes I just isolate myself in my

house trying to avoid people it's not me but my friend she's telling me that. At the moment I rely on him and I am grateful to have him because I know he's really trying by all means to make me happy. At the same time, I balance the wish that I could be free of loneliness. Sometimes I fear that loneliness might lead me to relapse for good. It's getting there because the voice is feeding me that I have no one. I'm just a lost soul.

Zweli: I think know it's time to get you a professional help.

There we go.

Me: If you tired of me just tell me.

He rubbed my hand.

Zweli: Did I say that.

I glanced down.

Zweli: I'm not going anywhere and you are not going anywhere. Seeking for help doesn't mean that I'm abandoning you. It means that I care for the women I love. And getting help doesn't mean that you are weak.

Yet I was feeling helpless The scariest thing about my whole seeking for help is that I will be judge.

NOMASONTO

He dragged me to the van.

Him: I'm not going to buy your service girly you are going to give it to me willingly.

I nodded. I was scared for my life. I can't die and live the kids alone in this cruel world. I don't want my girl to turn out like me. Because this is not life. I'm paying off the debit I never made

maybe my parents did I'm not sure. Or maybe Mr Mabuza cursed me the day he decided to deny me.

Me: Please don't kill me.

Him: If you behave I won't kill you.

He unfastened his pants.

Him: Blow job.

I took out a condom from my hand bag, but he didn't want it.

Me: Please!

The scariest thing about prostitution is getting in contact with a person who has STIs. Or being killed by clients, my friends the one that introduced me to prostitution were killed.

Officer: Don't dare me.

Me: I'm not on duty.

He showed me a gun.

Him: Are we doing this the easiest way or the hardest way.

Me: Ok easiest way.

Hence I don't show my clients my house, because I might get the kids in trouble. I won't be able to forgive myself. He started threatening me with the gun. I undressed myself. I ended up blowing him.

Him: You know how to satisfy a man.

God if you can take me out of this kind of life, I promise I will be a good child.

He pointed the gun on my forehead. I jerked my head back. Probably he was reminding me that he can do anything. He then made me to lie on the seat. I closed my eyes and wondered if I will be able to do that again and again.

His hands slid slowly down the curves of my ample hips. The contempt I felt angry, naked as a sour bubble of anger inside my stomach, inching its way up to my throat. I ignored his fingertips rubbing motions on my clits. My back was damp with sweat, face splotchy red with embarrassment, teeth clenched in frustration while I prayed that it must be over soon Musa and Nelly needed me. He had the power, and I had no voice. He finally got inside me. And he pleased himself on top of me. I cried silently.

When he was pleased removed his hands on my body. The sore muscles in my chest relaxed, and I released my breath, trying to

control the anger and tears, trying to calm the bile rising in my throat. I refused to give the rapist the satisfaction of knowing how deeply he had rattled me. I refused to cry in his presence. He has power and I had no voice. That's how we live as sex workers we fear for our lives and our loved ones. He threw me out the Van and drove off just like that.

MATSHIDISO

The following morning. We both didn't bath or shower last night. So we had to woke up early so that we can bath.

Zweli: Let's go.

I got up from the bed and we walked to the bathroom.
Sometimes I wonder why he's still caring about me I'm nobody,
or maybe if they was no Samukelo he would be long gone.

We dressed up.

Zweli: Need some help?

I nodded. He zipped my dress and kissed my neck.

Me: Your aunt and sister are waiting for us.

He ignored me

Zweli: Do you wanna help me with the breakfast?

I nodded. I wish I could get it right.

NOMASONTO

I've been raped many times. But I still feel undressed after being raped. I feel like the clothes I'm wearing they aren't covering my body enough. People can judge me but they don't know what I'm going through. I'm not proud of myself either. But I'm being punished for something.

Musa: Mommy!

No matter how many times I had bath but I still felt dirty.

Musa: Mom!!!

I wiped my tears and I looked at him.

Me: What is it Musa.(Yelling)

Musa: We are hungry.

Of course they are. When I got home last night they were already sleeping and snoring.

Me: There is a R50 on my purse.

He went to get it.

Me: Get the bread and parafin.

He nodded and get the bottle.

Nelly: Namaqanda. (*And eggs*)

Me: Baby the money I have can only cover us for a while.

Sometimes I don't get clients so I need to save a little.

Nelly: But daddy gave me the money.

Yeah Mr Khoza gave her R500 on Thursdays, that's her money and I'm planning to get her winter clothes with it. She keeps on calling him daddy.

Me: Nelly that's not your father.

Nelly: He's my God father remember?

Somehow somewhere I wish I could tell Victor about her.

Me: Baby that man feels guilty because he almost crashed you with his car.

I don't trust anyone near my daughter. Why should I while the people who should protect us are the ones who are hurting us. How much more should I trust a stranger with my daughter.

To Be Continued

07

NOMASONTO

It's not my fault that I turned up to be like this. The only thing that is evil is my destiny. I went to the open the against the police officer.

She showed me his picture as I described that officer.

Her: Tsabedi he's on leave.

Me: As I told you, he was wearing his uniform and he was driving the police Van.

She called her colleague to witness what I was saying.

Her: Ma'am please repeat what you just say.

I told them what happened. They seem not to believe me.

Me: Are you going to help me or what?

They looked at each other.

Colleague: We will pay him a visit.

It was but why I was surprised. I'm just Sonto the girl who sell her dignity to get food on the table.

Me: You are not going to arrest him?

Her: It's not easy as it seems the is the possibility to loss our job, if we help you.

Wow I expected that kind of a bomb on my face.

Me: Justice cannot be served clearly.

I clicked my taung...

Colleague: I know it's hard but he's our boss. Arresting him will be hard.

He walked away.

Officer: Take my advice Ms Mabuza, go to Saps head office.

Me: Where can the head office?

Officer: Pretoria.

She gave me the address. I was forced to borrow Nelly's money.

AZOLA

Zweli invited us to his house. I packed the car next to his car. Honestly Thobi and Zwe worked very hard to extended their grandparents's house. I can tell that they always wanted to do that. We got of the car. Thobile looked at me then smiled. We like sisters we share everything. We walked to the door.

She knocked Tshidi welcomed us.

Tshidi: Come in guys.

She seems like she was sad.

Thobile: I don't feel welcome.

Me: Are you sure that we are welcome?

She nodded. Me and Thobile looked at each other then walked into the living room.

Tshidi sat on the chair.

Thobile: Tshidi are you okay?

We sat on the chair.

Tshidi: I just don't understand, Thobi we were once kids and happy and now the world is turning against us.

We looked at her. She sounded like she was already giving up.

Tshidi: Thobi being a child is better than being adult, remember that we used to look down on the other kids at school, this isn't fair I miss being a child.

Everyone does, but this is life it doesn't pause it keeps on moving, non stop.

Tshidi: This isn't fair. Life is not fair.

Me: Hey girly life was meant to be so, you just have to embrace it and not take it as the pap you can always have.

She looked at Thobile.

Me: Why should life be fair to you? The fact that you are sitting on that chair covering your body with clothes, and you have a roof to cover your head it means you have some edge over some people around the world that has no food nor shelter, be grateful.

She looked at me.

Me: Life was not intended for those who try once then give up but instead, it's orchestrated to be determined and strong minded people who keep trying until they get what they want.

Tshidi: I feel like giving up.

Zwe walked to us.

Zweli: Welcome aunt and sis Thobi.

We smiled. He hugged us then looked at his Fiancée.

Zweli: My love I don't have much words to make you feel better.

He stood next to her.

Zweli: I'm not saying you must be happy but just hold my hand. I have nothing much to offer but my love for you is big. Mme Samukelo we are in this together and we are a team. The only thing you can do is to open up for me, we are friends, team and life parents. Yes life is like a mixture of tropical juice situations that may even compel one unconsciously to erase off all the joyous occasions that it lived. Every moment in life is a bundle of unpredictable surprises

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some good and some really us.

I could see that my nephew was sad and he was so in I love too. Tshidi got up from the chair and hugged him. I was about to ask him to take a seat and let her be. Well they both cried. Our centre do counselling so sometimes during the session I do act strong but now I just let the tears out. I don't know why I couldn't help it. If he doesn't change along the way I can give him 10 out of 10 of being a great nephew, brother, friend, son, father, and maybe a good husband if God can help Tshidi to find her really family.

NOMASONTO

After my visit to the police station. I went to the pharmacy to get myself the morning pill. If anyone has seen the difficulties of life that person is me. I was the fault finder that's my destiny.

My life turned out to be like that the day my father rejected me. It got worse after mama passed away. There is nobody to blame but myself. With my situation I will be forced to use my daughter's money. I had to voice out for my voiceless voice. I knew that I was risking my life but I had to. I paid the pills and started walking. Sometimes facing my fears comes with a bonus. I wish I had someone to talk to, someone who can call a friend but no my destiny is not as brighter as the mama used to

tell me. I don't deserve to live, and that's clear evidence that I was born by a mistake. They say God doesn't make mistakes right? But it seems like he started to create a mistake by creating me. I'm the first mistake he ever made.

MATSHIDISO

I felt his heart beat. He never turned his back on me, he's been so supportive. But this friend of mine she's making me it difficult for me, she turned me against everyone who cares about me, my parents stopped calling me, my anxiety made me to feel I'm not worth living.

We broke the hug.

Me: Thank you Rra. (Daddy)

He wiped my tears. He was teaching me how to cook it seems easier but it's very hard. I tried to participate but I ended up throwing up my hands and wanted to be all by myself again.

Me: Can I help you to dish up? (Whispering)

He nodded then wrapped his arms around me.

Thobile: You guys are full of games.

Zweli: I love you too Sisi.

Thobile: Futhi unendlela ehlekisayo yokuyikhombisa. (*You have the funny way of showing that*)

Zweli: Get yourself a man sis.

They laughed. My life sucks. I grew up with the silver platter on my hand now I'm just a burden to everyone around me.

VICTOR

Khoza's worked I won't lie. And him including the photographer package helped a lot. The book show went well yesterday. I told my family that I can't join them.

Siphelele: You are working on a weekend.

I and my team sold 513 books and we still had more orders. And that kept me awake and working on Sunday. All thanks to Khoza's boy.

Mav: But we need to go to church.

I looked at her then everyone.

Dad: Son today is the 7th day, you have to go to church. To praise the Lord.

Me: Bab Thabethe I totally agree with you but I have commitments already.

Dad: I hear you son but that should never be a habit to you, every Sunday I want my family at church, if I had any pet I was going to take it with.

Me: Just for today dad.

Mav: Will you need anything?

Me: I will be fine.

To Be Continued

08

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

Yeah many believe that life was made to be joyful, yet some of us suffer in different ways. We live in the other world where we

are against one another. I don't wish anyone's child to suffer like I do. Not even my enemy's child. I'm getting punished.

MATSHIDISO

Everything was going well. With Thobile telling us that we owe her.

Zweli: Aunt and Tshidi please pay my sister.

Azola: She doesn't say how much do we owe her?

Thobile smiled. Nothing in kills the heart of an enemy than a smile.

Me: Tsuuu

We laughed.

Azola: How much do I owe you sister?

I don't understand why they call each other sisters, Azola she's their aunt.

Thobile: You are dating my friend and someone she's dating my brother.

Me: So?

Thobile: You are spending much time with them then I do.

We laughed at her.

Zweli: But you didn't want come with me to Gauteng.

Thobile: I won't step my foot there.

Zweli: You can't be serious.

She folded her arms then looked at him, they can be playful.

Azola: You must be kidding me.

Thobile: Trust me.

Me: And she's done.

Zweli: Ngubani ozophatha inkampani kayise? (*Who will run her father's company*)

Thobile: His son will.

Zweli: I have my life Thobi.

Thobile: You are the measure share holder of Khoza's natural splendor peace.

Zweli: So you are?

We laughed. That's how they live always debating whenever we are together.

Thobile: Okay Zwe you made your point. Please keep my shares for my son.

Zweli: No ways. You are blackmailing me.

Me: Can't we talk about something else?

They looked at me.

Azola: You look better.

Me: I feel better but it will be back soon.

They looked at me like I said something bad.

Thobile: What are you saying?

I looked at Zweli.

Me: The voi-

I kept quiet.

Thobile: I'm listening.

Me: Forget I said something.

Zweli: But you said something.

Me: Excuse me.

They looked at each other and nodded. I don't understand everything was fine a minute ago now the feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness, hopelessness, pessimism got to me.

VICTOR

Being home and working it seems like the time was dragging. I decided to go to the office. Whilst I was driving I saw Sonto she looked so drained judging by her walk.

I stopped the car. To my surprise she walked passed it. She never did that to before. I got out of the car and rushed to her.

Me: Sonto.

She kept on walking.

Me: Noma!

I grabbed her hand. She stopped walking.

Sonto: What do you want Thabethe?

She didn't look at me. She was avoiding eye contact.

Me: Are you okay?

Sonto: What do you care no body cares.

I made her to looked at me. Her eyes were red.

Me: Okay now I care let's go to the car.

Sonto: I hate myself.

Me: I would like to hear more about my Noma hating herself.

Sonto: Victor tell me here.

I cut her.

Me: I will tell you nothing not until we are in the car.

MAVIS THABETHE

If my mother was to tell me how is it to be married probably I wouldn't wish to be married by now. Something chalked my marriage up to evolved differences, and it's slow making me doubt myself. You know the wave of deadness that's what is going on with my marriage. Sometimes I think my husband got a new intimacy mate.

Why I'm saying that is because sometimes Victor hardly touch me. Sometimes he would joke like "*Mav you turn my heart race enthusiasm for another person to boredom and dissatisfaction*" and we laughed about that. But it came to a point where he

keeps on saying that over and over. I'm I that wife who does not satisfied her husband. It gets worse when I talk about visiting the fertility clinic he will brush that conversation away. I think the baby will be the solution for our leaking bond.

People think because I'm married with the Pastor's son nice it is not. Yeah I get anything that I need, and the best in-laws ever. But the is something that is lacking. I can't find what is it but it's shaking my marriage the is something. It seems like we are, and my interactions have cooled. As blissfully happy as we were when we got married

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I can't imagine how we got to the point where I feel so lonely.

VICTOR

I opened the car for her she entered. I've known her for years, I never seen her drained like that. I got in the car too.

Me: Talk to me.

Sonto: I didn't wake up and choose to be like this, Victor.

I nodded.

Me: Did someone hurt you?

She nodded repeatedly.

Sonto: I don't enjoy to sleeping with different man but life got me here. (Crying)

What I like about her she knows how to satisfied man's need and she doesn't like the blaming game. I remember the was this

day I had fight with Mavis, I called to meet at the hotel where we usually meet. I told her that I was fighting with my wife. She told me that doesn't care all I can do is to respect my wife. Who does that?

Me: It's okay.

She wiped her tears.

Sonto: He raped me, I went to the police station seeking for help they told me that they cannot help me because the man is their boss can you imagine.

Me: I'm sorry to hear that.

Sonto: Engikudingayo nje impilo yami ibe ngejwayelekile. (*All I need is my life to be normal*)

I cut her.

Me: Would you like to change your current life?

She nodded.

Sonto: I do but it's not easy.

She told me that she has a brother to look after, since she doesn't have academically records finding a job is not easy.

Sonto: Sometimes I looked at Musa and think if I could get a poison for me and him and end all of this-

Me: Flush that out of your mind. I'm sorry that you going through this.

Sometimes we look at those sex workers and judge them. They are trying to feed their families. But we see their realities from the inside, we'll be aware of the many prejudices, myths and flat-out bits of misinformation present in our culture about sex work from prostitution to pornography and everything in between.

AZOLA

Zweli was telling us about Tshidi and that sometimes she doesn't want to around people.

Me: Depression is mild to moderate with symptoms of apathy, little appetite, difficulty sleeping, low self-esteem.

Thobile: And it can be more severe Zwe she need help we can't just assume that she will be fine.

He nodded.

Zweli: Hence why I called you before calling elders.

Me: I'm sorry Zwe that you are facing this we are here for you.

To Be Continued

09

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

THREE MONTHS LATER

I signed up for my dead. I managed to open the rape case against constable Tshivase. He promised to come after me. I leave in fear. I had to stop going to the brothel not that I got a secured job. Victor he's the only client that I was seeing and having encounter with lately. We had an agreement that I will be sleeping with him alone. I was getting paid for that weekly. Sometimes I think that he helped me but sometimes I think that he was taking advantage because I needed the money.

MATSHIDISO

I can't believe that everyone is supporting Zweli's madness. Zweli called Mr Radebe, his step dad, aunt and Thobile.

Mr Radebe: Thanks Khoza for letting us know.

Zweli nodded.

Me: I'm not crazy.

Zweli: Baby nobody said that.

Me: Zweli I'm not going to mental institution, if you want get rid of me just say so.

His step dad: Tshidi please allow us to help you.

His mother couldn't make it she's looking after the kids, step aunt grandfather and she's doing that without anybody's help.

Thobile: Zweli cared for you Tshidi if he didn't he was going to walk away.

Me: You guys don't know what I'm going through.

Thobile: That's why we want you to see the licensed therapist that will understand what you are going through.

Me: I have no one Thobi there is a girl out there who supposedly to be living this life.

Azola: Tell me here, what if yes we find that girl would you let her marry Zweli?

I shook my head.

Azola: Would you give her your son as her son?

Me: That won't impossible.

Thobile: Why not because she's living your life and you are living her life?

They were against me.

Azola: What we are saying it's that nobody is living anybody's life. Get that over your head.

I got up I was not going to listen to that. Especially in my house, yes their son bought the house but it belongs to me.

Me: I need sometime alone.

They looked at me.

Thobile: Where to, we left our daily commitment to come to your house and you are leaving us here?

She was supposed to say that she hate Gauteng from the bottom of her heart

Me: Somewhere else than being here with people who don't understand me.

I didn't want to be rude.

Zweli: I'm not doing this because I don't love you, I love you
Tshidi stop fighting me, just let us help you.

I looked at him. I couldn't believe that he was doing that to me.

Not after he promised that he will be always there for me.

Me: Zwe you promised to love me.

He nodded. I took few steps away from them. Zweli got up too.

Me: Why are you doing this?

Zweli: Ngikwenza lokhu ngoba ngiyakuthanda futhi
ngiyakukhathalela. (*I'm doing this because I love you and I care
for you*)

He took few steps to me as I was taking steps backwards.

Zweli: Please allow me to help you, Samukelo need his mother strong, I need the love of my life stronger.

I shook my head. He stretched out his hands. I shook my head still moving backwards I was blocked by the wall.

Zweli: Baby you have to do this, you can't find the family that we are searching for while you are relapsing like this.

He hugged me.

Me: I can't do this alone.

Zweli: You don't have to, I will come to see you everyday.

I didn't agree but he was making it seems like I agreed.

Zweli: You need to be on a medication for few minutes, maybe during recovery God will be answering our prayers.

I nodded and broke the hug.

Me: Rra Samukelo I'm not sick. (*Samukelo's dad*)

Zweli: No one said you are sick my love. You need someone who is well trained to deal with your emotions and stress that's all. Let's give it a try if it doesn't work. I will see what can I do. Watching you like this it breaks my heart.

I looked at Mr Radebe.

Me: Rra you also think that I'm losing my mind. (*Dad*)

He shook his head.

Me: Dad you know me, please don't allow Zweli to take me there. (Crying)

He cleared his throat and glanced down.

Zweli: Psychotherapist will help you to embrace your true Self, and to escape your daily suffering

like anxiety, stress, depression, trauma or any other emotional challenge. Please allow me to do this, if you are not doing this for yourself just do it for me and our son.

VICTOR

I decided to take Mavis out just to make it up to her after she learnt that she cannot have children she was not herself, we do have options such as IVF. There was a new restaurant that opened few days ago. Hopefully she will like it.

Since she cannot give me children I decided that I will take Nomasonto as my second wife. I haven't told or asked her yet. But since she wanted to stop prostitution herself, I won a ticket to be in control over her life, I made her to have encounter with me only that's ticket number one. Without going to brothel to sell herself. I'm paying her for that. Ticket number two is to impregnate her. As soon as she's pregnant that's where I will ask her to be my second wife. I will be going against my father's belief. I want children of my own I want something that will make me proud.

NOMASONTO

I sometimes wish I everything must come to an end. But there is this hope that my father will return, I had that hope since mama passed away '*My father will come back*'. That's the hope that was making me feel stronger. He will come back to rescue us from the poverty. Sometimes I think poison is the only solution for me and the kids.

Musawenkosi walked in. He went to his room then my room. I walked to my room he was sitting on the floor he was weeping.

Me: Why are you crying?

Musa: Mom Nelly she's missing.

I looked at him confusedly.

Me: What are you saying?

Musa: Please don't be angry with me. We were playing with my friends the next thing he was nowhere to be found and I don't know where she got lost.

My face started to shoot and everything was spinning. I felt like something walked through me and left me numb shaking. The sudden confusion made me to feel weaker.

MATSHIDISO

I knew that I needed help. But being admitted was another story.

Azola: Anxiety and depression are taking over your life. Don't let it control you. The more you listen to it Tshidi it will lead you to hurt yourself or even worse.

Me: I'm not losing my mind. I just need my life.

Azola: Life gets to everybody. And when you don't know what to do anymore, you often need someone to walk alongside you and help you take a step in the right direction. Psychotherapy will take you through. They will help you to get your life back on track again.

Me: Do I need to be admitted though?

She nodded.

Azola: You need to be monitored. Your depressive episode is severe

you're unable to keep yourself safe you're unable to care for yourself. During your time of hospitalization you will be on medication, it might be reviewed or change when time goes,

and there is the possibility for a group therapy. This will provide you with the support and treat you as well as to keep you safe until your depressive episode wanes.

I looked at Zweli and Mr Radebe.

Me: Can't you give me a day or two, to say goodbye to my friends.

They nodded. I meet them once a week they are working I'm the only person who doesn't work.

Zweli: You were supposed to meet them today?

I nodded

NOMASONTO

We searched for her everywhere.

Me: Where could she be?

I was losing my mind. Everything was like a dream. We kept calling her name. Our neighbours were all out helping me to search for her.

Musa: Nelly!

My heart was throbbing in my ears, loud and irregular, but I barely heard it, my mind was clouded with fear, anger, pity and lost.

To Be Continued

10

ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

My friends decided that we should meet at the new restaurant.
My fiance and his sister and his step aunt. Decided to join me

but they won't join our table. That's better because I don't need drama especially my sister in-law she can pull some stuns.

Zweli: Thank you for agreeing to come this side.

Thobile: We are family and family is the first institution of man's history. In the ancient age man lived in small families, which lacked any kind permanence. But they served to fulfill simple biological and psychological needs.

Zweli: Is that my sister talking or the the Ms mouthpiece?

They laughed.

Azola: Both.

Thobile: For that I'm going back to Pride Kingdom.

She got her excuse, she hate Jo'burg with all her heart. They said they will leave tomorrow morning.

Zweli: I'm sorry baby sis.

Thobile: That's not enough.

Azola: I'm sorry sister.

Thobile: Let's do like this, Zwe you will get me lunch and sister Zola you will give me a foot massage.

Them: Suck get yourself a man. (Go to hell)

They laughed. With their boring conversation I felt left out and I felt like the drive was taking too long.

NOMASONTO

I was losing my mind, everything was spinning, I couldn't control my emotions they were everywhere. She never played away from home. How could that happen? We reported the missing child.

My life was never meant to be livid from the beginning. I never been happy, sometimes I blamed my father for everything bad decisions that I was making. The fact is that I was the one who was making bad decisions not him.

MATSHIDISO

When we got to the restaurant my friends were not there. At least Zwe and his family will keep me company whilst I waited my friends.

Voice: Khoza!

Someone shouted. We looked at the person who was calling him. It was Mr Thabethe pastor T's elder son.

Zweli: Let's join the blessed table.

We laughed whilst making our way there.

Zweli: Mam mfundisi no Bab mfundisi! (*Pastor and pastor's wife*)

We laughed.

Mav: As for Mam mfundisi no Bab mfundisi though? (*Pastor and pastor's wife*)

We laughed, Zwe pulled out the chair for me then others we all sat on the chairs.

Thobile: Well well well, Mavis you chose a pastor to all this people?

Mav smiled.

Mavis: Don't start with me Thobi.

We laughed and exchanged greetings. The waiter gave us Menus. Banele and his girlfriend walked to us. They greeted us before he could see Thobile that's the drama I was avoiding.

Banele: Thobile!

Thobile: Hello Banele!

She didn't even bother to look at him nor showed any interest in him.

Me: Okay guys I will join you now.

Banele: Okay!

They nodded and walked away.

Me: Couldn't you be nice to him?

Thobile: What was I supposed to do Tshidi?

Me: You didn't have to be rude.

Thobile: I greeted him what more did you want me to do?

I looked at Mav she shrugged.

Me: At least offer him a hug.

Thobile: I don't do such Tshidi, I'm not his friend.

Me: But we were friends.

Thobile: We were fri-

She was cut by a little girl who ran to Zweli

Girl: Daddy I can't find my way home.

She was referring that to Zweli.

Zweli: Nelly how did you get here?

That grabbed my attention. I thought she made a mistake when she called him Daddy.

Zweli: Come sit here.

He lifted her up.

Me: Zwe what is going on?

He didn't even looked at me not alone to respond me.

Zweli: How did you get here?

Nelly: The police man brought me here, he said I will find my way home by myself.

Zweli: Did mom saw the police man?

She shook her head.

Nelly: I was playing with Musa, and his friends, the cop called me on his car he asked for me for the direction of the local shop, I showed him, he said I must take him there, I got to his car he drove with me and left me in at the corner where the are lots of people and many cars.

That cop won't see heaven, he had to protect the child but he took her to the danger zone.

Zweli: Did he hurt you?

She shook her head. Zwe looked at me.

Zweli: Never speak with strangers

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when a person calls just run okay!

Nelly: But a police man cannot steal kids.

Zweli: Let me call your mother.

Me: Zweli I asked you a question.

He looked at me.

Zweli: The girl, I almost hit with the car.

Me: Are you seeing her mother?

Thobile: Are you seriously asking him that?

Me: Thobi stay out of this.

Just because I had nobody to be on my side, that doesn't mean I will let Zweli and his family to do as they please. I won't allow them to get to me.

Zweli: I will never do that, mamkhe. As I told you few months ago. I'm somehow connected with Nelly I don't know how, but I'm spiritually connected with her.

He whispered to her. She smiled.

Me: I don't care Zwe-

Victor: Khoza the is something about this kid.

He nodded.

Victor: Something awful about her.

We looked at the girl.

Zweli: You scaring my angel guys.

Azola: Pastor is the anything you want to tell us perhaps?

We laughed Zola she's people's person.

NOMASONTO

My hidden fears and worries were visible people could see the weakness spot of Nomasonto Mabuza. I was lost, panicking, calling her name and continuing to look for her everywhere in the shark toilet.

We went to the park, the was no sign of my baby. I rushed a lady who was playing with her kids. I had her picture with me.

Me: Hey have you seen this girl.

She shook her head. I described her still she shook her head. I felt the flight responses kicked in, it was increasing my heart rate, flooding me with added adrenaline. I sat on the spot where I was standing. My phone started ringing. I looked at it. It was Mr Khoza. I immediately answered.

Me: Bhuti Zweli, I don't know what happened, she was playing with Musa-

He cut me, my voice was strained.

Zweli: Calm down, you will explain that when you get here. I will send you the address.

Me: I can't-

He hunged up, like really. I swear if he has my daughter I'm going to kill him. My phone vibrated. I checked it was a WhatsApp notification. He sent me the location. I was devastated by the pain of my missing child and a person from

nowhere was telling me to calm down I will explain when I get there without explaining why.

The worse fear that I had what if something happened, I will have to tell Thabethe the truth, I will be needed to explain why did I hide Nelly from him. I see Victor more oftenly but I never mentioned anything about Nelly. What kind of a mother I am? I got up and walked to the crew that was helping me.

To Be Continued

11

ONLY HOPE LEFT

VICTOR

Later on

Tshidi joined her friends. It seems like Mav wanted to join them but she didn't want spoil our day.

Me: You can go join them I don't mind.

She smiled.

Mav: I will join them next time.

Me: I promise I will make it up to you.

Thobile: Mav want to next to her husband.

We laughed. Honestly them joining us brought life in our table. And the child just made it more fun. I had a funny feeling about Nelly beside the feelings and stuff she was something about her, she looked similar with someone who was part of my family and that girl she's late.

The was something about that child, between me, dad and Shpelele someone has more explanation.

Zweli: Seems like I will take you to my house.

Nelly: Mom will be worried.

Zweli: If she was worried she was supposed to be here ages ago.

Azola: You want Tshidi to kill you?

Thobile: I care about Tshidi but sometimes she needs to look at the environment we at, before acting like she did.

I totally agree.

Zweli: She's going through a lot Sisi.

Me: Thobi she's right she should've called you aside.

Thobile: We all have problems, she need to stand on her ground sometimes.

Nelly: Guess who is here?

We looked at the entrance. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

Zweli called Noma. I looked at Mav. I was surprised my face was shooting open and everything was widening. In just a minute I had manipulation emotionals. It can't be Nally's mother.

Zweli: Finally she's here.

Noma walked to us. She brushed her chest as she saw me. She took two small steps backward.

Zweli: You are not taking her, before you tell me how did she ended up here, you were that busy to keep your eye on your daughter.

Sonto: Brother Zweli you can't take my child without my permission.

Thobi giggled. I know understand why Khoza kept on saying that he was connected with Nelly. Sometimes I think he's a spiritual person he just doesn't want to focus on that.

Thobile: Fiancée like drama and baby mama she has a drama too. Brother no you need some cleansing. (Laughing)

Khoza, Zola, Mav and Thobile laughed.

Me: Can't you invite baby mama to sit down.

She looked at me then pulled out the chair then sat down. I knew that she can pull herself together, the only person who cannot do that was myself. Nelly jumped to her, she hugged her

so tight. The whole thing lasted about five minutes, but I had a strange inkling about Nelly.

Sonto: Baby don't ever do that to me and Musa okay.

I could tell she was worried about her. The only child she mentioned to me was Musa her little brother.

Me: Baby I'm feeling cold please get me my jacket.

Mav got up and took the car keys. Well I wasn't feeling cold I needed answers from Noma, right there.

Mav started walking. I looked at her until she disappeared.

Me: I'm all ears Noma come with it.

She looked at me then everyone.

Me: Nomasonto!

Sonto: I'm sorry Vee.

Zweli: Ladies let's excuse them.

Judging by how he reacted he made his calculation well.

Me: Please don't.

Me: Who's child is this Noma?

Sonto: Mine.

Me: I understand it's your child, where is her father?

Sonto: He went to work on the mine.

She was very scared and she was hardly breathing. I gave her a glass of water. She drank.

Me: Noma you are lying.

Zweli: Can't you do this some other time?

Sonto: She's our daughter Vee, I'm sorry for not telling you about her.

I was furious. Why did she hide her from me?

Me: Noma you won't mind to kill me.

She looked at Nelly.

Sonto: I'm sorry Vee.

Me: Are you fucking joking right now?

She started crying. I saw Mavis at the entrance.

Me: Act your shit together we will talk about this tomorrow when we meet.

She nodded. All those years, taking penitency test will be waisting my time and money. Mavis gave me the jacket Thobi just laughed.

Thobile: Is to hot for that.

Mavis: He said he's feeling cold.

Azola: Maybe he's catching flu.

I already like Nelly she's my late baby sisters resemblance she was at her age she was diagnosed by brain cancer and she didn't make it at the operation room 10 years ago.

MATSHIDISO

We were having a great day. But Banele kept on staring at the table where Thobile was sitting. His girlfriend was right there while he was busy lying his eyes on another woman. I didn't even wish to look at that table, Zwe is cheating on me, He want me gone so that he could have a freedom of seeing Nelly's mother. I was telling them that I will be gone. I didn't tell them specific where I was going.

Banele: So how long will you be gone?

Me: Three months to four months.

Banele: Don't change along the way.

Me: I won't.

I knew what he was saying, but I decided to brush that off.

Banele: Is she married or something?

That's what I was avoiding, me, Thobile, Banele

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Mavis and Judy we were friends, before Thobi decided that we are not good friends. Than Mavis got married and I moved to Western Cape after learning that I'm not Radebe that's how our friendship broke.

But we still meet beside Mavis and Thobile.

Me: No she's focused on her job and her son.

Judy: UThobi Khoza unengane? (*Thobile has a child*)

I nodded

Me: Yeah she's a mother of ten years old boy.

Banele: Tell me that you are joking.

Me and my big mouth now I had to answer him.

Me: I think when I come back we should do a get together and invite her and Mavis.

It won't be easy to get Thobile here, we will have to go to Pride Kindom.

Banele: I think so.

Judy started complaining about stomach cramps which ruined our day.

NOMASONTO

I steadied my breath and tried to calm the panic. As Nelly explained how did she gets there. She was playing with Mr Khoza's phone. Thabethe had to wear his jacket. We had to pretend like we don't know each other.

Zweli: I will drive you home if you don't mind.

I didn't have the money to get home.

Me: I will get home by myself, but for Nelly's safety she can't be seen with me I have too many enemies I might put her and Musa in trouble.

What kind of life is that. Hiding the kids from the public that was not life. I know that there is no life without challenges, there is no life without hardship, there is no life without purpose, that would be pale and pointless. With all the challenges I've been through perseverance and gumption. With hardship come resilience and resolve. With purpose come strength and understanding. Challenges and problems are important parts of life that gave me experiences. Sometimes I think only the dead can do. But I needed to be strong. A beautiful lady on my age if I'm not sure.

She looked at me and shook her head.

Her: Zwe you can't be serious.

She sat down whilst looking at me.

Her: You are sleeping with Zweli aren't you?

Lady: Matshidiso stop it.

Me: I have to go-

My phone started ringing unknown number. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Voice: I hope you got my message.

I listened to the voice very carefully.

Voice: I'm giving you 48 hours to drop the case if you don't I'm coming for your life.

My heart froze and my stomach turned icy as I recognized his voice. It was the man who raped me.

Me: Constable Tshivase you won, you have the power I have no voice.

Constable: Drop the case.

He wasn't asking me he was demanding me to drop the case that's how powerful he was.

Me: I will drop the case, if you only promise to stay away from me and my daughter.

Him: That was the warning.

Me: But you raped me and now you want to get away with rape, Kanti aren't you supposed to be protecting people like me and my daughter?

Him: You don't get the message I think Nelly will be sweeter than you. Plus she's still a virgin.

My teeth chattered in fear. I looked at Nelly.

Me: Not my baby.

I put him on the loud speaker. I needed a backup for in case something happens to Nelly.

Him: It's up to you Ms Mabuza, you drop the case or Nelly will get disappear for good this time. How does that sound?

Me: This battle is between you and me not my child.

Him: 48 hours Sonto.

Me: I get it you didn't rape me I made stories I will drop the case.

Him: That's my girl.

Me: You are getting away with rape, but bare in mind that I will drop the case here but in heaven it's written the Lord I serve will punish you.

He laughed.

Him: Just do as I say.

Me: I get it justice won't be served for a less fortunate woman like me, I will go to Pretoria first thing tomorrow morning.

He hung up.

Lady: You are not going to drop the case, will you?

Me: I have no choice.

Lady: Did he raped you or not?

Me: He raped me.

Lady: I suggest you don't do that. Next time he calls you, record him, and send me the recording, my brother will give you my contact.

Zweli: But he will hurt Nelly.

Lady: When will he appear in court?

Me: On Tuesday.

Lady: That's the 48 hours he gave you to cancel his case.

I nodded.

Lady: Please allow me to represent you as your lawyer.

Me: I can't afford a lawyer.

She cut me.

Lady: The attorney that I'm working for it's running a pro bono this month for people who are in need, and I'm here to help you. I know there's no way to change what happened to you, justice need to be served, you didn't ask for that to happen to you. If I was you I was your

I was not going to drop the danm case. You dropping the case you are supporting abuse itself. We need to prevent sexual assault. You need to get him locked up for what he did to you. You will not only getting the justice you'll be preventing him from committing another attack. Getting him arrested it's the most effective tool that exists to prevent future rapes Sisi. According to the Harassment Act and the Children's Act, reporting of sexual abuse of individuals and younger is mandatory for adults. I hope you will sleep on this and get back to me before you make the wrong decision. Getting him behind bars will help you to recovery and help you to regain the sense of control. Nobody should face a traumatic event like sexual

abuse alone. You need to get support and I'm right here for that. Don't ignore your feelings, your life may depend on it.

Wow that lady lifted up my spirit.

Zweli: Aunt what do we say.

Aunt: I'm impressed Thobi. She's on fire.

Thobi: I'm not forcing her to do that-

Thabethe cut her.

Victor: You said it Thobile her life depend on her feelings so does Nelly's life belong to her?

Thobile: A parent's biggest weakness is their children, the guy know very well that she will drop the case by black mailing her.

Victor: So he won't-

She cut her. This is my case though.

Thobile: There is the possibility for her and Nelly to get hurt, we don't know who's watching her right now as we speak.

I looked around me there was nothing suspicious. That didn't get to me at all. I was needed to watch my back wherever I go.

Thobile: The only thing she can do today is to get a restraining order against the rapist. I repeat I'm not forcing her.

Me: That won't be easy he has more power than I am.

Thobile: That's bullshit.

To Be Continued

12

ONLY HOPE LEFT

VICTOR

I had no attention to take Nelly from Noma but after what I heard the girl and her uncle will need protection.

Me: Khoza, I will drop Nelly and her mum.

He nodded.

Me: Shall we.

Sonto was looking at Tshidi more like she was studying her.

Thobile: Hello there.

She waved her hand on her eyes.

Noma blinked multiple times.

Sonto: Ma!

She half screamed, than put her hand over her mouth she was trying to stifle her scream we all looked at her.

Zweli: Are you alright?

Sonto: I'm fine, just that I miss my mother.

Fair enough. Her hands were badly trembling.

Zweli: I think you need to rest Thabethe will take you home if that's okay with you.

She nodded repeatedly.

We got up I thought she was going to protest about that but no she just proved me wrong. Mav looked at me I was stunned.

Me: What's wrong?

Mav: I promised Sphe something.

Me: What is that?

Mav: Just give me your card I will get that myself.

Me: You want to get something for another man with my money?

Mavis: That man he's your brother.

We laughed about that. I gave her the card. She walked to the till counter to get whatever it was. Khoza looked at me then shook his head.

Zweli: You are not thinking what I'm thinking right?

Me: It depend on what you are thinking buddy.

Zweli: You won't separate the child from her mother will you?

I smiled.

Me: In order to protect her she has to be next to me.

Sonto: You can't do that Vee.

With a faint voice.

Me: I will take both of them you don't need to worry.

She shook her head.

Sonto: You better take her not my mother's child.

Me: He might be his next target.

She looked at Tshidi again

Sonto: You won't understand, my mother's last wish was to take care of Musa and that's what I'm doing.

She sat down again. She could no longer control her hands, they were shaking in an odd trembling rhythm.

Me: Noma!

Sonto: Home pl-

She couldn't finish her sentence. She breathed so fast, that got everyone worried.

Tshidi: Guilty is eating her up.

Thobile looked at Tshidi. She can handle Tshidi.

Azola: Okay sisi Sonto take a deep breath.

She did, what I like about her and Thobile they respect everyone around them.

Azola: Breath in

She did. She followed her instructions. Thobile gave her a glass of water.

She drank

Me: Are you alright?

Sonto: My mother was he-

She stopped talking Thobi and Zola looked at Khoza he shrugged.

Thobile: Zwe do something, help her.

Zweli: Mama Nelly are you okay?

Noma got up.

Sonto: I need to go home, I have to be with my brother.

I nodded. I asked Thobi to tell Mavis that she will get me out side.

MATSHIDISO

Wow that women can act, she created everything up. Just like that she walked out and I let her be. I looked at Zwe I was

seeking answers, that's the very same women who was wearing my lace and sleeping with my fiance on the dream.

Me: Zweli you slept with that girl.

He looked at me.

Zweli: I can't take this accusations any further.

Me: I saw you Zwe. You brought her to our house.

Zola and Thobi looked at each other.

Zweli: Uyahlanya Tshidi, angikaze ngikwenze lokho

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angisoze ngakwenza lokho. (*You are insane Tshidi I never did that, I will never do that*)

He shouted, No matter how mad he was, he never raised his voice on me. He got up.

Zweli: I will wait for you guys in the car.

Me: You are running away from the truth.

Thobile: That's enough Tshidi, Zwe sit down.

He sat.

Thobile: This behaviour is unacceptable I mean both of you.

Zwe: She's accusing me.

Azola: Calm down Zwe.

Zweli: I've been calmed for too long aunt, Tshidi she has taken my silence and kindness for granted.

Thobile: Tshidi what makes you think that my brother he's cheating on you?

Me: I saw him.

Zweli: When and where exactly Tshidi?

Me: On my dream.

He got up.

Zweli: That's it I will order a taxi I need sometime alone.

He walked away. Thobile shook her head.

Thobile: Will you blame him when he leaves you?

I didn't say anything. Mavis walked to us. She sat down instead of following her husband.

Thobile: Your husband he's waiting for you.

Mavis: He's with his new family.

Thobile looked at her than aunt Zola

Mavis: That child she's a resemblance of Sbahle.

Thobile: At least you didn't make yourself a fool like someone I know.

She looked at me.

Mavis: Victor he's my husband I know him very well, I've suspected that he was seeing someone.

Thobi cut her.

Thobile: I think you should teach Tshidi how to behave herself around people.

Me: I know what I saw in my dream guys.

Azola: Dreams can mean different things, and sometimes God talk to us during our sleep, he was sanding you a massage.

Thobile: Because of your ignorance he decided to sand the same massage to my brother.

Mavis got up.

Mav: Goodbye guys let me not keep them.

She walked away from us. Azola exeled.

Azola: That was too close Thobi.

Thobile: She knows already.

Azola: She has the clue of what is going on but she's not sure, she wanted us to reveal the information she's looking for that's why I intervened on your speech before you got deeper.

And they say I'm crazy. While they are protecting that madness, Thobile she's my friend she had to be on my side.

NOMASONTO

I was struggling to breathe. Missing my mother made me to see things. That Lady who accused me of sleeping with Zweli, she looked exactly like my mother I didn't notice her at first but after paying more attention to her, I saw my mother in her, I recalled the day my mother took her last breath. I'm so sure that my mother was sanding me a massage through her. Especially about her last wish.

Victor: Noma!

I could hear him but I was struggling to breathe.

Victor: I'm taking you to the hospital.

Nelly: Mommy!!

She sounded too far.

To Be Continued

13

ONLY HOPE LEFT

VICTOR

The following day.

Last night I had no choice but to take Sonto to the hospital. And I had to spend a night at her home with the kids. Now explained the connection I had with Sonto, there was always this connected vibe between us. I was given a second chance of being a man. The wise man once said "*Only a life lived for others is worth living*"

by Albert Einstein.

Nelly cried the whole night. I guess that was new to her. I know that Sonto she's a sex worker but her brother been her first priority, whenever I was with her, she would tell me that she does not do over time, after seven she was taking her belongings. That's explain that prostitutes don't sell their body because they like what they're doing, is because life showed them the different options, we can judge them but at the end of the day they are bringing a bread at home.

Nelly: Uncle Vee what time will you fetch her?

Me: We will go there later, what I suggest you to do is to get some rest.

I was in no position to make demands but she basically became my responsibility.

Nelly: I want my mother that's all.

Musa: Nelly stop worrying yourself, mom she's a strong woman.

Me: Let's go-to my house, than later we will go to see mom.

They nodded. I needed to go and freshen up and a nap.

Musa: But we need to come back early I have lots of school work.

Me: We can take your books with.

He nodded. Though I had lots of explanation to do with Mavis and my parents. I told Mavis that I've been seeing Noma, I didn't tell her exactly how I met her. That was going to be

another bombshell on her face. And my reputation is my number one motor.

The first thing I did was to take Noma to the hospital then I took my wife home, than I had to come to check on Musa, the plan was to go back home but I couldn't left them by themselves.

I must say Sonto she's a neat young women, who deserve to be happy. It was my first time stepping my foot at her place, but the place was clean. Though it's a shake but you could tell that's a girl's place. Who said people who live on the shakes they are unhygienic? That's people's opinion. 70% are clean. We sometimes talk shit with our mouth forgetting that at the end of the day we all human beings. Looking at Nelly that made my heart leaps for joy. And that made me to fall deeply in love with Noma.

MATSHIDISO

Zweli slept on the guest room last night. I dragged myself to the bathroom I took a quick shower. I just don't understand why would I dream about the girl sleeping with my fiance the next thing they are friends or whatever they call it. There is something that is going on.

After 30 minutes of taking a shower I joined Azola and Thobile. They were having a breakfast and busy gossip morning, they kept quiet as they saw me.

Me: Good morning.

Them: Morning dear.

I sat down.

Azola: Where is my nephew?

Me: He's still sleeping.

Pure lie, I didn't checked him.

Thobile: Are you ready for the journey?

I looked at her.

Thobile: Tshidi I care for you, but if the is something that I don't like I will tell you, as my friend, sister and sister in law.

Me: Thobi you always on my case, you don't see anything wrong with your brother, I can't just create stories.

She took a sip of her coffee then looked at me.

Thobile: Zwe love you, I don't think he would do that.

Me: He did Thobi.

Aunt Zola cut me.

Azola: If you suspect something is off with your fiance, talk to him about your concerns and feelings and watch his reaction and body language first a cheating man is easier to determine him.

They always protecting their son.

Azola: Provide physical evidence of the cheating before you jump to conclusions like you did Tshidi assuming that he's cheating without a proof that will put your relationship on the red flag.

Me: Red flag?

Azola: You are sending him to do that, even though he had no attention of cheating he will do that because you giving him that platform.

Me: So you are saying I was wrong?

Thobile: You were totally out of line.

Azola: Sometimes don't let your emotions to control you. Even though your emotions want to sway you towards having an aggressive or screaming confrontation with him, that's not the best way to resolve the issue. You're a mature adult Tshidi you know what's right and wrong, although the situation isn't ideal, you should let time to slow your roll and collect all the evidence that might link him of cheating.

I took a deep breath.

Azola: Sometimes there is no perfect time to confront someone you love about their possible infidelity. In this case, it might be better to tell him you have some concerns and that you'd like you and him to talk about them.

Me: Aunt the is something going on between Zweli and that girl.

Azola: Sometimes we may be seeing validation where there isn't any because we become so consumed, like you are right now, You just have to play your game as a smart girl, don't sit on your brain makoti. (*Daughter in-law*)

Me: I'm not going to apologise because I know what I'm talking about.

Azola: It's up to you.

Zwe walked to us he kissed me before he greeted his sister and aunt he then sat down.

Thobile: Should I get you anything?

Zweli: Green tea with honey please.

She got up and walked to the kitchen.

Zweli: I want to spend more time with you before you go. Do you have a problem with that?

Me: Nnyaa ga ke na mathata. (*No I don't have a problem*)

MAVIS

Have you ever felt the aftermath of betrayal? Well that was me. Finding out that Victor has been unfaithful all those years it was hitting me so hard it beared me like a ton of bricks. With a bonus I felt like my marriage will be thrown into a state of crisis and it will be destroyed by his baby mama. Especially that I can't give him children I cried it out. I let the tears run down my face

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I was feeling sorry for myself and I allowed the grief to take over. But after learning that he has been seeing that Sonto girl for years, I felt betrayed by my own husband, I'm not a fool I could tell that he cares for her more than me. Dealing with the disappointment, jealousy, anger, shock, fear and frustration that was too much to take. I put my the coffee down and checked the time. When he left he promised to come back and explain what happened, he didn't return home nor called me.

I've always suspected that my husband was having an affair but I didn't have a proof to support my suspension. I felt like I was no one I felt small and betrayed by him. After taking his baby mama to the hospital he confessed that he has been seeing her,

but he didn't know about the child. He was lying to me, he knew that he has a child, each time I brought baby topic he would brushed that out. I was blinded by love.

Mrs T: When the tears subside, take a deep breath and try the second way.

I faked a smile and wiped my tears.

Sphelele: Mav you have been holding that mug for ages.

Ma: Nekhofi lakhe selivele liyabanda. (*And her coffee is already cold*)

Me: I want it cold.

Ma: Mavis you like my child now, what's wrong?

I looked at her then shook my head.

Me: I will be fine Ma.

Victor walked in with Nelly and a boy whom I assume it's Sonto's son.

They both sat down.

Victor: Good morning family.

Them: Morning!

His mother lifted Nelly up, without saying anything she let out her tears. Nelly she's a resemblance to her late daughter. There was no need for introduction there.

Father: Victor what's going on?

He looked at me. Though I haven't said anything, that was not my place to.

Victor: Ma uthusa ingane. (*Mom you are scaring the child*)

She brushed Nelly's shot hair with her hand.

Ma: What's your name.

Nelly: Nelly Mabuza.

Ma: What a beautiful name, where is mommy?

Nelly: Me, aunt and Uncle Vee took her to the hospital.

Mrs T hugged her so tight. Literally she cried. Victor took Nelly from her.

Victor: Ma!

Ma: How could you hide her from me, I'm your mother Victor?
(Crying)

Victor: Musa and Nelly follow me I want to show you something.

He walked with them to our room. Sipehelele looked at me, I shuffled away from him, I didn't have energy for his silly jokes. The room went frozen it became a depressed room. Mrs Thabethe's tears streamed down. She stirred at the table. Victor came back and sat next to me. We sat quiet for a few seconds and he broke the silence.

Victor: Baby I'm sorry about last night.

I nodded. I had nothing to say to him.

Victor: Angikwazanga ukubashiya bodwa. (*I could not leave them alone*)

Pastor Thabethe: Ndodana ngidumele. (*Son I'm disappointed in you*)

Victor: Father believe me when I say I didn't know about the child, I just found out about her yesterday.

Pastor T: MaNcumalo are you okay with him bringing his children here?

He calls me by my surname.

Me: I have no words to describe how I feel father.

I kept quiet. His little brother got up and cleared the table.

Sphelele: Excuse me.

He walked away.

Pastor T: God hates deception. You were basically living a lie and creating one lie after the other. Proverbs 12:19 True words last a long time, but lies are quickly exposed. Your lies came out, son, it's up to you that you do what's right. You need to be honestly with yourself son. Satan is plotting to destroy your marriage.

Victor: The heart is used as something of a metaphor for the inner life.

We all looked at him.

Victor: I agree I've wronged Mav and I'm deeply sorry for that my love. I've been cheating on my her for years. I'm sorry to say this without no doubt that I would like to take Nomasonto as my second wife there is a long road ahead of us to walk through, and I pray that Mavis meet me halfway.

Mrs T: Why second wife?

Victor: She doesn't fullfill my heart like Sonto does. As I'm sitting here looking at her she's still my wife and I will continue loving her.

That man is something else. The trust was broken. I wish to lessen the pain of my heart he betrayed me yet he was telling me that shit. I don't full fill his heart like Sonto does. How is that possible?

Victor: I am incredibly embarrassed and shamed of the past years of lies and cheating, more importantly the embarrassment, and unequivocal hurt and sadness I brought to you my love and my family. It is so hard to think of the tremendous damage I'm causing, I'm not trying to break apart the trust we have and I would like us to stay united like we are.

Me: You made your decision.

Victor: Nelly and Sonto need me.

I cut him.

Me: Did you ever loved me?

That was the scariest question. What if he give me the answer that I wasn't waiting for?

Victor: I know that I'm the one who destroyed the beautiful thing we had. I also want to be the one to make everything like it was before, if that's possible? I have no excuses for my actions.

Me: I get it Vic I can't give you children she's a mother of your daughter you love her more than you love me.

Victor: I didn't say that Mavis, love is not about having kids together. It's about finding connection between the two of you. If they are no connection that relationship is not going to work.

I didn't noticed the goose bumps creeping on my arms until he said that. I was so angry, I was hardly breathing at all. Immediately I shuffled away from him.

Pastor T: Are you hearing yourself son?

He nodded.

Victor: Don't make this hard for me father. I heard what I said and I vouch myself to love both women equally.

I could feel the flight responses kick in, increasing my heart rate, flooding me with added adrenaline.

14

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

I was hospitalized against my wishes. Doctors considered that they will keep me for a day. And I think it was Victor's plan to take my daughter away from me. Nurses think that I'm losing

my mind when I tell them that I saw my mother in someone. To be honest if I had to meet that lady before yesterday I swear my heart was going to stop right away.

I was feeling worthless, my thoughts were out there thinking of the kids and that lady. Being in hospital impacted my mood, I wasn't worried about my health but the kids. They gravely impaired me of unable take care of myself. She walked in.

Nurse: How are you feeling today?

Me: I'm confused I can't think clearly, I miss her everything I saw in that young woman she was my mother.

She sat down.

Nurse: What happened before they brought you here?

Me: I saw my mother in someone else, I panicked and struggled to breath.

I she was the 6th nurse asking me that, and I was getting frustrated.

Nurse: How was your relationship between you and your mother?

Was she really asking me that?

Me: She was a mother just like every mother. She loved her family especially me and my brother, she was my hero she gave birth to me, she took her last breath in my presence. Life without her is like assuming a lake without water. Mother's absence in child's life, is like a tree without blossom.

She nodded.

Nurse: How was life after she passed on?

I shad tears.

Me: After she passed away, my life was difficult, sometimes I felt abandoned and alone in this world. I thought nobody cared about me and my brother. There are times where I struggled with the kids where I think only death can free me. With her life was a little better, seeing that lady, made my heart race. I saw my mom for the first time in years. I felt her presence, I wish I can be her friend just to be closer to her.

AZOLA

Zweli loved his fiancée though she's pushing him away. But he was supportive. He invited her friends for farewell dinner, just to let her know that she's much improved to him and her

friends. I excused myself from the crew to the guest room just to have a selfish thought Mavis walked to me she looked so drained.

Me: You look like a mess.

Mav: I feel like a mess.

Me: Do you wanna talk about it?

Mav: It won't change anything that my husband doesn't love me. It won't change that I've been cheated on. It won't change that my love for Victor was taken for granted all this years.

I got up from the bed and reached over to hug her. Sometimes there are just no right words to say to a person who's been cheated on. Some people just need to know you are there for them and that they have your shoulder to vent on at anytime. It's the ultimate betrayal. We broke the hug than we both sat down.

Mav: I'm a failuer, I failed to keep my marriage.

Me: We fall and rise up again sister. You either win or learn, there's no failure in life. It's not your fault, you did everything with all your heart, you cared and loved the him truly and he decided to be unfaithful, so who's actual won between you too?

Mav: He won he has a child with her.

Me: Stay strong and just wait for the right time to come. Don't let him affect you or ruin your life. I know you have been through hell but all that was to make you strong. Strong enough to know what's right for you, strong enough to move on. And there's surely you will be happy again.

She nodded we hugged again. Cheating is the ultimate betrayal and damages ones ability to trust others dramatically. To give that person an emotional support during difficult time

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is to be there for them.

NOMASONTO

I was tired of the questions that they were throwing on my face. I could tell that they think that I'm losing my mind, they kept on asking me the same question. She walked in again. I looked at her what I wanted was to be out.

Me: My kids needs me.

Nurse: Unfortunately we are keeping you. Panic disorder need to be monitored.

The only thing that was in my heart was Musa and Nelly.

Me: My brother and daughter need me.

Nurse: Panic disorder is marked by recurrent panic attacks. These attacks often happen suddenly, without warning, Ms Mabuza I'm sorry but we have to keep you here.

Me: I'm going hom-

Victor walked in before whilst I was talking.

Victor: Noma stop being stubborn.

Me: Musa need me he has no body but me.

He called the nurse aside, I looked at them I couldn't hear what he was saying to her, she walked out he came to me.

Me: Vee you can take my daughter away from me, the is no need to lock me here.

He sat on the bed.

Victor: Noma I'm sorry for my behavior yesterday, I was shocked and happy at the same time.

Me: So you are taking her away from me.

Victor: I would be a selfish person to do that to my Noma.

Me: If you are not planning to take her away from me then tell this people to let me go.

He shook his head and whilst, his mother walked in with the kids. I'm a dead meet. Nelly and Musa jumped for me.

Musa: Uncle Vee slept on your bed. (Whispering)

So he went to my house, how did he explained that to his wife?
I hate drama. His mother pulled the chair and sat down.

Her: I'm Anna Thabethe Victor's mother.

We exchanged greetings and introduction took place. I never met his parents but I saw them on his phone. Besides that she's pastor T's wife. The famous Pastor T.

Mrs T: Thank you for the wonderful gift you brought to my family, I don't condone cheating but spilled water is irreversible, I therefore welcome you to my family.

Was she welcoming me or her granddaughter.

Victor: Thank you Ma.

Mrs T: I wasn't going to support this if it wasn't for Nelly.

I was totally lost. She looked at the kids.

Mrs T: Come on you too let's give them a space.

Nelly: But I miss her.

Good luck with that.

Mrs T: 10 minutes won't harm you baby.

Nelly: Okay than.

They walked out. I missed something there, my Nelly stick to her words, a no is a no.

Me: So you slept at my house?

He nodded then smile.

Victor: The sad news you were not there.

Me: Mrs Thabethe allowed you to do that?

He kissed me.

Me: This is a hospital not those expensive hotels.

He laughed. He got off from the bed. He took out a jewelry box from his pocket.

Victor: Noma I love you, I want us to be one. When I look into your eyes, I can see a reflection of the two of us and the life I hope we'll share together.

Me: I'm confused.

He knelt down with one knee. Oh my goodness that is not happening.

Victor: I got down on one knee for you, and whether you say "yes" or "no," I'm going to need your help getting back up.

I looked at him and let tears fall.

Me: I can't Vee.

He kept quiet with his jewelry box on his hand.

Me: I'm sorry I can't.

He didn't move or say anything.

Me: Vee what does your wife feel about this?

Victor: Everything is new to her, she needs some time to heal.

Me: Well come back when she's fully recovered.

Victor: Noma as I said she needs time to heal.

Me: I never loved anyone like I love you, but I won't agree to be the reason for your wife's tears, you betrayed her and now you want make things worse, cha Vee it doesn't work like that. *(No)*

Victor: Mavis she's a very understanding women.

15

ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

Knowing life has a short, seized opportunities as they arise instead of focusing on circumstances for which I care little about. *"Events conspire in our favour, despite our worries and frustrations. They are there to help you experience ourselves in a greater capacity. I need you to know that we love you deeply"* that's the message my mother in law sent me. What a lovely mother. Sometimes, I feel my life was upturned purposely. I wish I would meet my family.

I was once happy that Zwe made the day special for me, he invited all my friends for farewell dinner was the best decision, even though it was quite but I was so happy. We heard a door bell.

Thobile: That's Ndu.

Zweli smiled then shook his head.

She got up.

Thobile: Relax brother I will get that.

Have you feel the disembodied as you become detached from yourself and go numb or shut down? That's was me I was feeling darker headed as if I was in the room but not quite present. And everything goes a little abstract.

Thobi came back with Ndumiso aunt Azola's boyfriend. He greeted us than sat down.

Thobile: Thanks for coming through for me you are the best.

Ndu: You didn't give me any choice.

Thobile: Thank you again.

Azola joined us, she whispered something to Zweli.

Zwe: Will she be okay?

She nodded.

Azola: She only need to rest.

Zwe: How could he do that?

Azola: I can't even imagine the pain she's going through
Hello we are here we need a memo. She sat down and looked
at her boyfriend then smiled. Thobile whispered to Ndu.

Azola: Should I get you anything to drink?

Ndu nodded. She got up and walked to the kitchen. Ndu and
Thobi looked at her as she disappeared.

Thobile: Ndu uncle Sanele will kill you, you broke my aunt's leg.
Let's leave that for another day. I need your help, the is this
rape case I'm working on.

Ndumiso: How much do you have mama Phawu.

Thobile: You can take Phawu.

Zweli: Have you lost your mind?

Thobile: No brother, I want to help Sonto but it feels like I will be betraying Mavis.

Zweli: I'm not talking about the case, I'm talking about my nephew.

She laughed.

Thobile: Zwe when you look at me you see dumb written on my face I wouldn't give away my son no matter what I won't do that.

Zweli: That's what I wanted to hear.

VICTOR

Rejection is most frequently refers to the feelings of shame, sadness, or grief that's what I was feeling after she rejected my proposal. I desire social contact, and I craved acceptance from the mother of my child being rejected was incite negative feelings and emotions. The was no way I was going to let her go. I don't understand why would she turned down the engagement.

Me: You're special. You're kind, smart, and funny and I am so much happier when you're around. I want us to be more than friends. I hope you see that like I do, we can be a strong team.

Sonto: Vee honestly I'm not the woman for you, remember who I am.

Me: You are saying you are not ready to settle down?

She frowned

Sonto: Don't put words on my mouth Vee, what I'm saying is that this is not fair to consider marriage in someone's tears won't work, especially that you know that I was a prostitute and that's how Nelly was conceived.

Me: And you never told me about Nelly remember?

Sonto: This is what I was avoiding, my daughter she's not my ticket for a relationship, happiness and prosperity. I'm not proud of myself. And now you want me to agree on something that I'm not comfortable with.

That's what I like about her.

Sonto: Please respect my decision and pay much attention to your wife's feelings, I will be fine Nelly will be fine too.

Me: Noma I'm not divorcing Mavis, I'm keeping her as my first wife. I don't understand why are you putting her first than yourself.

Sonto: She's a human too

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she's broken, she needs you as her lawful husband to there for her. I understand but let's let her heal first. Healing process might take time. Let's respect her that's all I'm asking.

My mother and the kids walked in, my mother insisted to come with me.

Ma: I believe I will be seeing Nelly more oftenly.

Noma nodded.

Me: She's moving in with us Ma.

She gave me a determined look.

Ma: Them or Nelly?

Me: Nelly for now.

Ma: Thank you. But we can't take a child away from her mother.

Me: I want to be to my child's life is that too much to ask?

Sonto: That's not to much to ask, please ask the doctors to let me go, I want to be there for my brother as well.

NOMASONTO

It's one thing to find love, and it's another to find love that lasts a lifetime, but maybe it's not marriage that makes love last. Maybe it's people, and life, and the balance between love that we're willing to give versus the love that we think we deserve. It's one thing to find love, and it's another to find love that lasts a lifetime, but maybe it's not marriage that makes love last. Maybe it's people, and life, and the balance between love that I was willing to give versus the love that I think I deserve.

Victor: Mara wena (*But you*)

Mrs T: I will go check the kids.

She walked out. Nelly and Musa were doing ups and downs I don't know what they were selling.

Imagine pastor T's elder son got married with his baby mama who is a prostitute. There are many reasons why we make excuses. In fact, everyone has a variety of reasons for making them. However, we mostly only make excuses for the following key reasons fear of failure. But that was not my excuse, my excuse was that I love Vee with all my heart, but I can't have him because he's a pastor's son I'm just a sex worker, who is on a process of changing my life.

Me: Ngiyaxolisa Vee, kodwa asikwazi ukusebenza. (*I'm sorry but we can't work*)

Vee: Mav will welcome you. She understands how I feel about you.

Me: Vee please. Don't make this hard for me.

MAVIS

Azola let me take a nap it was hard to close my eyes each time I tried to close my eyes I imagine my own husband telling that women how much he loves her. Marriage begins with promise between two parties to honor and cleave to each other for life. Many couples rely on love to keep their marriage intact, but commitment is the adhesive of marriage, and love is the reward of keeping the promise to stand beside each other through both good and bad times, in both sickness and in health, in both poverty and wealth. The process of keeping that promise is what makes love grow between couples. I felt like my marriage is being tested, so those my faith I was losing faith, I needed a new perspective of life. For some reason I felt little disconcerted with God.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

MONTH LATER

Life is strange, life is something else, those who knows better they say life series of events, one after another. Some are good and some are bad but that doesn't mean life isn't good at all.

According to situations and karma we keep on going and accelerating in life with all of hearts and emotions. Whenever something happens, things happens for a reason, and for that mere aspect, I need to arise and shine, I won't allow small things to break me and I was needed to keep myself motivated.

My mother umancumalo she there she keeps on saying everything will be fine, she's not help me nor understand what I was going through, on the other hand my mother in law she was acting like she care, but I could see that I'm no longer on her shoes. I got up and walked to join everyone. I had zero energy for anything. I just felt like I was dragging myself around the Thabethe's. My husband hardly home, he believes that his daughter and Sonto are in danger, that's his excuse, he was no longer hiding his darkness side.

New journey of life are one such way to keep you going no matter what. If something ends, there's always a ray of hope

that something new and fresh is coming our way. Something evident and much more practical is finding the path to reach us ultimately. That's what we call a new beginning, a new phase of life to start with something it's a new journey, fine I will accept polygamy, I just needed my life back. I joined the family. I cried, prayed about it but I still I was losing touch with God.

Me: Good morning.

Them: Morning Mav.

Pastor T: How are you doing my daughter?

Me: I don't know father, I feel lost. I don't know if God hears my prayers anymore.

He shook his head.

Pastor T: It's normal to feel that way my daughter. But God-

I cut him.

Me: His blessings were removed from my life and that relationship with God has faded to the point where I feel as if I'm navigating life's circumstances alone. His guidance doesn't touch me anymore.

Pastor T: You know that he once knew great inward happiness, a joy "*out of this world,*" came into something akin to a black hole, spiritually? You're not alone all you can do is to pray.

Me: I prayed and cried nothing is helping me.

Pastor: Its ok to have doubts. Losing God is like watching your loved ones die. The truth is that God has not lost faith in you my daughter. Nor is his love conditional on the fact that you're losing faith in Him. Life is harsh and offers little comfort.

Mankind has sought relief, or at least understanding, in all cultures through all time. "*Mark 5 vs 35 to 36, While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?' But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the*

synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe'" We all go through times of doubt, and wonder if we're losing our faith. Such times can often make us question whether God really exists and whether, if he does, we're really in relationship with him. Worries about losing faith lead to selfdoubt and we blame ourselves for drifting away. But it is vital to remember that while we may wander and drift, God is steadfast and his promises do not change.

I looked at my mother in law.

Me: I've made a decision, I support Polygamy.

Mrs T: Finally she came to her senses.

I've always heard about toxic mother in law, but I thought mine was different, but after she learnt that she has a grandchild she treats me differently. She revealed her hidden skeletons, she's no different than those toxic in-laws.

Mrs T: What took you so long Mav?

Me: Because I love my husband Ma, and loving him brought new scars in my life.

Mrs T: Then let him go, my son deserve better.

Don't I deserve better?

Pastor T: Anna!

Mrs T: My son his not happy with her-

Pastor T cut her.

Pastor T: Ngiyakuxwayisa. (*I'm warning you*)

Me: The is no need for all this, I will be in my room, in case I'm needed.

Love is a lot more like partnership than romance. Loving each other means not only focusing on what you want from your partner, but also being concerned with their happiness, too because he wanted to be with Sonto, decided to give him the freedom he wants.

MATSHIDISO

That place was hell itself. My life flashed before my eyes. My teeth chattered in frustration, as my psychologist walked in. I brought my knees up to my chest, trying to get the answers I will be needed to answer.

Psycho: Ms Radebe.

He sat on the chair.

Psych: We forget what an incredible danger it is to live life without knowing who you are.

Me: We forget there is very little progress we will be able to make in this life if we don't have a firm grip on who we are and why we matter.

I needed privacy not lecture from him, it was not a session time.

Psych: You are not responding well, I was informed that you are refusing to take your medication, to join group therapist and to eat. Do you mind telling me why?

Me: Will that help me to track my family?

Physch: I know depression is a complicated issue with lots of complicated answers. Not to mention that I have gone around with depression in my life too Tshidi, I know the pain you are going through. I've spent years depending on medication and on therapy and it hasn't been until the past ten years that I've discovered some freedom from medication and therapy. Going thought depression is something that still haunts me today.

I sat up straight.

Me: No one seems what I'm going through, nobody is related to my pain either.

Physch: You believe that

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and it's not true, you have a supporting family and friends I've been a psychologist for five years now and the support system you get other patients crave for it.

Me: I just want this to get over and done so that I will move on.

Physch: We are not responsible for everything that is happening to our lives, the only responsibility we have is to take care of ourselves.

Me: You said you once had an episode care to share what happened?

Physch: Lets say life happend, my parents and wife were involved in a car accident, and I was left with my 2 years child and my other half, it was my responsibility to raise my daughter but when she was 12 years she was raped by my brother and she couldn't take the pain especially that she was raped by someone who she trusted, she commited suicide, life was incomplete in my side. I was lost and all by myself.

Me: Sorry for your loss.

I looked at him, he nodded.

Physch: I drown myself to loneliness life, I became depressed, nothing seeing to be okay, suicidal thoughts were part of me. Depression was hunting me. But it hasn't succeeded because I begun to develop a stronger sense of self that I've been able to find a bit of freedom from my depression. My depression is my story not my fear. That is not a prescription, but it is a suggestion to consider that if depression is as much a part of your life as it has been of mine, it's worth considering it might help to work on finding yourself. A weak sense of personal efficacy operates on the cognitive source of depression in several ways.

Me: How did you get here, I mean you went through depression and you are helping people with depression?

He laughed a little.

Physch: My depression is my story not my fears. I find myself.

Me: How?

Physch: A lack of a strong self often flares up during times of change or transition in our lives, since often times we mistake our sense of self for things like the place we live in, our partners, job, career, money, family, status and many more. Our true self does not come from our outer self. It comes from our inner self. So when we move to a new place, we leave behind things that we care about, we learn to explore the new place, new life, people, job and sometimes we meet our soulmate and build a family, we see our grown kids they will also leave the house, get married, and start their new families as well, I always come across this question "*who Psychologist Dumezweni Nyathi?*" This is normal and also an invitation into a deeper journey of finding yourself.

Me: Are married Psycho Nyathi?

He nodded.

Physch: Yes with 3 years twins, I have a twin brother myself, he's behind bars for rape. My parents left nothing for us beside their house.

Me: How do you work with people like me when you gone through so much?

He smirked such a charma guy.

Phych: I get that Ms Radebe. I will give you Two activities today each activity take 30 to complete.

He got up and walked out. "*Our true self doesnt come from our outer self. It comes from our inner self*" that part got to me. He looked different from a person who was depressed before.

NOMASONTO

Yeah life is life, sometimes it has the lighter upon our lives sometimes it's completely dark. Hence why we say *life is a journey*. I looked at Vee and his daughter they were peaceful sleeping, one has to go to school and one has to go to work. Sometimes, love trumps everything, but sometimes, it's not enough. I tried to stop him from coming to my house but I failed. Fighting him feels like I was fighting with a strong winds that's come to destroy sharks.

Well he said he wants to protect us from so called detective. He was denied bail. Advocate Ndumiso Sikhakhane made sure of that. Thobile referred me to him. She wanted so bad to be my lawyer but since she couldn't because she grew up with Mrs Thabethe Vee's wife. I understand her reason if I was on her position I was going to do the same.

Me: Vee! Nelly!

They had to be out of bed.

Me: Thabethe! Nelly! Wake up guys.

Nelly: I'm awake mom.

Me: I will see you later I'm going to work.

That's when Thabethe rose up.

Victor: Work?

Me: One of my customers called he's going to a business dinner he needs a partner.

He looked at me then Nelly. No one called me, I wanted to see his reaction that's all.

Me: Nelly you need to get ready.

She got up and walked out, she suddenly became dad's daughter.

Victor: Give me your phone.

Me: Why?

Victor: Don't make me to repeat myself.

He sighs, narrows his eyes on me and drips saliva in front of me.

Me: Relax I'm done with that life, you need to get ready for work.

Vee: Can't we spend time together?

Me: You are spending much time here Thabethe, you need to spend quality time with your family.

Victor: My family is incomplete without you and Nelly.

I sat on the edge of the bed and looked at him.

Me: Did you notice yourself how you acted when I said I'm going to work.

He smirked then nodded.

Vee: My heart almost stopped.

Me: That's what she's going through.

Victor: Forget it Noma, I'm not going anywhere Noma.

Me: Okay let's do like this, you said you want to spend time with me, why don't you invite her so that we spend time the three of us.

Vee: You out of your mind.

I got up and walked out.

MATSHIDISO

Thirty minutes wasn't enough for the activities he gave me, my first 30 minutes ended before I couldn't finish the hidden object puzzle casual activity. now I was doing the second activity cross words. Still it was hard to find the word for each box I was given clue but still it was hard. His timer alerted.

Me: I need more time.

Physch: Why do you need more time?

Me: I need to complete this activity.

Physch: That's it for today Ms Radebe.

Me: I didn't complete my task.

He took the book from me. And looked at my work he looked at me again.

Physch: The purpose of those two activities I gave you today, was for you to find the hidden object which you only score 4 out of 10 and the second activity was cross words which you scored yourself 2 out of 10.

Me: The time you gave me wasn't enough.

He nodded.

Physch: That's what is going on in your life, you want things to go your way, instead of letting nature to take it course -

I cut him.

Me: You mean it will take time to find my family?

Physch: I'm glad you asked, only time will tell Tshidi. You did great today.

Me: You did great.

Physch: If you continue like this I promise you will be out of here within 2 months period.

He gave me the book.

Physch: There are many puzzles activities in this book, whenever you feel lonely do at least one activity.

Me: You want my brain to crack?

He laughed

Physch: That's the idea, brain exercise will help you to provide, a sharper memory and thinking. The same endorphins that make you feel better also help you concentrate and feel mentally sharp for tasks at hand. Brain exercise can also stimulates the growth of new brain cells and helps prevent age related decline.

He was making that seem easier.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

I thought Vee was joking when he was not going anywhere. It was just a the two of us. We just lied there having our little

conversation. He was telling me that he got the ring before he finds out about Nelly.

Me: So when you look at Sonto you see a baby making machine?

He chuckled.

Victor: I didn't say that.(Laughing)

Me: Let me see "*He just said he was going to ask me to marry him, after I got pregnant*"

Victor: That's what I said?

Me: I'm sure you are needed at work.

Victor: I'm that boring.

I smiled then nodded.

Victor: When they have crisis they will call me.

Can't they have crisis already?

Victor: Why do I feel like you are getting rid of me?

Me: No ways I didn't say you must go, I was just asking.

We laughed.

Victor: I'm not going anywhere unless you come with me. When people get closer, the boundaries can be blurred.

He always had an excuse.

AZOLA

Sometimes time can be dragging, I was meant to go for dinner with my boyfriend, but time wasn't moving. I checked the time on my phone, Thobi laughed so hard.

Me: If your friend he's not here in the next 20 minutes, I'm pulling off trust me.

She laughed.

Me: You can laugh as you want but I'm telling you.

Thobile: Sister just relax, Ndu he's at work as we speak, he will be here in two hours time.

Did she have to remind me that he was at work?

Thobile: Don't behave like it's your first date with him.

For me it felt like it was going to be our first date. The day felt so different.

Thobile: You need to sit down and relax, he won't disappoint you.

I sat down and threw my phone against the wall getting rid of my frustrations.

Thobile: You need to calm down.

She got up and picked up the phone. It was separated with the battery.

MAVIS

I was having lunch with Banele and his girlfriend, I wanted to be out of the house. When I left home I made a promise to my family that I will support my husband, no matter what, I promised them that separation won't be part of my marriage. I will stick to my promises, there are times where our fear of being lonely is bigger than our wish for genuine happiness. As a result we remain in relationships that don't bring out the best in us. We stay in lack luster relationships because we fear the unknown and ultimately do ourselves a huge disservice. I've

been always the house wife, and Sonto was always the golden women for my husband

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learning that he used to go with her to business events, that made me more angry because, he never went with me to any of his book show or business events. I don't know his business partners. But what can I do with the fact that he doesn't love me? that proves that I was the only one who was committed to our married.

Because I only have one life and that life I'm not going to waste. Tears were making me miserable not stronger. Giving up my marriage that will be undermines the sense of my happiness and fulfillment of a long term basis.

I looked at Banele as Judy excused herself.

Banele: I've been meaning to ask you something.

Me: Shoot.

Please God I know nothing about Thobi.

Banele: Have you meet Thobi's son?

Oh God why have you forsaken me.

Me: Not yet.

Why does he care their relationship wasn't that serious. I sent Sonto a message as Banele was asking me questions about Thobile.

Banele: I was seeing my future with that girl, I don't know what went wrong between us.

There's no magic formula for getting someone off the fence, they were teenagers by then and our parents were close they hid their relationship for their family, she broke up with him because she thought we were not being good friends to her. Honestly she didn't want anything to do with our friendship anymore. I'm glad that she walked away before it was too late.

Sometimes I think Thobile act before things get messy. before it's too late. I feel like it's too late for me to throw the all years of marriage.

Me: Remember that we can't predict our future?

He nodded and drank his coffee. I now agree that love hurts, but I didn't think it would hurt the way like kicking in the shin hurts. At the same time, life often presents a compelling argument that the two types of pain we often give to the wrong people.

MATSHIDISO

My fiancé walked in with our son. Whilst I was busy with the cross word. I smiled.

Zweli: Guess who's here?

Me: Samu and daddy are here.

I got up from the bed and hugged them.

Zweli: And she's in the good mood today.

I freely them.

Me: Why are you disappointed about that?

He sat down. I lifted my son up. I missed him so much. He was growing up so fast.

Zweli: You look different than the last time I was here.

I sat on the bed.

Me: When was that?

He gave me a side smile. It felt like I haven't seen his smile for ages.

Zweli: Two days ago.

I laughed. Samu went to him.

Me: Samu!

He looked at me then his father.

Me: Why didn't you go to school?

Samukelo: Bendigula sisi. (*I was sick sister*)

I looked at Zweli.

Zweli: Yeah he had a flu.

Me: And you didn't think of telling me that. Why?

Zweli: I'm sorry about that my love.

He took the puzzle book and looked at it.

Zweli: Puzzle book?

Me: It's keeping me busy.

Zweli: I see.

Samukelo: Tata ndifuna uYaya no Phawu. (*Dad I want Yaya and Phawu*)

Sometimes life doesn't make sense to me, my son speaks Xhosa he calls me his sister and Zwe dad how does that make sense? My fiance speaks Zulu and I speak Tswana that's how complicated my life is.

Zweli: We will go there tomorrow okay?

Me: Can't you take him back on weekend?

He looked at me and smiled

Zweli: You asking or telling me?

I laughed.

Zweli: I'm impressed to see the results of therapy.

Me: This book is makes sense, finding words look easier but work on it your brain will crack.

Zweli: I'm glad you understand the key of this activity book.

Me: Do you mind joining me for a walk?

Zweli: If that makes you happy why should I mind?

NOMASONTO

I read the message.

"Hi it's me Mavis Thabethe, I got your contact from Mr Khoza, I would like us to meet up and discuss something." I nervously looked at Victor. He frowned.

Victor: What is in that phone?

Me: Device icons, like settings, calendar-

He took the phone from me. He looked at it, he got up.

Victor: Let's go.

How rude? He gave me the phone.

Victor: It's about the danm time we go out of this house.

His phone started ringing. He answered it.

Victor: Mav!

I got up and went to my wardrobe.

Victor: We are on our way. Just wait for us.

Us? The bond I had with him because was always there but, he needs to spend more time with his wife.

Victor: Noma get ready.

If he knew that I wasn't going to agree, but because my instinct was to honor that women. I feel like I owe that women an apology. Even though things happen while ago and it wasn't planned to go that route.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

We was sitting on the garden. Samukelo was playing with his father's phone. The time seems to be moving so fast. I was enjoying Zweli's company for the first time in a long time.

Zweli: I promise.

Me: By this time tomorrow I will be waiting.

Zweli: Did I ever let you down?

I laughed.

Zweli: Anything else?

Me: Yes one more thing.

He leaned his ear over, I blew up the air.

Zweli: Then I'm taking Samu back to my mother.

I laughed.

Me: I'm sorry Khoza!

Zweli: Come again.

Me: Go to hell.

He got up.

Me: Where the hell are you going?

Samu: To hell.

We laughed, the funniest thing is that he said that then focus on his father's phone. If I could stop the clock from moving I

was going to do that, I was enjoying each moment with them. My friend anxiety didn't get the chance to play with my mind.

MAVIS

I was still at the restaurant waiting for them. The root of trauma is fear. I was scared that he might change his mind.

I checked the time. I felt someone standing behind me. I freaked out the look behind me, my husband was standing behind me.

Me: Vic you need to grow up.

He kissed me. Then opened the chair for his golden women she sat down.

Sonto: Thank you.

He also sat down.

Victor: Thanks for rescuing me from this woman.

Like really now? I was not even interested for that, what matters to me was to keep my husband and be his supportive partner.

Sonto: You need prayers Thabethe.

He nodded then smiled. We exchanged greetings. They both looked at me.

Me: Vic I'm sorry to take so long to accept this, is not easy but because I love you and I want to be with you I can do anything to show my love for you.

I paused as the wait walked to us. We ordered.

Victor: I'm all ears.

Me: This wasn't an easy decision but because I love you and I want to stick to my vows, I'm accepting your relationship with Sonto.

He smirked.

Victor: Thank you Mav this means too much to me.

Me: Sharing is not my style but I have no choice but to share you with Sonto.

Another waiter brought our orders. Funny enough Victor and Sonto ordered the same dish, I felt left out.

Victor: Did you have to order that?

She looked at him then eat. We ate quietly. Until I decided to break the silent.

Me: I don't know how this works, I can't share but I will learn as time goes.

Victor: You will get there.

He looked at her.

Victor: Is that Khoza?

He pointed at him. He called him.

Me: We are having a meeting here.

Victor: Well Mav postpone your meeting for later.

AZOLA

Whilst I was waiting for Ndumiso we heard a gun shot. That was strange PK (Pride Kindom) is a very peaceful place with people who are kind and welcoming.

Thobile: Did you hear that?

Another gun shot.

Me: This is serious.

She got up.

Me: Where are going?

Thobile: I'm going to check.

Me: Don't do that.

She walked to the window and took a deep breath before she could opened the blinds a little.

Thobile: No!!!

She screamed.

Me: What is it?

I didn't want to see what she saw but something strange pushed me to do that. I walked to the window I took a deep breath before I could open the blind, I paused then opened it. To my horror I saw Ndu's car. It can't be him.

Me: Tell me they didn't shoot him.

I rubbed my chest trying to be strong. She didn't answer me she walked away from me.

NOMASONTO

I was playing with Mr Khoza's son. Something strange about his family.

Me: What's your name boy-boy?

Him: Samukelo.

Me: Nice to meet you little champ.

He looked like Musa when he was at his age.

Me: Samu where is mommy?

Samu: At Mpumelelo.

Zweli: Not grandmother. Where is Tshidi.

Samu: She's there.

He pointed the entrance. We laughed.

Me: I'm sorry Mr Khoza but I have to ask this.

He looked at Vee then me.

Me: Is your wife related to the Nkosi family from Mnambithi?

Zweli: Not that I know of, why?

Me: Samu's mother look so much like my mother, then here again Samu look bit like my brother when he was at his age.

He looked at Mavis.

Mavis: You said she looks similar to your mother?

I nodded.

Zweli: I knew it.

We looked at him.

Zweli: I've been wondering why I was connected with Nelly, what is it that I was needed to pay attention to, I kept on getting it wrong, now everything makes sense.

Mavis: What's the next step from here?

He looked at me.

Zweli: Don't get me wrong, when you were born.

Like really now? I told him.

Mavis: Where you were born?

Me: Do I have to answer that?

They all nodded including Vee. I told the name of the hospital.
They all nodded confirming something.

Zweli: I have to go, Thabethe can we meet up tomorrow morning.

Vee nodded.

Zweli: Please come with Ms Mabuza.

Victor: No problem.

He took Samu from me he cried.

Zweli: We will see aunt tomorrow.

Samu hugged me.

Me: How old is he?

Zweli: Seven years.

Me: Okay boy go wait for me in the car I'm coming okay.

That's when he agreed to go to his father. Mavis shed tears, I don't know what was happening there but everyone was emotional.

Me: What is going on?

Mavis: You will find out tomorrow just be prepared for the outcomes.

She wiped her tears. My heart rate increased. I don't know what was happening but something was telling me it's about my mother.

AZOLA

Thobile rushed to his car.

Thobile: Ndumiso!

She cried calling his name. I didn't have the energy to go there.
Who would want to kill my boyfriend like that.

Thobile: Ndumiso please! (Crying)

I sat down and cried.

Thobile: Ndu!!!

MATSHIDISO

Later on. My roommate switched off the lights.

Her: Good night.

Me: Night.

Her: Count me on your dreams.

Me: Whatever.

I said a little prayer. Within fifteen minutes I fell asleep. I find myself walking with the woman who was carrying her child.

Women: Nomasonto, Ngikhathele ngicela ungisize nomfowenu.
(I'm tired please help me with your brother)

She gave me the child.

Women: Sisonдела eduze Nomasonto. *(We one step closer)*

Me: You've been singing that song for too long now.

Women: Ecclesiastes 3:11. Say every thing is as God made it not as it appears to us. We have the world so much in our hearts

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are so taken up with thoughts and cares of worldly things, that we have neither time nor spirit to see God's hand in them.

Me: I'm tired Ma.

Women: Everything has its own time, and there is a specific time for every activity under heaven, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to pull out what was planted, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build up, a time to cry and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to hug and a time to stop hugging, a time to start looking and a time to stop looking, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear apart and a time to sew together, a time to keep quiet and a time to speak out, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace. It won't be easy to accept what you have been dying to see, but we will pass that phase when we get there. That's Ecclesiastes 1 vs 8 Sonto keep it in your heart.

She stopped walking.

Me: Let's go Ma.

Women: My journey has ended, your sister will take you through the new journey, but most importantly everything has a period.

I nodded.

Women: Good luck on your new journey.

She disappeared.

Me: Ma!

The baby cried. I didn't know what to do I joined him and cried too. I woke up struggling to breath. The dream wasn't scary but I was struggling to breath. The woman kept on calling me Sonto and I was calling her mom.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

The following day.

Last night I had to tell Vee what happened to my parents, and why did my father left. It wasn't easy sometimes there are things that are needed to be kept in private because peoples might use those things against you one day.

Well my life involves a painful lesson, learned bitterly. Trusting a man sometimes might swallow you, my father left us, and he never looked back. On the other side there is Victor who betrayed his wife and he wasn't willing to justify his betrayal, instead of humbling himself and go to his wife he came to me. Which I find it very disrespectful. I spent hours last night thinking about my life, I find it difficult to get the right answer. Especially that Victor wants to be with me. The question was will he accept my brother.

I gave Nelly and Musa their lunch box. Nelly looked at Victor.

Victor: I guess you are ready ?

They nodded. He got up from the chair and took the car keys, I needed my own space with the kids alone I missed our own quality time. Why can't he go to his wife.

Victor: Noma we will wait for you in the car.

As they walked out. The are things that I should worry about, things like why Zweli wanted to meet with me, asking him if Samu's mother is related with Nkosi family it was a consent because they was something strange with that women and her son. I locked the door and joined them in the car.

AZOLA

I couldn't sleep, it was hard for me to accept the situation. My boyfriend was transported to a nearby hospital with life threatening injuries now he is gone, my happiness just faded. He was declared death at mid night.

The biggest fear was to be hurt by love because love hurts, love has scars love has wounds and marks every heart to be broken. Love come in many shapes loving him was to commit my loyalty, trust and love to him, in my heart I had many rooms for love and one of the room was locked because it was meant for my heartbroken, I never thought that I would unlock that room like that. Love is the link of heartbroken. Why do we call it *love* when we get involved to it and left with broken hearts. I know love has challenges but accepting that someone you were madly in love he's gone that's too much to take.

Thobile: Sisi someone is here to see you.

I wiped my tears.

Me: Who's that?

Thobile: Mr Sikhakhane.

I rubbed my eyes with my hands.

Thobile: No sis it's Ndu's father.

Me: Ohw let him in.

She walked away and came back with him. He was holding a bunch of flowers and a box of chocolates. He sat opposite me and put those flowers on the table.

Thobile offered him something to drink he said he was fine.

Mr Sikhakhane: My deepest condolences Ma Mazibuko.

I nodded. My words were deserted.

Mr Sikhakhane: I came to check on you.

I nodded again. He looked at me and asked me to look at the card on the flowers. I took them and looked at the small card. I read the card

"My love Azola Mazibuko, the only person who makes my heart beat of joy the women who makes me want to move out of my father's house, I know that you don't love chocolates but today I bought them for you"

I looked at the box of chocolates.

Me: So sweet.

That came out as an whisper. I took the box it was not sealed, I looked at his father then opened it. To my suprise I got a letter that reads "*Would you marry me?*" I put the letter aside

and opened all the chocolates until I got the ring. I couldn't help it but to cry.

Mr Sikhakhane: My son loved you and he wanted to do the right thing but because we can't predict our future, his life was taken before he could proposed the women of his dreams, my deepest condolences again.

Why did he gave me that?

Mr Sikhakhane: We both lost someone who was special to our hearts.

I just cried Thobile joined me.

MATSHIDISO

I was sitting on the edge of my bed hugging my legs, I was still blown away by the dream, it wasn't scary but it kept me shocked.

The thought of someone out there living my life was still there, the only thing I wanted was my really family

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my Identity. The women on my dream called me Nomasonto.

Mr & Mrs Radebe walked in. Still early in the morning for visitors.

Mrs Radebe: Tshidi!

I faked a smile. Whatever it was it must be something serious.

Mrs Radebe: She's not happy to see mommy.

Me: Mom! Rra! what is going on? (Dad)

Mrs Radebe: Zweli summoned us.

Me: Oh I see.

She sat next to me. The last time I saw her she was laying on the hospital bed. Yet the wheel had turned and I was the one was sleeping on the depression and anxiety bed.

Rra Radebe: O tsogile jang my baby? (*How are you*)

Me: I'm good and how is everyone.

Rra Radebe: Everyone is perfectly fine.

The center administrator asked us to use the hall. That made me to question myself, Mr Radebe said everyone is fine. He wasn't going to lie to me. We walked to the hall Zweli and his son they were there, that was a relief.

Me: Rre Samukelo! (*Samukelo's father*)

He smirked

Me: Whats going on?

He asked me to sit down which I did. Whilst we was exchanging greetings my In-laws walked in my mother in-law wasn't there only Zweli's father and his step dad, they were followed by Victor and his baby mama. To my suprised Zweli's father is based on New York City.

Me: What does she want here?

They walked to us and sat down.

Samu: Aunt!

She ran to her.

Me: How am I supposed to beat depression when my fiance keep on seeing this woman Zweli.

She put Samu down.

Her: I'm sorry, I don't know what is going on here and I'm not interested to know.

Victor begged her to calm down.

Her: Vee I have better things to do, than to be here.

She started walking.

Victor: Mr Mabuza was right you are not his daughter and your mother was right she never cheated on her husband.

She turned and looked at him.

Sonto: Pardon?

Victor: The Radebe's have been dying to tracked down there biological daughter, for years who was mistakenly switched by the hospital, they gave Mrs Radebe the wrong baby and the other mother took the wrong baby.

I shook my head she did the same. Victor walked to her. He bagged her to calm down and join us.

Victor: Noma my love you trust me I won't let anyone to hurt you.

Poor Mavis, she's a humble soul she doesn't deserve what was happening to her.

Me: You are the girl who was living my life.

She shook her head.

Me: I hate you.

She smiled then nodded.

Sonto: Everything about you look so much like my mother, her name was Khanyi Nkosi. And your stink attitude is my father's attitude. For a moment I wanted to say Vee lost his mind. I never lived anyone's life. I'm living my own life without bothering anyone.

I looked at Mr and Mrs Radebe. They kept on nodding.

Sonto: You might hate me for something I did not do and I'm not aware of but the life I'm living I don't wish it for anyone to be me, not even my greatest enemy, not even you or anyone.

Me: That doesn't change how I feel about you. You disgust me.

Sonto: Thank you madam and everyone, I think I'm done here.

She walked few steps away from us then turn and looked at us.

Sonto: The life you are talking about has a lot of disadvantage. They struggled I've been through with the realities of my own lives, being a care giver at the young age, becoming a mother to my brother at the young age, being a teen Mother, not to mention that the are men who were doing as they pleased on my body because I'm voiceless.

Victor: Noma you cannot walk away just like that. The least you could do is to get to know who you are.

Sonto: I need some time alone, if you don't mind.

She walked away.

Zweli: What do we do?

Mr Radebe: Thank you Khoza you made me the happiest man in the world.

Me: That woman who was here seconds ago, can act, she's not the girl we are looking for.

Victor: Well her story is relevant to your story, but if you have doubt the only thing that can help us is paternity test.

Everyone nodded.

Mr Radebe: I'm willing to do anything.

Me: Dad what makes you think she's your daughter-

Mrs Radebe cut me.

Mrs Radebe: As a mother I felt connected with that girl, I can do whatever I'm required to do to prove that she's my daughter.

Step in law: Tatu Radebe, Ufana nale ntombazana yayilapha. Kunzima ukuxelela kuba uyindoda kwaye ungumfazi, uvavanyo lwe-DNA luya kuba sisinqe semali. (*Mr Radebe! You look similar with the girl who was here. It's hard to tell because you are a man and a woman, a DNA test will be a staple of money*)

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

I was sitting on the bench trying to overcome what happened in that room, how could Victor put me on a position like that. Some of the things are meant to be kept in secret. What was I thinking telling him about my parents. I was angry at myself angry at the world. I walked back to that toxic and depressing environment.

When I got there, Vee was about to leave. I leaned on the door and looked at them.

Victor: We'll keep in touch khoza.

He stopped talking as he saw me. I walked to them.

Me: Thabethe you claim to love me, how dare you put me in this position?

Victor: Because I love you and I want you to be happy. Knowing who you are will help you to understand why Mr Mabuza left.

I sat down. That lady didn't hide how disgusted she was my presence was making her foam. She looked at me then spat on the floor.

Me: Why do you hate me like that?

Tshidi: You slept with Zwe and pretended like nothing happened.

She was so sure that I did that. Everyone looked at me and Zweli. Even the man who claimed to love me.

Zweli: Tshidi how many times should I tell you it was just a dream.

She cut him.

Tshidi: How convenient Rre Samukelo, I dreamt about you sleeping with her talking about beef, and stuff the next thing you guys are friends how do you explain that?

That wasn't funny but I find myself laughing mind me Victor joined me.

Me: Uyazi Nomasonto, ubufebe bakho bebusezingeni. (You know Nomasonto, your prostitution was on the other level)

She hated me because of a dream?

Zweli: I'm sorry about that Ms Mabuza.

Man 1: Tshidi that was a serious accusations which might lead two people to break up. Did you see Thabethe's face he was ready to go.

I thought I was the only person who noticed that, I glanced at Vee then that women.

Zweli: Uyahlanya wena Tshidi. (You are insane)

Tshidi: I know what I saw in my dreams.

Zweli: That dream was the guidance, where to search for the women you always wanted to meet.

His phone started ringing, he answered.

Zweli: At least my sister decided to call me.

Not even a simple hello.

Me: Vee please take me home if you don't mind. (Whispered)

He nodded then asked me to wait a minute.

Zweli: Thobi Sisi I can't hear you. Calm down and talk to me.

He got up and exited the room. How do we explain that, a humble respected man was in love with a crazy woman. That's

how complicated life is sometimes, we don't always get to see the perfection of life. Because life it doesn't have to be perfect life must give us challenges in order to learn.

Zweli walked in again

Zweli: Samu my boy let's go.

He was so down.

Tshidi: You can't take him now, I want to spend time with him.

Zweli: You know my love I could be at the park playing with my boy, or be at my office. But because I love you I'm here to show you my support. And you still throwing accusations on my face I'm tired of your behaviour Tshidi I'm done here.

Tshidi: Are you dumping me?

He shook his head.

Zweli: Udadewethu no-anti wami, bayangidinga kunokuhlala lapha ngilalele izinsolo zakho zobuhlanya. (*My sister and my aunt, they need me instead of sitting here listening to your allegations of madness*)

Man 2: Zweli we do not deviate from our responsibilities.

Zweli: She doesn't need me Tata. I'm going to PK Ndumiso was shot sadly he didn't make it.

Man 2: Zola's boyfriend?

He nodded.

Zweli: You head me Tata, Ndumiso Sikhakhane he's no more.
(*Dad*)

Me: You mean Mr Sikhakhane the lawyer?

He nodded. I looked at him for a couple seconds, hoping that he will say he was not talking about him. My stomach started churning, I shut my eyes and opened them again. That man knew what he was doing, it's all my fault, I felt like someone stabbed my heart with the knife then immediately pulled out the knife forcefully.

Vee: Noma!

Me: Wate...

Words failed to come out. My hands began to shake. There was no justice that was going to be served for the person who come from a poor background. There was no happiness or whatsoever for a poor background girl like me. Victor gave me a glass of water I drank whilst my hands were trembling.

Fifteen minutes later. I was feeling better but still shock, I wished he could say he was joking, but no he stuck to his story.

Me: That's it I'm going to clear the case, before more innocent people get hurt because of me.

Victor: We are not sure that constable Tshivase is behind the-

Zweli: What makes you think he was shot because of your case?

That cop told me that he's coming for me.

Me: I'm talking about the man who took my daughter and dump her somewhere I never been. Yes he is in prison but let's not forget he can do anything to get out of that place, and hurting people who gets involved on this case will be his main object.

Victor: The is no case that we will dropped. We will get a new lawyer.

Me: We?

He nodded.

Victor: We are partners Noma, anything that affects you it affects me too.

I have a feeling that what we are doing is wrong.

Zweli: Ndumiso wouldn't allowed you to drop the case, not alone my sister would allow that to happen.

Tshidi: I'm out of here, nobody cares about me, everything is her.

Mr Radebe: Matshidiso my baby stop being so stubborn.

Even if I wanted to tell Victor the peace of my mind but I could see the male vision of myself in Mr Radebe.

Tshidi: Rra you find your daughter, I'm nothing to you. I'm no longer matters to you.

Zweli: Why is everything about you? (Yelled)

Tshidi clapped her hands. I got up and looked at Victor.

Bab Radebe: You are my daughter no matter what Tshidi.

She looked at Zweli, he was ready to leave.

Zweli: My love you will call me when you need me.

He took few steps away from us.

Zweli: I'm going to PK my aunt and sister need me

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more than you do.

Tshidi: And my son?

Zweli: What about him?

AZOLA

Mr Sikhakhane walked out. So Ndumiso wanted to ask my hand for marriage, I looked at the ring.

Thobile: I can't believe that he's gone.

As much as I wanted to be strong but I just couldn't, Thobi was also falling apart, they were so closed. No one was strong between the two of us. I lost my boyfriend she lost her best friend.

Me: We have to accept.

She nodded and cried silently. He was the man I had hoped to see my future with, my love for Ndumiso will never be replaced. I slid the ring on my wedded finger.

Me: I will never love anyone like I love you Ndumiso. With this ring you left for me, it will symbolise the love I have for you.
(Crying)

Thobile gave me a determined look.

Thobi: Sisi don't do that to yourself.

Me: This is what he would wanted me to do, he would wanted me to be close to his heart, so this ring is his heart.

She nodded and say. "*May his soul rest in peace*"

MATSHIDISO

I was experiencing pivotal peak of pain, anger and frustration I wanted to scream only two words "*I hate my life*" whilst Zweli exited the hall with my son. I felt like a dark cloud has specifically settled over me. I was left with Mr Radebe, knowing Mrs Radebe very well it will take time for her to talk to me ever again. Fear is the little death that brings total obliteration.

Ere Radebe: Tshidi my baby you've been praying for this day to come and it came you should be happy.

Me: She's living my life Dad.

Rre Radebe: We talked about this before, no nobody is living anybody's life. Nobody interferes in anybody's life, there is no interference Tshidi get that to your head.

Me: I always wanted to meet her, now that she's here I'm scared, that I won't be your baby girl anymore.

He hugged me I cried on his arms. Sometimes I wonder whether life will ever get any better, or maybe it will always be this terrible. Escaping from that hopeless seemingly stated that it was impossible. There I was needed I needed a friend, I needed Zweli but he wasn't there.

NOMASONTO

Later on.

Instead of Vee taking me home, he drove with me to his house.

Me: Why are you doing this?

Victor: I want to introduce you to my family.

Me: Isn't that too soon?

Victor: You already met my mother and Mav now it's time for you to meet my brother and my father.

For my side I don't know about him, that disrespectful.

Me: Thabethe I understand what you are saying but today it's not the day. I have a lot of things to take in.

He giggled.

Victor: You always have excuses don't you?

Not that he wasn't there, not that he didn't hear that my lawyer was shot. I was carrying lot of stuff on my shoulder. He got out of the car and walked to my side.

The burden that I was carrying they were heavy for me alone but because I was born alone I had to carry them myself. He opened the car for me, I looked at him.

Victor: Noma please.

I got out of the car. If he is that controlling how much more when we get married?

He punched the door bell the door automatically unlocked. We walked in. The more I was sticking through hardest times without expecting the road to be easy, it was the more I could handle what life throws at my face. Hardiness involves accepting that we have some control over our situation, and that there are always steps we can take to improve our circumstances. Obstacles can be seen as challenges from which we can grow. When we got there their were having their family time Mav wasn't among them.

Mrs T: Finally he decided to come home.

He kissed her cheek. I could see the excitement on her face.

Victor: I missed you too Ma.

We sat down. We exchanged greetings.

Victor: Where is Mavis.

Mr T: In her room.

He got up and disappeared to one of the rooms.

Mr T: I believe you are Nelly's mother?

I nodded. Honestly I was scared, he asked me about myself.

Mr T: When was the last time you went to church?

I swallowed. Honestly the last time I've step my foot to church.
I was still a child.

Me: The last time I step my foot at church I was still a child, I
had no idea what life has for me.

He cut me.

Mr T: Nobody knows what life has in store for us, Nobody knows what tomorrow holds for us, the word of God says Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart for my holy purpose. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations." Therefore he has the plan for our lives.

I nodded.

Mr T: Polygyny produces unstable societies because it creates competition between men seeking partners, thus undermining masculinity and, in many cases, requires style. You are a young beautiful woman any man would like to have.

You see this was what I was avoiding.

MATSHIDISO

I always wanted to meet my family, now because I had the lead I became afraid of getting what I wanted. All my obstacles boiled down to one thing. "I'm no longer dad's baby." My fears were a lot more personal, a lot more internal.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

THREE MONTHS LATER

I was sitting under the tree enjoying the buzzing sun of winter.
My Psychologist walked to me.

Psycho: Someone seems to forget that this is her last day with
us.

I smiled as he sat down.

Me: I can't believe that, this feels like my second home.

Psycho: I can extend your stay if you want me to.

I hit his shoulder. He chuckled.

Me: No. no! absolutely you won't do that.

He laughed I joined him.

Me: I will miss this place though.

Psycho: We will miss you, Ms Radebe.

Me: I can't believe that tomorrow I'm living this place.

He gave me a book.

Me: *Become the Boss of Your Emotions*

I was still upset because I keep doing it wrong, pushing Mr Radebe and my fiance away, which makes me want to end my life. My fiance come to see me only when he feels like. Not to mention Mr Radebe he only call me when he feels like he want

to, those were the only people who never wanted to see me stuck yet I pushed them.

Psycho: This book will help you to overcome your emotions.

Me: Why become the boss of your emotions?

Psycho: Take it as a gift from the author of *become the the boss of your emotions*

I looked at the author name. The book was written by *Dumezweni Nyathi*.

Me: No ways, Tell me it's not your work.

Psycho: Yes ways it is my own sweat.

I laughed.

Psycho: Meditation your emotions can help you increase your awareness of all feelings and experiences. When you meditate, you're teaching yourself to sit with those feelings, to notice them without judging yourself or attempting to change them or make them go away. Sometimes, it's enough to mentally trace emotions back through your thoughts. Putting your feelings on the paper can help you to reflect on them more deeply.

Me: Oh I see.

He was a great friend beside of being my Psychologist.

Me: Thank you Psycho Nyathi.

He nodded then smirked.

AZOLA

It was hell and shitty three months of moaning process, it wasn't easy, it was hard, accepting that he's gone it's a challenge, I still can't believe it. Everything was about him. I miss his mess, his talking and singing. He wasn't a good singer though but he used to sing love songs. He was in love with his job. It felt like my life was half empty. I just find out that I'm pregnant with his child what a wonderful gift he left for me

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I guess the pregnancy was filling the space that he left. He was the only man who knew how deeply flawed and crazy I was but he chose to love me anyway. Thobile walked out with another bag she walked in again after five minutes.

Everything was about Tshidi, she was much recognised than us in the family. Everything was about her. We are invited to celebrate Tshidi's recovery, honestly I think Zwe is wasting his time with that girl. I called her last night she is no process on that girl she was complaining about my nephew that he is

distancing himself from her. What did she accept? She wanted her family yet Zweli tracked the family it's wrong.

Me: I hope this is the last last time I come to Jo'burg because of your sister in-law.

She nodded

Thobile: The world can be dark when it seems like there is no one in it who will understand us. She needs to accept her condition.

Thobi had anger issues but she is always organized and managing her anger.

Me: Thanks for being here.

She nodded again. She doesn't like Jo'burg. She dislike that place, she says it brings lot of bad memory. They say fear is the profound of success. But with Thobi here success and fear doesn't go hand in hand.

Thobile: We are practically family and Ndu was my friend he would wanted me to be here for his love of his life.

Thobile was the only person who seems to understand my situation, only one close friend who was there for me. My brother and his wife were nagging me about the ring on my finger they think I was bringing bad lucks for keeping it. They say it was confusing for potential suitors, who might not be able to state my relationship status. Gradually, they belief is that, *I'm bringing bad luck in my life and I need to let go of Ndumiso. For me that ring was indicating the connection between me and my deceased fiance.*

NOMASONTO

DNA test confirmed that I'm Mrs and Mr Radebe's long lost daughter. Which makes me confused and angry, with the endless questions like how would the hospital be so ignorance? How did I ended up in the wrong family? But only God knows why.

"Mommy" Musa screamed. We are waiting for Tshidi to return so that we can organize the trip to Kwa Zulu Natal to let my mother's family and the Mabuza's about the incident that happened years ago. It was hard for me to accept that the hospital switch me to the mabuza. But I was happy at the same time that I have a family that I was dying to have all those years.

Victor: Mama ingane ikhuluma nawe. (*Mom the child is talking to you*)

What does he want here? We are engaged to be married but the whole process was blocking my happiness. And his father

on the other side he was making things hard for us that, he said it's against his belief to have more than one wife. That man is rude and unfriendly he calls himself the man of God whilst he treats people like '*shit*' Is not like I woke up and decided to be on polygamy relationship it happen naturally.

Family problems from mild to severe will challenge every family at some point. These can result from behavioral and mental health issues in the family or from specific stressful events. Because of Pastor Thabethe's favoritism between me and Mav. I decided to isolate myself from the Thabethe's until I became officially their bride that's when I will go there and play the pride duties.

Victor: Noma!

Him shouting my name made me to freaked out.

Me: Don't do ever do that.

Victor: I'm sorry my love, Musa has been talking to you for too long without any response.

Me: I'm sorry.

He nodded. I looked at Musa.

Me: Boyza!

Musa: I'm going to the library.

Me: Okay.

He walked out. Nelly visited her grandmother parents from his father's side, hence why I was surprised to see Vee there.

Me: What brings you here?

Victor: Because I missed my Noma.

He doesn't forget himself.

Me: Why are you here alone?

Victor: Nelly refused to come with me.

Nelly like her grandparents, I was going to say that he's lying but she admitted that she no longer want to stay in the shack. She's just a child she doesn't understand what is going on. I glanced at Victor as he placed his hand on my cheek, his other hand moved slowly to my thighs the soft sweat poured all over my body. I swallow my pump then cleared my throat at the same time.

Victor: What's the matter Noma?

Me: I wish Tshidi can accept me as her sister.

Victor: She will come around.

I just wanted everything to end. I wanted everyone to focus on a new character. That's all mattered to me.

Victor: Let me take you to a dream land.

Me: If it help me to overcome my stress then take me there.

He helped me to get up from the chair. Like really now?

MAVIS

Even if a person doesn't want to involve black magic for being loved she will end up doing that. Vic hardly touch me not alone to look at me. I wanted to know what is it that Noma fed my husband, I wanted to know which love secret she was using on my husband. I was supposed to be happy for them but with Vic's behaviour I turned from being a good girl to a bad girl. My cousin referred me to this woman who once helped her with her cheating husband.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

I thought the person my cousin referred me to was a woman. Only to find out it was a man. He asked me to take off my shoes which I did. He groaned.

Me: Thokoza gogo.

He kept on groaning, I didn't have any idea what do or say.

Me: I came here to-

He cut me.

Him: To check how powerful I am?

What?

He was getting everything wrong.

Him: What God created and written on the rock is irreversible.

Me: I need your help that's all.

Him: I can see that you need my help, but unfortunately I cannot help you, with with destroying what God has created.

Me: Why, what do you mean?

Him: Angiboni ikusasa lakho nomyeni wakho. (*I don't see your future with your husband*)

I didn't tell him what is it that brought me there, but yet he was telling me about my husband.

Him: You are destined with someone else.

I got confused.

Him: You can do anything to please your husband but it will be temporary, his destiny wasn't meant with you but with someone else.

Me: Please help me, I want him to look at me the same way he looked at his Fiancée.

He clapped his hands then groaned and spoke the foreign language that I didn't understand, then he shook his head, he roared like some beasts that scared me off.

Fifteen Minutes Later.

He looked at me then shook his heard.

Him: Ngitshele lapha ngabe unokuxhumana nomyeni wakho?
(Tell me here do you have any connection with your husband)

I shook my head, he shrugged his shoulder. I love Vic with all my heart to be honest there is no connection no communication

as married couples unless we are having dinner with the family that's where we will communicate.

Him: Why are you still with him?

Me: He's my husband and I love him.

He shook his head.

Him: Tell me about the young man in your dreams.

Usually I have a disturbing dreams. Sphelele he's my brother in law, I don't see as he appears on my dream.

Me: Husibali wami, ufana nomfowethu kimi. (*He's my brother-in-law, he's like my brother*)

Him: And the green pastures in your dreams?

That guy was reading my dreams not what brought me there, that was frustrating me.

Me: That's where I find myself playing with him.

He groaned again then let out his scarier raor. I've always thought traditional healers are scamming people. And they are performing satanic magic yet that man didn't use any herbs but he was reading all my dreams.

Him: How is your relationship with the young man physically?

I looked him confusedly. He said.

"The young man you are playing with on your dreams"

Me: He's kind, friendly and easy to talk to. I must say he's a good listener.

Him: You got the help you were looking for.

WHAT?

Him: Don't think about visiting another seer, because many people will get hurt.

I nodded repeatedly.

Him: Communicate with your dream when you pray, only God will lead you to the right path.

Me: Won't you give me anything for...

He cut me.

Him: Have faith my daughter, when you feel like you are losing your touch with our creator, pray if you still feel that way the is this young man who's dedicated at your church he will get you through, he's Spiritual gifted, he's not aware of that but he gets vivid dreams. He help people.

A young man who has the Spiritual gift? Our church had many dedicated young man.

NOMASONTO

Well sex also causes large releases of dopamine the pleasure chemical, it also release a stress. I must admit it makes a person feels good, especially if you are having encounter with the right person.

He drove his tongue inside my virgina, setting off another shattering moan that was music to his ears. I was quite an instrument to play, so finely tuned, as he touched me to the ticklish part, I made the most glorious sounds raw, intense.

Me: Ahhh, baby, uhhh.

The absolutely softly sounds of pleasure as he plundered me with his tongue. I grabbed his head, yanked and pulled him closer. He thrust one finger inside me crooking it and hitting each and every spot that turned me moans into one long, high pitched orgasm. I shuddered against him, my legs quaking, and when he finally slowed to look up at me.

Victor: You always brings the best in me.

I didn't say anything he let his fingers worked inside me a little uncomfortable but nothing I couldn't handle. Anyway I know my way in the bedroom.

MATSHIDISO

I read the book, *"Be The Boss Of Your Emotions"* The book had many technics of controlling my emotions, such like playing board games, talking to a trusted friend. The is a point of view were he was talking about himself "I had an unforgettable time when everythingwent wrong. Where I lost the people who meant the world to me, parents and my wife at the same time, it was too much to take someone whom I trusted, my own blood, I'm talking about my twin brother. He brought the more pain in my life because the pain I had were not enough before his eyes, he turned my daughter his sex toy and that cost my little girls life" Imagine the pain I went through and I'm still breathing. Physical pain, has the sense of forever to it. The most commonreason teenagers commit suicide is heartbreak, from the trustee person, stemming fromromantic rejection,

and the belief they will never get over it and find it possible to be loved again. Here I stand and I'm the testimonial of my own depression. Working with numbers it demonstrates our brain to function very well and to focus on what we are doing.

Wow that book had many motives. When he told me about his life the other day I thought he was creating stories but now I understand how broke he was.

NOMASONTO

I don't understand how and I will never understand why would Vee want to be with me whilst he had a wonderful wife and educated wife. Well that's life isn't meant to be understood it is meant to be lived. His hands came to life. He went as if to rub his wrists, then he reached to the place where I find my body trembling, his fingers dancing right on my cookie.

Me: Ahhh! mmm! Thabethe!

He reached out for me. I jumped. He pressed me by his arms, wrapping his fingers all the way around them and bringing me forward.

Me: Ahhhh; Thabethe!

I think he realized that I was ready for him, I was wet, and he put his penis in my choochi. That man knows how to make a girl scream I no lie. The good thing about it is that he wasn't sneaking.

MAVIS

I was driving home. I was angry at myself and cousin. She promised me that the seer will help me. He didn't even take my money. The only thing he said it's that I should pray. The only thing that I needed was my husband to love, recognize me as he does to Nelly's mother. And again the young man who's dedicated to our church and he will help me to get be in touch with the Lord again.

MATSHIDISO

Zweli walked in right I was about to start packing my stuff.

He sat down and looked at me.

Zweli: Hello!

Me: Hi!

It was awkward in that room. I believe if it wasn't for our son he was going to walk away from me.

Me: How are you doing?

Zweli: I can't say that I'm fine while I know that my love she's here and I'm out there thinking about her all day and night.

Me: Do you love me?

Zweli: What kind of question is that Mme Samu?

Me: It's a simple question.

Zweli: You are the one woman who brings the best in me, you don't have to doubt my love for you.

Me: I'm nobody Zwe, how do you love a person like me? I have no family. The person who I used to call a mother washed her hands on me. I have no one.

He extended his hands to meet mine.

Zweli: Love doesn't need to be perfect, it just needs to be true. Only if your love is true, then it's already perfect. When you find the one that is meant for you, then you always think about how perfect everything is and will be. But love really doesn't need to be that perfect. Nothing is perfect in this world my love not even you or me but trueness is what counts. You are my love, my best friend and my soul mate, your smile, your laughter, and remember that you my everything. You are my perfection, love is the one who will pick you up in good and bad times. The one that is always on your side and that wipes away your tears when you sad or even happy.

Tears streamed, he wiped them. I don't deserve this man, I don't deserve his kindness.

We laid down on my bed. That moment brought memories at Stellenbosch University residential. We use to sat there until it was too late.

Me: Can't you stay with me until it gets late.

He chuckled.

Zweli: Tomorrow you will be with me until you get enough of me.

It was too hard to hard to bid him a farewell.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING

I looked at that place for the last time. I was going to miss that place it was nothing but friendly to me. I met people who've

been through the most than I am. I have Zweli who's kind and generous.

Voice: There she is and ready to go home.

I turned and looked at her. It was Mrs Radebe she looked happy and healthy. The last time I saw her that glowing it was before we find out that I was not their daughter.

Me: Mommy!

She walked up to me and gave me the warmest hug ever, I sobbed.

Me: I'm so happy to see you again.

Mother's love is the one of the greatest gift in the world. Zweli always praised his mother.

Mm Radebe: It's okay Tshidi.

We broke the hug and sat down.

Mme Radebe: You are my daughter Tshidi it won't change.

I nodded and wiped my tears

Me: I'm scared Mme, that she will replace me. *(Mom)*

She nodded.

Mme Radebe: Take her as your sister, she's been there for Mrs Mabuza until she took her last breath. She is still taking care of your brother Musawenkosi. The only thing you have to do is to accept her as your sister. That will make me the happiest woman alive.

I swear if I'm going to hear about girl in my house I'm going to kill someone.

Mme Radebe: The best thing is that both my daughters are breathing and they will be getting married very soon.

Me: Is she getting married too?

She nodded

Mme: She's getting married with Victor Thabethe, it won't be a big wedding as yours but yeah she will be getting married with the man she loves.

That girl she's living the life of sharing. Everything about her is sharing, she was sharing a man with Mav now my parents.

Me: So I will be getting married without my family?

Mme Radebe: Sonto will take us to your family this weekend.

Honestly I'm scared that Sonto girl she might get all the love from my parents.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

VICTOR

Zweli invited us to celebrate his Fiancée's return, though I didn't want to go there since he invited close family and friends, both Mavis and Noma are going there so why should I stay behind. I had to support my fiancée, the mother of my daughter, the golden queen. Between my little brother and Mav labeled Noma as my "*Golden women*" which it suits her.

I smiled a little. 'Golden women'

Noma came with a simple strategy which benefit her and Mav. I agreed to it because I want to keep her with me. She's her own women. The strategy was to use something like a schedule. This week I'm with her the other week I'm with Mav. As simple as it was. I just couldn't wait to be with her. Noma bring the best out in me. I tried to stick to the original plan but I find it hard. I don't know but it feels like my marriage died years ago, it's unconsciously uncoupled. Last night I was supposed to be with Mav but I couldn't stick the plan. I had a wonderful day with my Noma that made me to call it a night.

How long does it takes for a person to get dressed?

She finally walked to us. I swallowed my pump. She was wearing a dress waist it was wide, and a tight fit. It was not decorated with anything only created with a graceful, flowing look. Below the waist the dress was widen and had multiple symmetric layers towards the bottom. The dress was reaching just above her knees and it was the same length all around.

Her attire made me to swallow my pump.

Musa: Uncle Vee! (Laughing)

Me: You look beautiful Noma.

She looked at herself. Before she could say "*Thank you*"

Me: You ready?

She nodded then looked at Musa.

Sonto: You ready boyzer?

He shook his head. She took a seat and looked at her little brother. Honestly Noma she's unique person, she's what a man should marry. She cared so much about Musa and Nelly, she had a way to make her little brother to be happy and feel wanted.

Sonto: You don't need to worry, I will be there with you. I believe Tshidi she's not that bad.

Musa: Does that means you no longer who you are to me?

She took a deep breath that was the hardest question asked by a teen boy.

Sonto: This doesn't change who I'm to you, whatever circumstances life throws at me, I will be always your sister okay?

He nodded.

Sonto: Even if it means I should give my life for you I will do that, you are still my brother.

Musa: Mom you are the best.

She nodded and hugged him.

Me: Shall we?

They broke the hug than nodded.

MAVIS

Vic is unbelievable, unreliable, untrustworthy. He's just an "Un" with a capital letter "U." He's selfish and disrespectful, I don't feel like being loved by him. My mother in law was helping her granddaughter to dress up. For Tshidi's return, honestly If it wasn't for Tshidi I wasn't going to go there, but friends need to stick together, she's one of the luckiest woman in the whole world, who has a man who celebrate her. When she left the was a farewell dinner now we are celebrating her return. Even though she lied about where her condition, but we friends she should trusted us

The truth is love is not always pink as it looks. At first, it's lovely and blooming, but then there are often ups and downs. And yes, love can be sad too. I have every reason to be mad at myself. Sometimes I question myself does God really exist? Does he knows me? Does he hear my cries? I had server wounds that I don't think they will ever heal.

All I wanted was Victor to recognize me. Like he does to Nelly's mother. Love is not always sweetness like honey. It's also has painful pages full of laughter, sickness and sufferings. It is precisely these in which the emotional world of people often

gets out of hand, fluctuates, and is particularly susceptible to consoling words.

The saddest part is that I can walk away from him and give up all those years but he won't come after me. That's how sad my life is. Nelly ran to me.

Me: You ready?

Nelly: Only if you are not taking me to my mother.

Me: Remember uncle Zweli.

She nodded.

Nelly: My God father?

I nodded.

Me: We are going to his house.

She was excited.

Pastor T: That Khoza boy he's a good man, I wish my sons were like him.

Mrs T: Unfortunately they not.

He looked at her then called his granddaughter

Pastor T: Send my regards to your godfather okay.

She nodded.

MATSHIDISO

Me and Mrs Radebe we had a shopping therapy just a two of us. We used to do it years ago.

Mme Radebe: Next time we will invite your sister and Mavis since they are one package.

Oh my goodness just let the earth swallow me. My what?

Me: How do you feel about her being a second wife?

She looked at me then exiled.

Mme Radebe: Fuel prices is one of the biggest issues for us motorists, so it's worth doing all you can to make the most of every litre.

Where did fuel fit to my question. There is nothing that makes me angrier than a person who doesn't answer the question as the questionnaire asked.

Mme Radebe: Before we look at how to save on costs

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Let's look at why the price of fuel is so high in the first place.

Her phone started ringing, she walked away from me, saving me from the fuel conversation. She's suffocating at times. All I can do is to pretend to love her daughter, because with Mrs Radebe I can be her worst enemy ever.

MAVIS

The emotional of abandonment was confusing, vaguely. Experiencing great and deep longing of a failed romantic love can be extremely painful, suffering from broken heart which succumbed to depression, anxiety and, in more extreme cases, post traumatic desire.

Often loneliness in a marriage stems from a lack of connection, a lack of effort in the relationship, or a lack of individuation or maybe some combination of these factors. Everything was so wrong. Sipehelele was driving me and Nelly to Tshidi's house. He tried to have small talks with me but I was not interested. We got off the car. Sipehelele drove off. Right before we could walk to the house, I saw my husband's car, surprisingly Tshidi she's not my husbands favorite person for some reason, but there he was on her house.

We waited for them so that we can walk in as a family. Heat race became popular. They walked to us we exchanged greetings.

Victor: Shall we?

That man can pretend, he didn't even ask how am I doing? He pretended like everything was normal. He lifted his daughter up then we walked in. Zweli welcomed us Tshidi wasn't there already. We exchanged greetings then sat down. The deco had details. It was so beautiful, you would swear that it's a wedding ceremony, but why I was suprised, Zweli run his father's company that deals with catering and florist.

Me: This place is so -

Thobi cut me.,

Thobile: It's a five star luxury hotel.

We are determined by our biological design to experience mixed and messy emotions, often simultaneously. Postulating that there is no such thing as happiness in relationship or in marriage, but the silver lining, the consolation, is the knowledge that having difficult emotions which doesn't represent a personal failure. The inevitable unhappiness that was what I was suffering from, I was hurt beyond repairs. We admired the place until Azola noticed that I wasn't myself

Azola: Pastor I don't like this Mav.

I looked at her then gave her a faint smile.

Thobile: You cannot fool us with that smile.

I looked at my husband.

Me: I have a terrible headache.

Azola: I have something that will help you.

She got up and indicated that I should follow her then gave her a nod.

Victor: I'm not a fool. (*He whispered*)

Who said he's a fool?

Victor: Don't worry aunt I have her medicine on my car.

He gave me the car keys. He was unbelievable, how could he embarrassed me like that? People can change because of people like Victor.

NARRITED

Somewhere in Tanzania a man was lying on his sick bed, he was very sick but yet doctors couldn't find anything wrong with him. His wife looked at him. Mind me he saw his wife as his ex wife.

Man: MaNkosi I'm sorry.

His wife shook his head.

Wife: Mimi sio mtu unayenirejelea. (*I'm not the person you are referring me to*)

On his eyes he was seeing MaNkosi. He remembered how did his marriage ended with, MaNkosi. Some pain are unseen, and some words are unspoken. His wife walked out crying.

Man: I'm sorry.

MAVIS

I seat on his car and cried. I called my mother she answered.

Me: I can't do this.

I was crying, she couldn't hear me.

Mom: I can't hear you Mavis.

Me: I can't do this anymore I just can't.

Mom: Just send me a WhatsApp.

I let go of my phone then cried. The golden women opened the car.

I wiped out my tears.

Sonto: I'm sorry.

Me: You are sorry?

She nodded.

Sonto: I wish I can do something, but I can't.

Me: My husband loves you more than he loves me and you are sitting here telling me you wish you could do something.

Sonto: Sis Mav the least we can do is to be friends.

I aggressively chuckled.

Sonto: I tried to stop him from coming to my house, but he kept on-

I cut her. Each time word she uttered I was getting more angry.

Me: What did you feed him?

Sonto: Vee asked me to check on you.

I slapped her. She just nodded and walked out. Who became a fool at the end? It was me.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

LATER ON STILL AT TANZANIA

Sometimes taking risks is a good thing but take risks that you will never regrets. The man was lying there hopelessly. He left

his place of birth after his divorce was finalized, he never looked back. Never in his life thought about his siblings, kids and the other family members.

The couple had children of their own, but a dark cloud visited his family. His son was struck by the lightning then his favorite daughter was washed by the water. That's when he started losing faith, his wife was blaming him for every bad thing that was happening in that family. From then there was no communication.

The only thing that was left in his family was only hope. They hope for nothing but tomorrow.

NOMASONTO

Vee put me on the hot plate. He didn't have to spend a night with me. That was what I was what I was avoiding from the beginning. Conflict and bad blood between us. I walked in, Mavis was behind me, no sorry no nothing. We both sat down.

Victor: What happened outside there.

Me: Nothing.

Mind me we were whispering. He looked at Mavis.

Since he was sitting between us so he could talk to us. He whispered to her.

Me: Dad can I sit next to you if you don't mind.

Mr Radebe smiled then nodded. I moved to sit next to him.

Thobile: What happened to your face.

I avoided the question.

The WhatsApp message came through.

"How could you do that to Mav?" I looked at them then smile.

Musa: Mom I want to go home.

Me: Let's wait for sister Tshidi then we will leave.

He nodded. Vee sent another message.

"Can I have a word with you?"

I didn't respond, in order to respond I switched off my phone. I refused to let him and his wife to get into my head.

Me: Bhuti Zweli uphi uSamukelo? (*Brother Zweli where is Samukelo*)

Zweli: My mother just called they won't be able to come today.

The room went quite until I broke the silent.

Me: Dad are you sure that you were home.

He nodded.

Me: Why do I find it to hard believe you?

His eyes winded. We laughed besides the kids and Vee and his wife.

Me: So you are trying to tell me that mom let you go out looking like this?

He looked at himself. We laughed again.

Me: Sorry dad. Let's do this, you look fine but your tie and jacket doesn't match.

I took off his jacket. Well that wasn't my place. But I was trying by all means to forget what just happened.

Mr Radebe: Thank you Sonto.

I won't say that I was hurt I always knew that polygamy relationship has many disadvantages I knew the consequences before I could agree to be part of it. I couldn't wait for the day to be over.

NARRITED

I normally say we are chained by our past, holding on to hurts and grudges. And though no one else may know about our secret pain, the negative emotions we feel gnaw away if we don't hold on the past. Mr Mabuza was regretting leaving his home, regretting his divorce. He asked his wife to contact the bank.

He had no idea what was waiting for him back in South Africa. Poor man was coughing his cough was so dry. And he was getting weaker and weaker each day. Honestly he had given up but only hoping for tomorrow.

MATSHIDISO

When we got home, it was already late. The lights were off. My fiancée is at home around six pm. I switched on the lights only to be welcomed by a scream "**WELCOME**" I looked at Mme Radebe.

Me: This was the plan?

She smiled.

Mme Radebe: We missed you baby.

I smiled then hugged her. Then hugged Zweli, we had a group hug with his sister, aunt, Mav and my two friends. Zweli was trying by all means to make me happy. Though I was just a girl who couldn't do anything for herself, what kind of a woman I was? I couldn't cook

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iron, or do a simple laundry. But yet he was always there being supportive. Even though sometimes he was distancing himself from me but the love he was showing me was beyond.

We broke the hug than walked to the living room. My smile faded as I saw Sonto siting next to my father.

Me: Rra! (*Dad*)

He got up and gave me a hug. The only thing I had to do was to pretend. I couldn't ruin that evening. We settled down. I was introduced to little boy as my brother.

Me: Nice to meet you Musa.

He nodded.

Mme Radebe: Rre Tshidi don't you feeling cold?

Everyone laughed.

Thobile: Sonto doesn't want her father to look like he's on sixths.

They laughed.

Mme Radebe: At least someone had the courage to tell him that.

Rra Radebe: Oh my world, the person I spent all those years with failed to tell me that I don't look good with my dressing code.

They laughed. Mind me I just got up and walked out to my mother's car.

After thirty five solid minutes. I walked back to the house.
Everyone was ready to leave.

Sonto: Thanks for your hospitality.

Zweli: You welcome.

They shared a hug. She came to me I just gave her what she wanted, that's was a hug.

We broke the hug. Poor Mav she was awful quiet. We bid them farewell aswell as Mr and Mrs Radebe. And my friends. Thobile and Azola whispered to each other's ears as everyone exited the room.

Thobile: It must be hard for them both.

I cleared my throat. They kept quiet then looked at me.

Thobile: Tell Zwe to never invite us ever again.

Azola: Everyone was here for you, and you just walked out like you had no guests in your house.

Me: I had no interest in the conversation.

They looked at each other and walked away from me. My pride didn't allow me to apologise.

NOMASONTO

If I had money with me, I was going to take a taxi with the kids. But my stupidity let me to left my purse at home. I was sitting at the back passenger seat with the kids.

Victor: Noma I'm all ears.

Me: I had a long day Vee.

Victor: We all going to my house we need to sort this out.

Me: Stop the car.

Vee: Huh.

Me: Just pull over.

He stopped the car, I walked out of the car. I asked Musa and Nelly to get out too. Mind me Nelly didn't even fight with me, she just got out willingly. He just drove off. I carried Nelly on my

back then started walking with my family. If anything happens to us it will be God's grace.

Twenty minutes later. Whilst we still walking. His car was waiting at the corner. He was out leaning against the car. When we reached to his car, he took Nelly from my back then but her on the car.

Victor: Get in.

Me: Sorry I will be fine.

Victor: Don't do that Noma.

Mavis was not on the car. I believe he went to drop her than came back for us. Remember his princess comes first, if anything could happen to Nelly he won't forgive himself, so should I?

Victor: Musa my boy get in the car, Noma will join you guys. He got into the car. Victor locked the car. I started walking again he followed me.

Victor: Noma stop being so stubborn.

I stopped walking and looked at him.

Me: What do you want from me?

Victor: Noma stop fighting me, you are the one who laid your hand on my wife.

I could deny the accusations but I didn't want to make things worse.

Me: I'm sorry I didn't mean to.

Victor: What pushed you to do that?

Me: Victor I had a long day. I need to get home and have some rest.

He nodded and bagged me to get to his car.

Me: On one condition.

Victor: Which is?

Me: You won't sleep over.

He nodded. I walked to his car. Nelly was already snoring.

MAVIS

I kept pacing up and down. On my bedroom, I didn't wanna join my in-laws. Noma didn't touch me. I'm the one who slapped her. Yet I lied.

Me: Mav what did you do?

What drove me to lie? What drove me to slap her? She's just a peaceful soul is it was anyone else she was going to fight me back. Loving Victor turned me into something else that I don't recognize.

Voice: How was the dinner party?

I stood there and looked at him.

Me: Siphe don't ever do that?

I sat on my bed. He joined me.

Siphelele: Sis Mav I'm sorry to be the one to bring this up.

I looked at him.

Siphe: You need to let him go.

Me: I can't Siphe.

He brought my head into his shoulder I rested there for few minutes.

Siphe: It's not easy to admit when your that relationship is over. I've been there I know the feeling but you need to let it go. It's not easy to end a relationship when you're no longer happy on it than what. Its common Sis Mav but you can see that your relationship isn't working.

Me: I love him.

What I like about my brother in law his a good listener and a great advisor besides what the seer told me.

Siphe: When the two of you have a unitary identity and you can't pull yourself out of it despite your best efforts. Losing yourself is not good at all. If you can't find your identity even after trying repeatedly, call it a quite it won't define you as a failuer. Your life should be full of vibes, and when one of the most important people in your life is bringing you the exact opposite, it might mean they're doing you more harm than good. Let him go.

I cried on his shoulder.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

VICTOR

When I got home, it was already late, it was very quiet. I guess everyone was in their room. I walked to our room. For a moment I wanted to jumped to conclusion. As I walked in my room my brother was lying on my bed with Mavis on his chest.

But jumping to conclusions that was going to ruin my relationship with my little brother. My brother won't screwing me over, the was nothing that was linking them having an affair. Mav was lying on my brother's chest. I woke them up. Mav sat up straight as my brother got up with a quizzical expression on his face. If I didn't know better I was going to say something happened. But no the was nothing suspicious.

Siphe got up.

Me: Lele I really don't mind you being there for Mavis but not in my bedroom.

He nodded then then walked out.

Me: Is the anything I should worry about?

She shook her head then gave me a faint smile.

Mav: I thought you will sleep over at Sonto's house.

I changed to my sleeping wear then joined her.

Me: Noma doesn't want to tell me what happened earlier. Do you mind telling me what happened?

She swallowed.

Mav: I'm not ready to talk about it.

I nodded and brought her to my chest. I doze off.

I walked to my brother's room only to meet the surprise of my life. Mav was half naked lying on Sipelele's bed. She closed her

eyes, feeling his lips on the back of her neck, feeling his fingers tracing the length of her spine. My heart rate excelled.

Me: What the hell?

I pushed Siphelele he fell down. I started beating him and punching him, while Mav calling my name.

Mavis:Vic you will kill him.

I continued punching him.

Me: That's what you have been doing all along?

Siphe managed to get up he punched me. And grabbed the knife on his cabinet. Before he could stab me Mav bagged him.

Mav: Babe please whatever you do think about me, think about our future.

I woke up. That dream was refined, limited, and terrifying too.

I woke up the following morning with the the terrible headache. I looked at the woman who was sleeping next to me. I kissed her cheek then walked to take a shower. All I needed was to be out of that house. The image of Mav being naked on my brother's bed was still playing on my mind. I know it was just a dream which I should let it go.

NOMASONTO

If Mav managed to lie, how much more should I trust her with my child? I just couldn't understand why would one lie about being beaten up. Maybe I should've agreed to talk to Mav, maybe I should forget about getting married and focus to my new family. I should end my relationship with Vee before things get messy.

NARRITED

Life with an invisible illness can be isolating experience. Mrs Mabuza stared at her sick husband. His illness was unbearable, he was expressing pains after pain and no doctors or traditional healers seems to be helping him. Because they couldn't pick anything up from him. The lack of understanding of the pain he

was expanding each day, believe me when I say that made him to give up in life.

Mrs Mabuza: Hapa kuna chakula. (*Here is the food*)

That women she had no hope.

Mabuza: Nataka kwenda kwa mke wangu. (*I want to go to my wife*)

She looked at him the let out a loud cry the saddest thing is that she was no longer recognized by her husband. The only person who was on his mind was his ex wife.

Mabuza: Khanyi ungakhali. (*Khanyi don't cry*)

In his eyes he was seeing his ex wife.

Mabuza: MaNkosi uxolo. (*I'm sorry Ms Nkosi*)

That was the saddest struggle the poor woman was facing, being called by another woman's name.

AZOLA

As we were sitting we heard a knock. Thobile went to attend it. I hardly give up. But with Tshidi I washed my hands. That girl she was unbelievable. She's always complaining. Thobi came back with Mav. They sat down.

Mav: I'm so sorry to come so early in the morning.

We all nodded then greeted her.

Mav: Azola I didn't know where to go or whom to talk to the only person who came to my mind was you.

I looked at Thobi, she's her friend or whatever they call it. But she choose me. How would she trust me like that?

Me: It's okay.

Mav: I'm falling apart, I'm not being recognized by anyone, even God himself, he's rejecting my prayers.

I looked Zweli he gave me a nod, faith and stuff is his call not me and Thobi. I won't say I know how she was feeling. But only to remind her that she was not alone.

Mavis: I tried everything, I'm not winning.

Tshidi: Don't tell me that you are giving up on your marriage without fighting for it.

Mav: Some of the battles are worth fighting. Some of those battles are not meant.

Poisonous people are like Tshidi, she gives the destroying advises.

Me: Very true not all battles are fought for victory, she cannot force her husband to love her.

Tshidi: I was just saying.

Me: Thank you Tshidi.

Me and Mavis excused ourselves. Sometimes I think Thobile she's being too hard on her but yeah Tshidi can get to anyone's nerve.

We walked to the empty room. Immediately when we got to that room

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she cried. I let her be until she calm down.

Mav: Loving Victor turned me to be something else I can't even recognized. I slapped her then lied. I don't know what pushed me to do that.

Me: Love can fool us sometimes. It can destroy us if we don't pay attention to ourselves, love can be cruel, it can destroy us. An unhappy marriage feels painful and hopeless. It can cause resentment and profound loneliness. You get caught up in the same vicious cycle with no end in sight.

The one thing I learned in life is that whenever you are advising someone you don't have to be always a making a example by yourself.

Mav: I feel helpless and powerless especially to make decisions. I know that he can say harsh things sometimes but I love him, I

want him to love me too. I never went against his desires, there is nothing that I didn't do to prove my love for him.

Me: No matter how much you love him, if he doesn't love you back or simply doesn't treat you the way you deserve, it's more than a reason enough to turn your back on him. It's easier to express anger than to admit you're hurt, sad, ashamed, or scared. Anger makes us feel momentarily powerful and takes the attention off of us. But when you're caught up in anger, your brain's ability to think logically has shut down. This leads to making impulsive decisions, inflicting deep wounds, and doing things you regret. You have the right to feel angry, but ultimately what you choose to do with that anger is your responsibility, not your partner's. So when things get heated, give yourself time out and go for a walk, listen to music, or practice relaxation breathing.

She looked at me.

Mavis: You think I should walk away.

Me: For now you need to distance yourself from him. Just go away, give him the space that he needs.

Mavis: He won't come after me.

Me: Then you will give him something that he wants that's divorce then move on with your life. Often, couples who feel they can't leave an unhappy marriage have terrible fights. That will destroy those who are around you.

NOMASONTO

I looked at my bucket. It was half full with water. I joined the gossiping group at the tank. We talked about what was happening in our area. How are we not being recognized.

When my bucket was full I lift it up. Before I could possibly put it on my head. Vee came from no where and took it from me and walked away. Some of the things are unacceptable. I followed him. When we got home. The kids were playing. Since the incident of Nelly gone missing, I no longer allow them to play far away from home. I want to see them.

Me: It's everything ok?

Victor: I'm filling a divorce.

I thought I didn't hear him. Until he repeated what he said. Honestly I didn't accept that.

Me: Vee don't do that.

Vee: Don't make it hard for me Noma, I know that you think is your fault.

I nodded then took a seat as he did that too.

Victor: Mav, she's a beautiful woman who's kind and thoughtful and generous. But I'm not happy with her.

Me: Have you tried to let her know how you feel?

He shook his head.

Me: Communication has to be one of the main problem in your marriage but there are a couple of opportunities to look at how you participate in your marriage and how your language is disrupting the connection between you and her.

Communication isn't about talking. Just because how you share how we feel, it doesn't mean we are lake of communication and although we women are more expressive with our feelings. The only way you are going to truly open up is to talk to her.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

Have anyone told me that relationship is a partnership. I looked at him, and bagged him not to divorce Mavis. Honestly I know nothing about relationships besides my way to the bedroom ask me about that I was going to respond.

Me: You can't do that.

He shook his head.

Victor: I'm not happy Noma, and giving her false hopes that will destroy her.

Me: She's your wife Vee, you vowed to love her, cherish her and so whatever.

He nodded.

Victor: Will you believe me if I say Paster T asked me to marry her?

I shook my head.

Victor: Well he did. I had to obey his commands, I had to learn to love her then again I was not be happy.

I knew that there are those parents who do that, but I never thought Mr Thabethe would be one of them. But who was I fooling, that man looked at me and told me that I don't fit to be part of his son.

Victor: Sometimes people fall in love because they love each other's company others, fall in love because of physical attraction. However, relationships based on physical attraction, one may feel empty after when times go. Some people fall in love because their partner is someone they can laugh with and cry with for the rest of their lives.

I was now confusing myself. I didn't want to build a relationship based on someone's tears, yet that was the father of my daughter, the man who saw the woman in me besides seeing a sex worker that sells her body to get food on the table. The first man I had encountered with. I extended my hands to his.

Me: This is not right, this is all wrong.

He nodded.

Victor: I know, but keeping her. Won't bring hope but heart break, it's like I'm holding her happiness. It's wrong Noma but I can't give her false hopes I just can't.

He swallowed...

Victor: My love let me do this. You are the only person I love.

Me: Vee I love you, but I'm scared to do this, what if the love you have for me varnish along the way.

He cut me.

Victor: My love for you won't fade. I promise because when I'm with you in someone else, the emotional, behavior, and physiological systems occurring in the brain, that cause strong

feelings and the warmth, admiration, affection, respect, protectiveness, and general desire for my Noma.

Spoken word can even buy the entire universe.

Victor: It's wrong to compare my feelings for you with hers. But it is what it is.

He got up. Love changes, and the way we feel love changes according to our own personal experiences.

MAVIS

Does true love exist?

When one is falling out of love. Is there anything in the world more complicated

more confusing, and more agonizingly delightful than love? The saddest part was that my husband was now showing me that he doesn't love me.

Talking to Azola helped me. I know that she was still mourning for her fiance but I needed someone who hardly know me to tell me what I needed to know. Surprisingly she told me what Sipehelele told me. If she was a male I was going to say she was the young man who suppose to guide me.

I looked at her.

Me: Thank you.

She nodded.

Me: I'm going to pack my bags and leave.

Azola: You need to let him know before packing your things. I know it will be hard for you.

Me: What if he doesn't allow me to leave.

Azola: I can't say he will be selfish or he loves you. The main thing here is happiness.

I nodded, she says the truth as it is, Thobi was blessed to have someone like her. Someone who will guide her when she feels like throwing her arms and give up, that explained why she never came back.

VICTOR

Noma walked me to the car. She is a person who devotes everything to a relationship and never gives any doubts when it comes to matters of caring. Girls on her status would've jumped for the opportunity. But Noma was putting Mavis's feelings before hers.

Me: I love you.

She just nodded.

Me: I'm going to let her go, with or without your support.

Sonto: Why does it feels so wrong?

Me: Because you are so kind. You don't want to see someone sad.

Sonto: Let's see how will she handle the divorce thing then we will give it a try again after everything.

I nodded. I took her hand then kissed it.

Me: Promise me that you will wait for me.

Sonto: I promise that I will wait for you Thabethe.

Me: One more thing no matter how broke you won't go to that brothel of yours.

She smiled.

Me: And then?

Sonto: You such a coward.

Me: I don't share what belongs to me.

Sonto: Says the man who wanted two women to share him.

Me: Well I was being. utterly selfish, greedy, lustful loser without consideration how you and Mav felt.

She nodded then smiled again.

Me: That won't happen again, I find the traits in one woman, I won't have a reason to look elsewhere again.

Sonto: Just go before you sell me dreams.

Me: I'm just being honest.

She nodded.

Me: Take care of my princess okay.

She sighed...

Sonto: Thanks goodness he's not taking my baby.

If I wanted to take Nelly I was going to do that after finding out about Nelly. I was going to use how she survived to win the full child custody. But because I love that woman I didn't even consider that.

Me: I won't do that Noma.

MATSHIDISO

Azola and Mavis walked to us. They both seat. Silent took place for few minutes. I cleared my throat. Everyone looked at me.

Me: Time moves so fast, I remember this four girls and one boy who were friends, they had no idea what life held for them.

Mavis: Those are days I wish I can rewind.

Shame, I don't know if I was on the same boat as her's what I was going to do.

Zweli: Time cannot be reversed, the only thing we can do is to focus on the future not on the past. Everything that happened years ago that was meant to. You guys need to have faith that God will answer your prayers.

Thobi and Azola nodded.

Mavis: Brother Zweli what can I do if I lost touch with God?

He smirked like he was waiting for that question.

Zweli: You are in the right place, Mrs Thabethe, I've been waiting for you for too long now.

Mavis: So you are the one who will-

He cut her.

Zweli: I'm a spiritual person who is meant to guide you through your faith?

She smiled.

Zweli: It's easy to be in touch with him again, pray, trust him, get Godly council, trust the system of healing, lean in, ask for help and wait whilst you pray.

Azola: You make it seems easy. While it's difficult.

He nodded.

Zweli: Let me make it more easier. Talk to God, tell him your problems. Like you are talking with your friends. Communication is essential to strengthening your relationship with God. Obey him. Obey his commandments. Read the Bible more often. Listen for him, show gratitude, be mindful.

Mavis: So you will help me to get my faith back.

Zweli: If you really need my guidance.

She nodded.

Zweli: No more consulting the seer without praying about it. Mrs Thabethe, that's not who you are, before we take a step we pray about that.

She rubbed her chest.

Mavis: How do you know I went to consult the seer?

Zweli: The are things that you don't know about me, your ancestors sent you to me because they believe that I will help you, not only with the faith but your gift as well.

Mavis: What gift now?

Zweli: I won't say much. We will continue with this some other day.

Mavis: Why not today?

Zweli: Firstly focus on your relationship with God.

She nodded.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

FEW DAYS LATER

To say my heart was broken it will be understatement. It was ripped off me. Tears streamed down, they fall on the divorce papers making them wet. My emotions were mixed up with stress and pain during the deep longing which I needed to end. Being served with divorce did numbers in me.

It was tough to see the light at the end of the tunnel. But there was never a light, behind my ripped heart, moving on was going to be hard. Restarting my life as a single person was going to be a long journey too.

Me: I can't do this. (Crying)

The only person who was going to be hurt was my mother.

Me: Only death can erase all the troubles.

Probably I felt like life wasn't worth it. Love was meant to destroy me.

MATSHIDISO

It was the day that I was waiting for, the day to meet my family.

It was overwhelming at the same time it was scary.

Zweli: You sure about this?

I nodded. To tell the truth, I wasn't sure, because I wasn't sure what was waiting for me there.

Zweli: Remember when I asked your hand of marriage I said let's start this journey together, and we are taking it together.

I smiled looking at my cousins. My cousins don't consider me as Radebe, but when Zweli and Rre Radebe they pretend to like me.

Believe me when I say if Zweli would wake up one morning and decide to break up with me, surly I will die. I looked at Sonto as she walked to in with Rra Radebe and the kids. They greeted us then took a seat. I was against meeting at the Radebe's resident but Mrs Radebe thought is a good suggestion.

Koketdo: She's beautiful.

Puleng: I'm Puleng Radebe and this is Koketso beleve me she's boring like Tshidi we call her Keke.

Sonto smiled.

Sonto: It's nice to finally meet you both. This is my daughter Nelly and my our little brother Musawenkosi.

My aunt walked to us while the introduction was taking place. She knelt down and began to pray and cry at the same time. After she said her Amen.

She hugged Sonto then welcomed her. Her name is aunt Bontle a God fearing women.

Bontle: Welcome home Nomasonto and tell me here why did they named you that name?

I wish my family can be that welcoming like the Radebe's.

Sonto: Do I have to answer that?

They laughed.

Keke: No you don't have to.

She's aunt Bontle's last born. She comes after a boy named Thato, then Puleng she's the first born.

Sonto looked at her dear mother.

Keke: Of course you have to cuz.

Cuz how nice?

Sonto: When I checked on the calendar, it's stated that I was delivered or received on Sunday.

Bontle: So Nomasonto she's a Christian?

She shook her head then gave her a smile.

Sonto: Ake sithi ngingum Juda ngenkolo. (*Supposedly I'm a Jew by religion*)

Aunt Bontle: There is nothing that I like than a person who speaks the truth.

We heard a knock, Keke went to get it.

Koketso came back with Victor, Nelly jumped for him.

Nelly: Daddy!

She was excited to see her father. Kids are free, they don't have stress.

Victor: Hey Princess.

As he lifted her up.

Rra Radebe: Welcome son.

He said that giving him the access to take a seat. They exchanged greetings. My elder cousin whispered to Sonto she kept on smiling and nodding.

Puleng, Keke and Sonto they got up then walked to the kitchen. So they had meeting with their new cousin without me.

Mrs Radebe: Thabethe, Sonto said you are not joining us.

Victor nodded.

Victor: That's was the plan

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then I thought about it. You will be there for Tshidi. Khoza will be there for Ms Radebe so who will be there for my Noma?

Bontle: I will be there for her don't worry.

Victor: And my little girl?

They laughed. Keke walked to us.

Keke: People please come this way.

She pointed the living room.

MAVIS

I took a pen my hands were trembling. I started writing.

Love is a complex emotion that's hard to simply turn on and off.
After writing the letter. I read it, the letter read like this.

(To my dearest mother)

"Once you get this please note that I'm no more. Things have been tough lately. Every day feels the same and you are not here to walk me through, I tried and screamed from the top of my lungs because it sucks. Every day I feel like I'm carrying a burden on my shoulder that I can't lift off my shoulders. I hope that you will forgive me oneday for taking my life. The burden of suicidal have crossed my mind because I don't want feel like this anymore. I'm sorry mama and I love you mama, you are a hero. I wrote my last words for you here, I love you mommy."

(Yours Mavis Ncumalo)

I cried.

NOMASONTO

We seat on the dinning table. I kept on stealing glance at Vee. Putting me on awkward position was a habit to that man. How could he do that? We talked about that we will see eash other again when things are normal normal.

Life is about exploring everything out there. It's trying different things and putting more attention on certain ones. There's so much out there that it'd be a shame to not have more than one interest. That was what I was doing and I will be doing that forever.

Musa: Mommy!

I looked him.

Me: Boyzer!

Musa: I can't do this. I don't want do this, I don't need my father, uncle's, aunt. You are my sister, friend and a mother. Let's not do this, please.

I looked around then him again. He was in tears. An overwhelmingly disturbing force of the human mind, fear has the power to sway, distort and rupture the conventions of the human psyche.

Me: I know that you are scared, remember that I'm here for you. Fear is one of the most powerful human emotions. While some of these imagined fears are of one's own making, many are the consequence of narratives created by those in positions of power. We need to face our fears Musa.

Musa: Don't let them take me.

Me: Uma angavuka kwabafileyo. (*Mom can rise from the dead*)

Tshidi: My mother.

That girl was in matured. She need to grow up

Me: I understand that you are scared, but remember that life is like a mortgage lender where we pay our debts with interest. Let's do this like we are paying our debt off okay.

MAVIS

I looked my hands they were trembling. Before I could swallow the bunch of pills that on my hands. Sipehelele entered into my room. My heart started pounding and threatening to come out.

Siphe: What are you up to?

Me: Didn't your brother tell that, you can be my shoulder to lean on but not to his room.

He sat next to me and asked me to give him the pills.

Me: I want... I want everything to end.

Siphe: I know how you feel right now but ending your life is not a solution.

Me: Siphe your brother he's divorcing me for another woman. You know why?

Siphe: For now I don't know but let's go for a walk, you will tell me why while we are stretching our legs.

It's painful and confusing to adjust from your failure.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

ZWELAKHE

We had a chain prayer. The was something that my subconscious trying to get my conscious mind to notice. It was

related someone close and that situation was hunting me. Well my parents believe that I must accept my calling which was the journey because I was suffering, I was carrying the burden that was heavy to carry. That life is not easier. There are times where I find myself stuck on the river.

There was a part of myself that was being hurt when I looked at Musa, but I was not connected enough with that part of my personality to help him. Sometimes I see things and just shut my mouth.

Mr Radebe asked me to pray before we took the road trip.

Me: Heavenly creator, whose glory fills the whole creation, and whose presence we find wherever we go preserve us as we take this trip surround us with your loving care protect us from every accident that are planned for us, let it be a safety journey's end, through Jesus Christ our Lord I pray. *Amen.*

Them: *Amen.*

Tshidi looked at me.

Me: The journey will be long lets hit the road.

Tshidi: I can't do this.

I checked the time. Not that I needed the time. I was just avoiding her. I asked her multiple times that she was sure about the trip and she told me that she was ready.

Loving her it doesn't mean that, I'm cursed, failed to chose or I'm getting punished. She's the one for me. Besides her madness she's the only woman who I see the future with. And I'm trying to kill the stigma of women belongs to the kitchen.

Tshidi: Rre Samu I'm talking to you.

I looked around then her.

Me: The is no turning back.

Aunt B: If we keep on dragging ourselves, trust me you won't get married soon.

She looked at Sonto.

Me: This is what you have been waiting for Tshidi.

Tshidi: I'm scared of what we are going to get there. I'm scared of rejection.

I looked at Sonto as she walked out. I don't blame her, Tshidi she was giving her every reason to be mean towards her, Sonto have her family, Tshidi she's the one who suppose to be nice to her.

Me: Take your medication with. *(Whispers)*

MAVIS

Siphelele didn't take no for the answer. We walked to the park. We were holding hands. I know that was standing the wrong message out there.

Me: Your brother he's divorcing me.

Siphe: It's hard you have every right to be angry. I suggest that you get a professional counsellor if you'd like one I can help you, I know it's not for everyone but it's for the best.

Me: I don't wanna be a burden to anyone.

Siphe: I know that you're devastated by the whole thing that you don't know how to ask for help. You feel embarrassed and ashamed and your self-confidence is usually in the toilet.

Me: He flushed my self-confidence.

We stopped walking. He was now holding both my hands. Probably we're looking at each other.

Siphe: I can tell that you think that nobody cares for you.

I nodded

Siphe: The sad news is that I care, you are not alone I'm here for you.

Friends like him are not just priceless, they are sometimes the difference between surviving and spiraling down into a dark hole it's hard to get out of.

Me: I feel like my whole world is falling apart. I can't talk to him. I can't tell him how I feel. Sometimes I feel like I'm being too much on my mother and your father I feel like they don't understand what I'm going through.

The road of divorce is very lonely and isolating. No one seems to understand. I was struggling to sleep during nights. I was not eating like I used to. It was hard to concentrate. Sometimes I forget the simplest things because I was overwhelmed by that tornado that has slammed into every single part of my life.

Me: You should have let me die.

He shook his head. I truly felt like I was not meant to survive.

AT TANZANIA

When others took the trip to look for their loved ones. Mr Mabuza was lying there thinking that the world had turned against him.

His wife was summoned by the king. Regarding Mr Mabuza being sick. It's been said that he had no family there either than his wife. The king gave them a notice to leave his county. The are people out there who thinks that the world revolves them.

As sure as the sun rises from the East, two things religiously happen. The poor woman didn't know what to do. It was hard for her, especially that she didn't know what to do. The money that they had was less than 25K. How fair is life if you have to leave your place of birth by being forced to. She glanced down to her husband and say.

Mrs Mabuza: Enock tafadhali kupata nafuu (*Enock please get better*)

Her faith was fading away each day.

The only question was will he remember his house? He looked at her. The only reflection he was seeing was his ex wife. Which happen to be late ex wife

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yet he didn't know.

Mr Mabuza: Don't cry Khanyi.

He said with a low voice. If he knew that the is no more Khanyi he wouldn't do that. Sometimes running away from your problems is not the right call to make. Tell me if a sick person can see his ex wife on his current wife. What do we call that? I would say he brought that for himself, but the man was suffering in the land of other people.

Mabuza: Khanyisile Nkosi, intombazane elethe ukukhanya enhliziyweni yami. Abesifazane abengesabi. (*The girl who brought light to my heart. Fearless women*)

Life is rotating like savings and credit, stokovel that have members to meet their basic needs and thereby improve the quality of life. Again when he left his Khanyi he never looked back. Because he thought that his wife cheated on him. Now she's cheating on him whilst she's six feet Under.

NOMASONTO

We headed the road. Vee was driving me, Nelly and Musa. I had to make my little brother to calm down. Well it wasn't easy but Zweli helped me to calm him down.

Victor: I'm sorry for coming invited.

I just nodded.

Victor: Noma I'm talking to you. I'm trying.

Me: Okay.

Victor: I know that you asked us to lower our speed, the more lonely I became is the more harmful I become to myself.

Me: We need to stick to our plan.

He nodded.

Me: The is this thing that I don't like about you.

He frowned then focused on the road.

Me: You like to put me in an awkward position.

Victor: I do?

No ways that man he was something else.

Me: Vee I didn't say that.

Victor: I wouldn't mind to check in to the nearest hotel.

I looked at the kids then smiled. He was getting it wrong. He just showed up without consulting with me. That made me feel like a fool before my father's eyes.

Me: Forget I said anything.

He chuckled

MAVIS

Oh my goodness. The whole walking and talking situation turned out to be an ice cream date. The Darkness turned out to be lighter. That wasn't good at all.

We were sitting on the bench enjoying our ice cream. He removed something on my cheek with his thumb, our eyes met, we looked at each other for a while, the erotic throughness made me kiss him, he kissed me back. He pulled away the kiss.

Siphe: I'm sorry.

I cleared my throat, I felt like a fool, I felt stupid, how could I be that foolish?

Me: I'm sorry.

He nodded and we proceed to enjoy his ice cream. Every muscle in my body screamed at me to flee, but I remained foolish as I was.

Siphe: Life is too short to stress yourself with people who don't even deserve to be an issue in your life.

MATSHIDISO

Everything about Sonto was sharing. She was sharing a man with Mav, a life with me.

Zwe kept on shooting glanced at me whilst he was still driving.

Zweli: Fear of failure keeps you safe, but small. It doesn't allow you to try new things, to take on new challenges, or to expose yourself to new situations. But it doesn't have to. You can conquer the fear of failure easily when you understand better what causes it and how it affects you.

Me: What if they reject me like that girl and her little brother.

Zweli: That girl who is helping you to reach out for your family. You should be nicer to her.

Nice to her. She had parents that I didn't have.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

HOURS LATER. That long drive to Mnambithi. Made my fiance to turn on the music. Music was the one of our top we it had an

essentials for a long ride. Mind me he was holding my hand then used his other hand to drive.

Me: You think I'm that crazy?

He didn't even care to look at me.

Me: Rre Samu!

Zweli: Mme! (*Ma*)

So he was avoiding me?

Me: I won't jump out of this car.

Zweli: Did I say you will do that?

Me: You are holding my hand whilst you drive, that proves that I'm crazy?

He took my hand then kissed it.

AN HOUR LATER. Victor's car stopped we also pulled over behind his car and Rre Radebe did the same. We all got out of our cars. Sonto looked at me then Musa.

Sonto: This is my grandmother's house, from Mabuza's side. We need to accept whatever the family will throw on our face, my family are too proud of themselves. Therefore they might kick us out.

I looked at that girl, everything about her had a plus one. Her family that is not her famil not at all?

We walked into the yard. We were welcomed by a woman maybe she was her 30s. We greeted her.

Sonto: My name is Sonto Mabuza, we from Gauteng, I don't know if we are at the right house?

The woman nodded then asked us to come in. The house it wasn't big like the Radebe's residence.

We settled down she gave us tea and scones, Zweli asked for water instead of tea, he doesn't like sugar, when he drinks tea or coffee he only add a lemon or honey, that's the weird part about him. Funny enough that woman sat down too.

Woman: You said you are Ms Mabuza?

Sonto nodded. She got up and disappeared to a room. Victor looked his whatever he calls it.

Victor: Just relax.

She nodded and put Musa's head on her lap. The woman came back wheeling a man with a wheelchair.

Man: Thanks child.

The woman nodded. He looked at Sonto before he greeted us.

Man: Nomasonto what do I owe the pleasure?

She looked at me then glanced down.

Man: I told you six years ago that Enock he's not here.

Sonto: You know uncle I think I said this before, I don't need you in our lives. If it wasn't for Tshidi and Musa I wouldn't be here.

The man chuckled.

Man: Vele uzobe uthengisa ngomzimba wakho emgwaqweni wasejozi. (*You will be selling your body on the street in Johannesburg*)

She looked up then looked at Victor, he gave her a nod.

Sonto: I did not sign up for Eric's attack.

Eric: I'm I lying Sonto?

Sonto: Let's go guys.

Me: He asked you a question.

She got up.

Sonto: We will come back when my father he's here.

The man clapped his hands.

Eric: You still believe that my brother will come back after so many years. He's probably dead by now.

Sonto: He will be back that's the fact I know.

Eric: Unenkani kakhulu njengonyoko nobaba wakho. (*You are as stubborn as your mother and father*)

She asked the kids to get up.

Eric: Sibona show these people their way out.

Sibona: But dad.

He cut her.

Eric: I'm not going to repeat myself.

We got up and left him there. Sibona was supposed to be nice to him.

Me: How could you do that?

Sonto: We're going to the Nkosi's family now.

She didn't answer my question.

MAVIS

When we got home. My uncle was there with my in-laws, it was hard to look at Siphe. But I forced to, why did he called my uncle. We seat down.

Pastor T: Mav my daughter, Sipehelele called your uncle here do you mind telling us why?

I shrugged

Me: I don't know.

Sipehe explained what happened before we took the walk.

Sipehe: She's dangerous to herself.

Everyone nodded besides my mother in-law. She used to like me, but after she learned that her son he's not happy with me. She changed.

Me: Where did my husband went to? He was suppose to get involved in this meeting.

Pastor T: Anna!

She gave me a faint smile.

Mrs T: He went to KZN for business.

What a protective mother?

Me: Uncle their son he's divorcing me for another woman.
What do you expect me to do?

Uncle: Divorce is against our religion.

Me: Tell that to Victor.

They all looked at me.

NOMASONTO

I won't say that I was angry I was accepting that from the Mabuza's, that was Eric he was just being himself. He wanted nothing to do with us nor to hear what brought us there. I was not going to beg him, I don't even care what he thinks about me.

Have you seen a person getting lost? That was me. I knew that night family house was 8

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5 km estimated from the Mabuza's family. Victor was losing his patience he bang the car hotter in frustration.

Victor: Come on Noma focus.

Me: I'm trying okay.

Victor: Try harder Noma. (**Half shouted**)

I shuffled away from him. I didn't invite him, he came willingly yet he was acting like I asked him to come with us.

After thirty minutes drive. I finally recognized that house. People have renovated their house. Even Nkosi's did. The house looked different than I last saw it. I noticed a lady who was sweeping the yard. My aunt had child who was a year older than me.

We got off the car and walked to her. She stopped sweeping and looked at us as we walked to her.

Me: Snalo ngitshele la uma ushanela igceke ngalesi sikhathi ubu-kuphi? (*tell me here if you are sweeping the yard at this time where you were*)

She threw the broom and jumped to hug. Let's say I'm good at guessing I was trying my luck though.

Snalo: Mzala! (Cuz)

We hugged, cried and screamed together we broke the hug.

Snalo: I can't believe this.

She hugged me again.

Voice: Snalo!!

We broke the hug.

Snalo: Come deal with your aunt.(Whispering)

I laughed.

Aunt: Snalo!

Snalo: Maa!

I could tell that she was annoyed by her mother calling her name.

Snalo led the way to the house. We sat down her mother was on the other room. She was busy shouting her name.

Snalo: Can you deal with her while I call your uncles.

Me: Which way?

She showed me. I made my way there, she was lying on her bed.

Me: Aunt!

She looked at me.

Aunt: Ngubani lo? (*Who is this*)

Me: Nomasonto.

She forced to sat up straight. I walked to helped her to, she then asked me to get her medication on the cabinet she was complaining about her knees.

Me: Let me get you some water.

She nodded. I walked to the living room, to tell everyone that I will join them, Snalo wasn't among them.

Me: Please give us few minutes we will join you guys.

They nodded, I had to find my way to the kitchen. The kitchen was dirty. I got her the water before I could clean that kitchen area. I'm not saying I'm clean but I dislike a dirty areas, my day

might come at any time I must be prepared, I must be in the clean place so that people will who will get there will find me clean.

TWENTY MINUTES LATER. Snalo wasn't back yet from where ever she went to. I walked to aunt and helped her to join everyone.

Aunt: Uphi uSnalo? (*Where is Snalo*)

Me: She mentioned something about calling uncles.

Aunt: Please get me a rooibos tea.

I gladly went to prepare the tea for everyone. Entering the frustration field, luck I had already boiled the water. I had hoped that my dear sister was going to help but no there she was sitting next to her fiancé. But yet she was complaining about me living her life. My life never been sweeter as hers but she hated me for something that I didn't create.

I walked to them with a tray mind me if I tell you that Musa had to help me. We sat down and had conversation there and there until Snalo and both my uncles showed up. I introduced everyone then gave my father the platform to tell the uncles and aunt whatever happened. It was an emotional moment, for everyone especially my aunt, she asked Nelly and Musa to sit next to her.

Uncle: So Mabuza didn't fake the test?

I nodded.

Me: Both mom and dad they were right, mom didn't had an affair and I was not their daughter.

I never come across a man who shared tears. But my uncles were crying.

Aunt: And you raised the boy on your own?

I nodded.

Uncle Amu: Your father never came back?

I nodded still.

Uncle Amu: I know that my sorry won't erase the pain we have put you through as a child, cause I feel really bad, thinking about how we left that little girl with an infant, I can't imagine how you pulled through.

I was now crying but acted strong at the same time.

Uncle Amo: It makes me sad. I'm sorry for all the hurt we've caused you as a child, it was our responsibility to take care of you and Musawenkosi.

Guilt isn't necessarily bad. Sometimes it's even productive. Feeling bad after making a mistake it also can lead a person to change, and make things better if he/she really mean it. Guilty it's a pleasure that can describe something harmless a person enjoys even if they feel they shouldn't or are embarrassed about their tastes. With all being said. I forgave them.

Aunt: Don't tell me that you guys are heading back to Gauteng.

Rra Radebe: We will go to the nearest B&B.

Uncle Clifford: Khanyi wazala yena. (*Khanyi she gave birth to herself*)

Me: She look exactly like her.

Both uncles and aunt nodded agreeing with me. We had everything under control, but Nkosi's can't introduce her to their ancestors before the Mabuza's does.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

[MONTHS LATER]

The reality hit me so badly. The divorce was the darkest journey of my life. In the darkest of my days, I felt like I was on a low dose of *lsd*. at all times, it was weird, my vision was odd, I threw up for no reason, my emotions were out of control. Eating was an intellectual exercise. I felt like I was tripping.

My brain was parsed by the event which it was trauma. I was in a surreal flight mode, I was unable to sleep or eat normally. If I had a child none of those could be happened. He divorced me, he chewed me then spit me out like I was nothing.

Me: Impilo. *Life*

I find myself laughing alone. If you want to be a motivational speaker get involved with my ex husband you will be the best motivational speaker ever. He left me with unspoken words. But somewhere somehow he motivated and inspired me at the same time. Now I understand the myth of "*love is wicked*" it is indeed wicked it's a kind of '*romantic idiom*' but at the same time it can tear a person's love towards another person, it

causes more harm than good. In other words, my love for him course more wounds love unintentionally.

That man didn't just spit me out like I was nothing. He made me realize that not only love can build me. The only thing I got from my divorce was a car. I moved in with my uncle and his girlfriend. I couldn't go back home, I was afraid that they will label me as a *woman who failed her marriage*. Indeed I failed, I'm a failure. The only people that I could reach out to was Siphellele, Thobile, her brother who's helping me to see the light behind the darkness and her Aunt she was always the ear to listen. I don't know how she was pulling that through, she was pregnant and lost a partner but that didn't stop her from doing what she loves.

Those whom I called my friends were distancing themselves from the divorced me. Banele, Judy and Tshidi they never checked on, yet we thought Thobi changed to someone we never attended school with, to someone who was not our friend.

Aunt: Mav it's Sunday get ready.

Me: I'm not going anywhere.

The very same church where I will be seeing him and his golden women. The very same church where they will expect me to be strong and be the MC, where Pastor T would want me to lead the youth. I'm not going there I refuse to be used by Thabethe's again.

Me: I will search for another church.

NOMASONTO

I chose to put on my dancing shoes, and move as the sunset rise and fall. People may never understand what do I mean that I put on my dancing shoes and move as the sunset rise and fall. Is part of myth of '*life goes on*'.

Happiness is based on the quantity of these ups and downs. Most believe that the more good moments they have rather than bad moments, then the more happy they will be overhauled.

Life taught me that nothing comes for free, everything has a price to pay. Talking about a price to pay, the officer that raped me, asked me to settle the case out of court because he didn't want his name to be in the mud. So did I want my name to be dirty "**no**" I agreed for the sake of everyone, I needed peace in my life.

I was getting prepared for church, Vee invited us. The last time I set my foot at church I was still a little girl. He knocked then walked in.

Me: Inhloko yale ndlu. (*The man of the house*)

He kissed me before he could take a seat. He didn't see anything wrong by walking in uninvited.

Musa: Will Nelly join us?

Vee nodded. I was seeing my daughter by chance

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she liked to be there than being with me or my parents.

Victor: She's always at church, you need to join her.

He nodded. Whilst fixing his shirt.

Musa: How do I look Ma?

Victor: Are you sure that you don't have a girlfriend?

I hit his shoulder.

Me: Don't ever say that.

They laughed at me best friend that made me smiled. Victor being in our lives was more productive because Musa got a friend to talk to, an elder to open up to beside me he couldn't talk to me about other things, but Vee being there for him it was a blessing in disguise. Talking about elders, Nkosi's and Radebe's are getting along, we like one family even though my sister hates me. We should get along but not Tshidi she hated me from the sun the moon. Hate destroys, hate can get innocent people pain.

AT TANZANIA

Mr Mabuza, was sleeping trying to drift away the pains. He find himself at the river where he experienced angry waves.

He heard voices calling out his name for help the was an old woman she was sitting on the rock blowing a black balloon.

He rushed to help them but he couldn't reach there.

Old woman: You are the only one who can save them.

He looked at her.

Old woman: All the pains will disappear when you get there.

The weird part about that woman she kept on blowing the black balloon then blow out the air before she says whatever she was saying.

Girl: Enock, Enock!!!!

He looked at that women for the last time and tried to run as fast as he could to reach there.

He was stopped by another woman again the women had a black balloons not one but to many black balloons. She was also blowing them before she passes the little massage to him.

Woman: Take them home.

He stopped and looked at her.

Woman: What are you waiting for, take the kids home, Enock, take them home, the time is ticking, time doesn't wait for anyone take the kids home.

The main massage was take them home. It's been said that black balloons represent depression and gradual loss of hope.

Balloons, in general, denote blighted hopes and adversity. But black though?

Mr Mabuza rose up from his sleep. He understood the message. He groaned in pain calling his wife.

Enock: Mariam!

For the first time in a long time he didn't call her Kanyisile or MaNkosi, that brought a smile on his wife's face. She rushed to him.

Maria: Umeniita? (*You called me*)

Enock: Tafadhali nipeleke uwanja wa ndege, ninahitaji kwenda nyumbani. (*Please take me to the airport I need to get home*)

With the king wanting them out of his country, the villagers donated for Mr Mabuza so that he could go home. Remember he only had less than 25k. Many people saw him as their hero.

He was committed to the villagers before he lost his kids and before he got sick.

Maria: Kama ilivyo sasa? (*As in now*)

He forced to sit up straight.

Enock: Please my love, I can't die in this country I need to go take my last breath home.

The message didn't say anything about dying.

MATSHIDISO

The is nothing that I hate than people who are forcing me to do something that I'm against. Zweli and his sister were forcing me to go to church. His sister had a case to attend on Friday but Zwe asked her to spend the weekend with us. He zipped my dress.

Me: Khaitsele ea hau e tlameha ho tsamaea. (*Your sister has to go*)

Zweli: Why?

Me: O lula a le ka lehlakoreng la ka. (*She's always on my case*)

He made me to looked at him.

Zweli: If you could pull yourself together, no one will be on your case. You are Someone's mother Tshidi you need to start acting like one.

I shook my head in disbelief.

Me: I think it's time you choose between me and your family.

Zweli: Uyahlanya, ngeke ngikwenze lokho. (*You out of your mind I won't that*)

I knew very well that he wouldn't do that, his family comes first then because I'm a lost soul my opinion are not recognised like his, mother, sister, aunt and his stepfather. That needs to stop.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

My uncle and his girlfriend they left me alone I had nothing to do, then to read my Bible. I heard a knock. I dragged myself to

attend the door. Can't I be alone? Sometimes being alone is the best thing in life but loneliness itself comes with a boredom. If I had a brother or sister maybe life was going to be easier for me.

Initially, I was feeling like I would never get through because the divorce turned my life upside down. I opened the door for my guest on a Sunday.

Me: Thobile! Brother Zweli!

Zweli: We are here to take you to church.

He called me an hour ago and I explained that I was going to look for church.

Me: I'm fine.

They looked at each other.

Thobile: Mav I know that you are in pain, but you need to get out of this house, you need to face the reality, I know that separation is not easy, there is life after divorce Sisi, and there is hope for happiness as a single woman again.

I released my breath.

Me: Come in guys.

Zweli: We are here to take you to church.

Me: I'm still searching for...

He cut me.

Zweli: Shine before your enemies. Let them dig deeper to find out what kind of a person you are. Sister Mav there are people out there who look up to you. I know it's hard and it will take time for you to expand the new atmosphere. There is this script *'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by*

prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God

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which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

I nodded

Zweli: You distancing yourself from things you, they will keep you falling off the edge.

Thobile: Philippians 4:6-8.

Zweli: One hundred percent.

He was my spiritual advisor who wouldn't mind to let me sob on his shoulders and sleep on his house when I couldn't face and accept the reality, he was a true treasure.

Me: Please give me thirty minutes.

They nodded. Pastor T need to hold on brother Zweli, he was what our church needed. He never stood in front of the of us and preach the gospel. But his door was always opened for everyone.

MATSHIDISO

I couldn't understand what does it mean when they say a man will leave his father's house and start his new family. Zweli had to accept that I was the new woman on his life.

He just dropped me to church and told me '*no women in his life will fill his mother's love*' I was not in any competition with his family but his sister was getting to my gut. She was always seeing wrong in me. I was sitting on the second row when Mrs and Mr Radebe joined me.

Mom: Baby!

I forced a smile.

Mom: That smi...

She stopped talking when she saw her beloved daughter.

Mom: Sonto my daughter!

Sonto joined our row. Looking at that woman my stomach was getting angry, everything about Sonto had a one plus and perfect.

AT TANZANIA

Mrs Mabuza had to go to her family and friends to let them know that her husband will be heading back to South Africa.

She loved him though he could call her with another woman's name. She didn't want to leave her county but yet she couldn't let her husband go alone especially that he was sick. So she decided to take the journey with her husband.

Her uncle looked at her, shock was written on his face.

Uncle: Are you sure about this?

She nodded repeatedly. Maria liked her county she never wished to leave.

Maria: I could stay and let him go alone but he's my husband, the father of my kids.

Tears streamed down as she mentioned kids, she remembered how her children died, lightning then drowning. No Mother shall over come the lose of her children. Marriage is a commitment, it's commonly interpreted as a roller-coaster ride by many. Once you get into the roller coaster you have to make a commitment to ride it out and it's not designed for anyone to get off at any point until it stops at the end. Unless you're one hundred percent sure that you want to get in, you better not commit to it.

Maria: When I agreed to be his wife I knew what I was going to face especially ups and downs that would come inevitable. Marriage in general has highs and lows. However unless you work on minimising the lows, things are going to get worse and hit rock bottom.

She said between her sob. She was trying by all means to be strong.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

Church is like a family. Just as families exist in all shapes and sizes, so there is an enormous variety of churches.

I was sitting on the between my mother and Victor. My dear sisters doesn't want to see me, I could tell that I'm a threat in her life.

Pastor T he was standing on the pulpit welcoming everyone and the visitors.

Pastor T: So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

He kept quiet.

Pastor T: Normal before we start the service we call visitors to come forward. We will do the same today. I'm not saying be a member but we are welcoming you.

I didn't wanna go there but Vee asked me to. I walked there he prayed for me then I walked back to take a seat.

Pastor T: Preaching a sermon about sharing God's love with church visitors and the surrounding community. Is like sharing

God's love isn't only reserved for those outside our church, it begins right inside the doors where we worship.

He asked the chore to sing. They sang then sat down.

Pastor T: This isn't usually to stand in front of the congregation feeling so weak.

"Uma ujhova avula umnyango akekho ongavala xem" People got up and sang along. I turned and looked at the blessed wonderful voice, it was Mavis she was with Zweli and Thobi. People are so blessed. She walked to join the chore crew.

We settled down.

Pastor T: As I was saying I'm feeling weak but the Lord has spoken.

He stopped taking. And took a long breath, then lowed his head. The chore sang again. *"Uma ujhova avula umnyango akekho ongavala xem"*

AT TANZANIA

Mrs Mabuza was preparing, for their trip to South Africa, flight was booked. On the other side her husband was rushing her he wanted to be out of that country as in yesterday.

Mr Mabuza: Don't tell me about tomorrow morning Maria.
(Shouting)

Maria: Our flight will depart tomorrow morning.

Enock: Ma! Ouch! eish!

As he forced to seat up straight whilst he was groaning in pain.

Mr Mabuza: Let's use a train or bus.

Maria: A bus will take 2 days.

Patience involve perseverance in the face of delay, it was hard because he was facing the longer-term difficulties. He wanted nothing but to be out of that country.

MATSHIDISO

The service was boring on my side people seems to enjoy it, I didn't want to be there anymore. Zweli was sitting first row with his sister and Pastor T's second son. If Thobile doesn't leave my house, I'm going to move out and leave them there to. When Zweli bought that house he didn't say it's our house, or family house but mine so I wasn't going to allow another women to enter into my house and rule me in my house. I just didn't understand why she was always on my way. Just like Noma, seeing Noma was making me dizzy, I wished I could strangle her because she was standing on my way, where ever I go its Sonto this Sonto that, everything it was her.

Pastor T: Zweli why I'm I seeing you standing here?

Zweli shrugged.

Pastor T: The Lord has spoken, Mr Khoza please come forward.

Zweli walked to him

Pastor T: Njalo ngeSonto, nima la ninikeze intshumayelo yami la ebandleni, but I never felt this weak, I prayed about this, the Lord showed me this young man. *(Every Sunday, I stand here and give my sermon here in the church)*

He took two steps away from Zwe.

Pastor T: Sometimes we ignore our feelings, me feeling weak it doesn't mean that I'm sick, it means that I must give this young man the opportunity to preach to the congregation.

He gave Zweli the mic. People clapped their hands.

MAVIS

We sang, I didn't want to be there, but brother Zweli made me to go there. We settled down giving brother Zweli the opportunity to sermon the congregation.

Zweli: Thank you for the warm welcome, thank you for this opportunity, I won't introduce myself you'll know.

Siphelele: I don't know you brother Zweli.

We laughed.

Zweli: He doesn't know me but he mentioned my name.

We laughed again.

He introduced himself then thank everyone for the warm welcome again.

Zweli: I wasn't prepared for this, but since Father Thabethe got me in the corner where I couldn't say 'No' I will let our heavenly father to lead me. In that case he will guide me, because I wasn't prepared but I was given this huge opportunity. In life we come across many challenges like this one, some of those challenges are bad and some of those challenges are good, just like a Mother and father who never planned to have a child. Not everything goes according to how we plan. Let's look at Jeremiah 1:5.

We checked for the chapter.

Zweli: We all born for a purpose. And we need to understand that nothing in this world is permanently everything happens for a reason.

He stopped talking for thirty seconds. He then chuckled.

Zweli: Already there are those who say, 'he's just talking because he has everything under control.'

He chuckled again.

Zweli: I'm not in control, I'm driven too. Don't be deceived by everything I have. Don't look at the car I'm driving, why because it might be the same car that will send me to my grave tomorrow.

He chuckled again.

Zweli: I have nothing under control, I live under the shadow of God, others will say

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he has the house, don't be deceived by those big walls we all have our own challenges, we all question God, I myself I once lost faith in God, but here I am, standing here today letting God to guide me. We all fall and rise again, we need to rise and let our creator guide us or drive us. If you feel that you are losing faith in God or have already lost your faith, reach out to God anyway. Muster the small amount of faith you have to tell Him exactly how you feel and to seek His Word for answers to your life. Surround yourself with strong Christian people who will

support you through your times of doubt. Not only will you experience the blessing of walking in relationship with a powerful God through the ups and downs of life, you can also anticipate a time when you will be received by Him and ushered into everlasting glory. I'm not saying that life is easier no I didn't say that.

He asked the girl to read.

"God knew you before you were formed in your mother's womb"

She read. I felt like he was saying that directly to me.

Zweli: Yet, few believers understand their purpose or why they were born. I've accidentally met a little girl. She asked me to be her father can you believe it? I find that too hard to respond her, but God spoke through me, you know what did he say?

Us: No.

Zweli: *'The girl was praying to have a father'* that wasn't my will but he knew before I met that girl that what does she need from him. I decided to be her God father because it's what she needed, after responding that girl she was happy. She believed that one day she will have a father that she always wanted. Why because she allowed God to drive her. Today I want everyone in here to question him/her self if you have faith are you allowing the Lord

Zweli: Before step down , I would like to send this little message. People often begin to lose faith in God as a result of their life experiences. Some face things that seem cruel and unbearable. Others are confronted with information presented from a secular view point that rejects God. Through all experiences like these, people start questioning whether the God is there. God won't put you in a situation where you won't be able to get out, God has all the answers of life's problems. As you begin to doubt God, your faith begins to fade and it becomes weaker. As a result of your doubts, you may stop worshipping and communicating with God, which in turn, makes it even easier for your faith to diminish and eventually die. Don't let it die my sister and you my brother just remember that he knew you before you were born.

I swallowed and let out the deep breathe. We sang as he gave Pastor T his platform back. He was speechless.

Pastor T: Wise word from a young man huh, indeed we are driven by the Lord, the moment we start doubting God is the moment we lose our relationship with him. I like how brother Zweli let the God spoke trough him.

NOMASONTO

TWO HOURS LATER. The service was over, everyone was happy. I must say I enjoyed Zweli's sermon. He made the

service more enjoyable. My mother was so happy to see me there.

Mom: I hope this won't be the last time.

I nodded

Mom: Ke lakatsa eka o ka utlwana le ausi wa hao ka tsatsi le leng. *(I wish you could get along with your sister one day)*

I nodded.

Me: Konke kungaphansi kokulawulwa uNkulunkulu mama.
(Everything is under God's control)

She gave me a hug than invited me for dinner.

Me: I will be there.

Mr Radebe walked to us.

Dad: My two favorite women.

Mom: You want your Princess to kill us. (Jokingly)

Dad: She needs time to expand Rato. (*Love*)

She cut him.

Mom: I tried to make her understand that there is nothing that will change, but she's pushing me to choose between her and Sonto.

Me: There won't be any need for that, it's not that easy. Let's give her time she will come around.

They both hug me, pressing me between them.

Me: Okay.

The let go of me. Only to meet Tshidi's disgusted face.

Tshidi: Rre! Mme! that's what things should be, from now on moving forward, nobody asked me how I am doing today. But here playing a happy fam.

My mother cut her.

Mom: Don't you have anything to do Tshidi?

Her eyes winded. Probably she didn't believe what she just heard.

Tshidi: Wow mom.

Mom: Don't try me Tshidi.

She said that than walked away from us.

Tshidi: Why are you standing on my way of happiness Sonto?

Me: I don't have time for this.

I walked away from them. I didn't have time for her madness.

I walked to Vee and his mother.

Mrs T: Here she is.

Victor: How was your day?

Me: It was fine.

Mavis: Well I was forced to come.

As they walked passed us. We looked at her and Sipehelele as they walked past us, well if I didn't know better I was going to say something is fishy between but they get along, that's what I know.

Mrs T: You need to speak with your brother, this doesn't look good.

We sometimes like to jump in conclusion, Mav need a friend she didn't deserve to be treated like she was nobody. I can't say I was happy with the everything that was happening, Vee made me to realize that he his love might fade at any time.

After sitting and chatting for an hour. Musa and Nelly walked to us, I miss my daughter my house feels empty without her.

Musa: Sawubona Gogo. (*Greetings grandma*)

Mrs T: Unjani mfana wami. (*How are you my boy*)

She was very kind and again Mav warned me about her kindness which might fade when times goes.

Musa: Mom I need to get ready for tomorrow, I need to do my homework.

Me: It's a pity that we are going to the Radebe's.

Nelly: Can I come with?

Musa: Cha we don't need you.

I missed they're crazy fight.

Victor: They don't need you Nelly.

She looked at him.

Nelly: Whatever dad.

Zweli and Thobile walked to us. Everyone was happy with Zwe teaching. I myself think I'm the only one who has problems but he turned my mindset into self impression.

Victor: Some people are born to teach.

Thobile: Brother we need to leave before my sister in law show you the door tonight.

Zweli: You can go, I will take a taxi to the office.

MAVIS

We were still at church sitting on the last row having our little conversation. Those who didn't know better got the wrong idea already. I once said friends like him are priceless. Sophelele's friendship is indeed priceless gift, that cannot be bought or be sold, but it was value as far greater than a mountain made of gold.

Sophe: I'm glad that you came.

Me: Brother Zweli didn't give me a chance to say no.

Sophe: I'm glad he did.

There are wounds that never show on the body that are deeper and more hurtful than anything that bleeds.

Sophe: Do you have any plans for tomorrow?

Me: Not that I know off.

Siphe: Okay by 10am be ready.

Me: For?

Siphe: Just be ready.

The sorrow I was feeling after the divorce it was the price I paid to love a man who never loved me.

Siphe: Come on get over him.

Me: I'm trying.

I can tell that we were getting closer and closer than we were before. He squeezed my cheek I looked at him.

Siphe: Don't give him the reason to think that your happiness is with him.

He was supposed to be on his brother's side but there giving me all the support I needed.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

Later on. I might not have a voice to speak out but I have feelings to show my emotions. Whatsoever hate Tshidi was holding towards me it was hurting both my parents, especially my mother, she could not see that because of here selfish thought.

Sometimes I think I'm too clingy to my parents, but the truth is that I didn't get a chance to have them when I needed them. Vee thought I was joking when I said I had dinner with my parents. No child ever want to see their parents sad. So I was going to that dinner, to put a smile on their faces, I had nothing to offer them but me being there was enough.

I had accepted my past, I embraced my present, and I was planning for my future. Truly speaking I was refusing to dwell on my past. If I didn't find the courage forgive myself nobody was going to forgive me, God himself was not going to do that. Beating myself up for choices I made years ago when I was a kid was not going to help me, dwelling on the past was only going to let me stuck in that same place of pain. I felt the warmth arms wrapping around my body as I was applying a lotion on my body. He kissed my neck.

I turned and looked at him.

Vee: Why are you crying.

I didn't realize that I had tears on my eyes.

Me: Nothing is just that I was planning to change my contact information and move on without holding on to my past.

He kissed me.

Vee: You mean your cellphone number?

I nodded repeatedly. He smirked, honestly I needed to move on, if my bank account was loaded believe me even the clothes that I bought with prostitution money I was going to get rid of them.

Vee: You see why do Victor Thabathe love you?

I shook my head.

Me: I don't see?

Vee: You are who you are, kind, selfless, thoughtful and you always open the room in your heart for me, which make it easier for you to communicate with me and I find it easy to do the same too.

MATSHIDISO

Thobile was the one who was driving home. Thobile told me that my fiancé went to the office. I knew he was avoiding my query. WhatsApp notification appeared on my phone, it was a WhatsApp group for Radebe's, probably they're having a Sunday dinner and I was not invited. But the Someone they met month ago was invited. I lean my head on the window then shut my eyes.

I was getting sick, my stomach was getting knot each time Nomasonto's name crossed my mind. When I saw her with the Radebe's earlier, I felt a like my heart was burning and I got angry, When Mme Radebe walked away, I felt the cold sadness. She was not hiding that I was nothing to her.

Thobile: Tshidi!

She woke me up. I opened my eyes only to realize that we at home.

MAVIS

Honestly seeing him with his golden women

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throws an entirely new variable into my emotional equation, and it caused a host of new and different emotions. But with a friend like my ex brother in law, everything seems like it was a dream.

So instead of him driving me to my uncle's house we drove to the park. We lied there having our little conversation.

Me: So you are telling me that you got them on the act?

He was telling me about his ex who cheated on him.

Siphe: Even this day, I think my ex best friend planned to be caught by me, he called me earlier that day, asking me if we could hang out, which I agreed, but I got there later than the time he gave me.

Me: You mean the girl wanted to call it a quite?

He shook his head

Siphe: My friend planned that to happen, I think he always wanted to break us apart and he finally succeed.

Me: I'm sorry to hear that.

Siphe: It's all in the past now, I'm focusing on the future.

I wish I could be strong as he was, but no I was dwelling on my failed marriage.

MATSHIDISO

I checked the time it was 19:00 with no sign of Zweli. Thobile got up and took the car keys from the table.

Me: You not going to drive his car without him.

She looked at me.

Thobile: Your brother he's home probably safe, my brother he's out there we can't reach out to him, and you expect me to sit here and looked at you forget it Tshidi.

I smiled a little.

Me: Girl this is my house you don't come-

She cut me.

Thobile: I don't care Tshidi, it's your house but you came to this house to be a bride, you're not even married yet but you have grown some wings to fly.

I was supposed to be married long time ago, but with someone there using my name, I remained engaged for seven years.

Me: That's it Thobi you leave my house now.

She sat down again.

Thobile: Forget it I'm not going anywhere makoti. (*Sister in law*)

The audacity from that girl.

Me: I'm not going to repeat myself.

She looked at me then folded her arms.

Five minutes later. I didn't see any movement from Thobile. I got then walked to the guest room and took her belongings, two bulls won't survive in the same house. I walked to her.

Me: Here I made it easier for you.

She laughed.

Thobile: With the energy you used to pack my stuff. You should've used that energy to prepare a meal for Zwe.

She still had the energy to tell me what to do in my house.

I started throwing her belongings out. To my surprise she didn't move nor stopped me. She just watched me.

Me: Ha ke khone ho lumella motho e mong hore a kene ka tlung ea ka le mookameli oa ka. (*I cannot allow anyone to come into my house and boss me around*)

She didn't say anything. I walked to her.

Me: Thobi the door is open for you.

She remained quiet. Did she want me to drag her out of my house?

Me: Thobi I said out-

I was cut off by my fiancé.

Zweli: She will be out of your house Tshidi. Please give us five minutes.

I looked at him.

Zweli: Sisi wait for me in the car I will join you soon.

Thobile: Brother is late.

Zweli: Our father's house it's around the corner and there is no one there.

Thobile: So you are kicking me out.

He cut him.

Zweli: I won't do that sis I'm moving out, giving this woman a space to think what does she want in life.

No he wouldn't do that. I swallowed.

Me: Rre oa Samu! (*Samu's father*)

He walked away from us.

Me: Thobile please talk to him.

She got up then looked at me.

Thobile: You made your own bed lie on it.

She walked out. Oh my goodness what have I done.

NOMASONTO

Vee dropped me and the kids to my parents house.

Musa and Nelly Nelly got out of the car first.

Victor; You take care of yourself.

Me: I will.

My phone vibrated. I looked at the notification, it was a message from standard bank. R3500+. Who would give me such amount.

Vee: I believe you got what belongs to you.

My eyes winded.

Victor: That is what you are going to get from me monthly, you don't have to worry about Nelly I will take care of her.

Me: Why would you give me your money without working for it.

He smirked

Victor: Noma you are not my girlfriend or that girl I used to pay her for selling me her services or coming with me to business meetings. You need to get that on your head you are now my partner and my daughter's mother.

That didn't explain why too much money. Well for me it was too much.

Victor: We partners Noma.

I nodded giving him the satisfaction.

MATSHIDISO

I looked at them as they drove off. I could no longer control my hands they were shaking in an odd trembling rhythm. Zweli can't leave me, I'm nobody without him. He promised to stick with me but yet he left me.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

[DAYS LATER]

I was seeing and hearing things that did not exist. And I was all by myself. I had no-one to talk to life seems so unfair. The only person I called friend walked away from me. It's been two days since he left me, It's been two days since I ever touch anything to eat. Zweli never called me nor he was answering my calls.

Depression was the only friend I had, it was the only thing that was telling me what to do. The only thing that kept reminding me that I'm alone. Sometimes I'd cry for what I didn't even know either. but the tears wouldn't stop coming out. Nobody called nor visiting me ever since they left.

I dragged myself to the kitchen to find something to eat, I couldn't find anything to eat. I sat down took out my phone from my Jean pocket. Reality kicked in, increasing my heart

rate, it was flooding me with the added adrenaline I dialed Zweli's contact number, his phone was ringing unanswered. It automatically went to voicemail.

Me: Rre Samu please come-

I hugged my knees and cried. If the two people who were enduring my behavior, walked away from me, was the Radebe's going to accept me? I mean they got their precious daughter and I had no one.

NARRITED

The couple had arrived to South Africa. Different temperature, currency and form of airborne moisture, cloudiness, and strength of wind.

They asked the cab to drop them on a certain slums.

Driver: I will drop you on the new bridge. We are not allowed to get in mujondolo, unless it's late. (*Squatter camp*)

Mr Mabuza couldn't understand what the man.

Mr Mabuza: How are going to get there? It's been ages since I stepped my foot there.

He was disturbed by his cough.

Maria: Usijali. (*Take it easy*)

Driver: Are you alright sir.

He nodded then viewed the place through the window, he was trying to hide that he was in pain. His heavy eyes winded as he saw that they were an old crossing bridge. Yes everything had change I mean fourteen years, is not fourteen months, but wow that crossing bridge had memories of him and his late ex wife.

Mabuza: Regina's crossing bridge right?

The driver nodded.

Driver: It was charged from Regina to old crossing bridge.

He nodded and remembered the last time he was there. He remembered all the hurtful things He said to his late wife, all the pain he coursed before he left South African. He couldn't hold them he let them out. Remember that karma comes after everyone eventually. You can't get away with screwing and hurting people over your whole life, karma doesn't care who you are and where you come. Rich or poor it will eventually come that's the fact. What goes around comes around.

NOMASONTO

Nobody lives for anybody's life. I was sitting alone holding my mother's picture, oh Musa's mother. A mother who gave me a shelter to hide my head. There was no way I was going to forget my mother. My phone rang I looked at it.

Oh my goodness

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I had to change my cell phone number. I had to start afresh, the person who was calling me was one of my clients. Well I didn't want to be reminded of who I was. I switched off my phone.

ZWELAKHE

She walked into my office with a take away bag. She placed it on my desk before she took a seat. Not that I hated Tshidi, I was giving her the chance to search herself.

My emotions were controlled by my, thoughts, dreams, visions and voices they were changing like how the moon change, from full moon to quarter moon. Also the color of the moon, from grey to red. That's what was expressing in my life.

Me: The is something called '*you may come in and take a seat*'

She laughed.

Me: What do I owe the pleasure to be visited by my sister.

Thobile looked at me. I looked her as she gave me a faint smile. She was cerring burden over her, I find myself in a cycle of questioning myself and trying to figure it out. What was wrong with my sister.

Me: Are you alright.

She nodded.

Thobile: I got you this. You need to eat something.

I closed my eyes and opened them again.

Me: Thank you.

She nodded again.

Thobile: I think she got the message.

Me: Is too soon.

Thobile: She will hurt herself.

The disturbance vision, got to me, I saw Thobile sleeping on her peacefully bed, but spiritual the was a man who was having emotional encounter with her. She was on her sleep she didn't have any idea what was happening.

I shook my head, trying to come to reality. As she shouted my name.

Me: You were saying.

She gave me a folk. I didn't understand that massage, was my own sister having a spiritual boyfriend or husband? The worse part is that I couldn't tell her. I chose to shut my mouth.

MAVIS

Siphelele was holding my hand insuring me that he was right next to me. He suggested that we do few activities in order for me to regain my hope.

So we were doing bungee jumping. I closed my eyes and hold his hand tightly.

Lady: Ready?

Me: No Lele I'm scared.

Siphe: I'm right here, if you die I'm going to die too.

Me: What if I die before the bungee comes back?

Siphe: Let's face our fears together.

I just nodded.

Siphe: I need us to forget about everything and everyone, as we dive into the open space towards the earth, that will help to know our fear of hope is gone.

From you to we? Before I knew they pulled it on. I screamed my lungs out.

Me: Ah! Ah! Ah! Lele!

Siphe: I'm right here.

Me: Tell them to stop.

Siphe: It's too late.

I was still holding his hand.

Siphe: Trust me we are going to make it.

Do I trust a man no, not ever, I gambled with my whole life with a man who was unfaithful, yet I gambled with my life trusting Thabethe again. I'm scared of heights yet I allowed him to take me there.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

Loneliness was walking proudly around my house, and it was having a pretty huge impact inside me. Prolonged of loneliness

was draining me emotionally, it was making my life seem bleak and pointless at the same time. I was expressing aches and pains in my body.

I could've done things better, I was supposed to be nice to my sister in law. But she was always on my case forgetting her place. What did Zweli expect me to do?

Was I supposed to humbled myself and bow before her, no that was not going to happen not in my house.

NARRITED

The Mabuza's reached their destination. They started walking without any idea where they were going. That place changed it looks nothing like years ago. Enock Mabuza asked the driver gave them a clear direction of how to get tenement houses. The wife unloaded their heavy bags from the cab.

Twenty minutes later, they were approaching the shanty town. But had no idea where to start looking for his long-lost family.

Mabuza: I'm tired.

Maria: Je! Tutawahi kufika huko Mabuza? (*Will we ever get to Mabuza*)

He stopped walking and tried to catch his breath.

Enock: I am thirsty.

She looked at the water bottle that was empty she then shook her head. Tears streamed down her face. You know the feeling

of seeing someone you love in pain? She wished that she could take away all the pains away from him.

She took a deep breath then looked at the place again and remembered that's not the village Tanzania, where neighbors stick together, people were minding their business.

Maria: The bottle is empty.

He nodded. They proceed with their journey. Maria saw a water tank, she put down her bags and asked her husband to wait for her. She rushed there living her husband behind. She wanted to get water for her thirst husband. When she got there were people who were filling their bucket. She didn't know where to start asking or how to ask, she greeted them and asked to fill her water bottle. They told her to join the queue. One of the ladies was disappointed of their behavior she shook her head in disbelief

Advertisement

in life treat others as you want them to treat you.

Lady: You look so tired.

She nodded. She had to wait on the queue so that she can get her husband the water.

Lady: Where you from?

Maria: We from Tanzania.

Other ladies who were there laughed at her. The young lady looked at them.

Lady: Guys you her bottle won't finish the water on the tank.

They told her where to get off. They insulted her and the poor woman, they showed hatred towards that women and that affected Mrs Mabuza, who regretted going to the wrong county that had full of hatred. Some people do things without thinking twice, we need to treat others as we want to be treated. We don't want our country to be called an enemy number one by

most if not all African countries. The young lady looked at them then asked the lady to come with her to her house.

Maria: My husband is sick he's tired and...

The lady cut her then asked her to come with her to her house. She could see that Maria was tired but her neighbors were not helping at all.

Young Lady: Where to from here?

Maria: Um....we... I

The young lady took her empty bucket. She had enough water at her house, she was just bored then she decided to go fill that empty bucket.

Lady 2: Usushintshile. Selokhu wathandana nendodana kaMfundisi. (*She has changed. Since she's dating the pastor's son*)

She gave them the best smile ever.

Young Lady: We cannot watch people suffer because they are from other lands.

As they walked away from them. She knew the danger of letting a stranger at her house, but she saw that she was really in need of water. On the other side Mr Mabuza was tired he ended up sitting on the rock and he was struggling to catch her breath.

MAVIS

I looked at him as he was driving me home. I felt like my temperature changed and the pressure of skin was noticeably cooler like I opened the air conditioner.

It was nothing like I thought it was going to be, and it was way better of healing. I shoot glanced at him, he smirked.

Me: Your girlfriend must be luck to have you.

He nodded.

Me: So you have a girlfriend and you never told me.

As I was taking to him, I remembered what the healer told me. "*Your future is meant with someone else*" and that someone is the man I see on my dream. And that man was my ex husband's brother.

Siphe: Our relationship is flushed she's in love with someone else.

Why was he still keeping her? He was the one who encourage me to sign those divorce papers, without fighting his brother.

VICTOR

My mother can be annoying at times. She was busy asking me to talk to Siphe. She didn't like to see him around Mav. I didn't see anything wrong with them being friends. She came all the way from the house to my office to tell me that I had to stop Lele from being friend with my ex wife.

Me: Mom I don't care what happening between them.

Mr T: They will ruin our name.

Me: I gave her a divorce and released her from me. She can be friends with anyone she wants to be friends with.

Mrs T: With your brother thought?

It might look somehow, but I wasn't going to run after her. I let her go for reason.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

I knew that I was risking my life by helping a stranger out, but she needed water for her sick husband, she was really

desperately. A small acts of kindness encourage me to think of someone else. I know that my energy to help others doesn't just make the world better it also makes me feel better.

We walked to him. He was sitting on the rock.

Woman: Mpenzi wangu, twende. (*My love let's go*)

Man: Where did you disappeared to?

Woman: I went to get you water remember. But unfortunately I didn't get the water then this young lady will get us the water at her house.

He looked at me.

Man: You stay around?

I nodded.

Man: I'm searching for someone, would you help me?

He coughed.

Me: If you provide me with the person's information I will gladly help you.

Man: I'm...

He coughed again.

Him: The name of the person I'm looking for is Khanyisile Nkosi she was married with Enock Mabuza and they-

I cut him. I was shocked, why would someone look for my mother, someone who is late, that was new to me. That was shocking.

Me: Why are you searching for my mother?

He looked at me, I did the same. Oh my goodness, how did I miss that?

Me: Dad! is that you?

Him: Nomaso-

I don't know how but I find myself on his arms. We hugged...

He groaned in pain, I stepped out of his hands. I looked at him.

Me: I knew that you would come back.

I was excited I won't lie.

Mabuza: Take me home I'm tired.

Shame I could see that he was in pain but trying by all means to be strong.

Me: Let's go then.

I lifted up their bags.

ZWELAKHE

My sister and I we were having a great time. I even forgotten about work.

Me: Why don't you relocate this side sis?

Thobile: Why should I do that?

Me: You want me to tell you the truth?

She smiled

Thobile: Between you and I, we know that my brother can't lie.

Me: Everyone lies in this world.

She laughed.

Thobi: Well not my brother.

We laughed...

Me: Okay sis no one ever brought me lunch since I got here.

She smiled then looked at her phone. And again I had the same vision of her having a spiritual partner. That was serious, it needed my attention no matter how I tried to ignore that but the vision kept on coming back. I closed that's when I heard the voice I listened to it.

Voice: Imimoya anayo izoduna ikusasa lakhe umoshe nempilo yakhe. Umyeni wakhe wokomoya unomona futhi unonya. Ngeke ashade noma abe nesoka. Ngoba leyo ndoda yokomoya inomona futhi iyamlawula. Zibuze mfana wam ukuthi kungani ethuka wonke umuntu wesilisa omshelayo? Akuyena kodwa ngumyeni onomoya ononya lowo. *(The spirits she has will hijack her future and ruin her life. Her spiritual husband is jealous and cruel. She will not marry or have a boyfriend. Because her spiritual husband is jealous and self-centered, ask yourself why she's insulting every man who approaches her? That's not her but that cruel spiritual husband)*

Thobile: Zweli your phone is ringing.

She Snaped, I came to reality.I answered it

Her: Hello Mr Khoza, you are speaking with Nadia from Musa's school.

Me: Okay.

Her: We tried to reach his guardian and his uncle without no luck.

Me: Is he okay?

Her: Unfortunately he's not Mr Khoza.

I looked at Thobi. She was busy with her phone.

Me: Okay I will be there in few minutes.

Her: Please sir.

She hanged up before I could ask what's wrong with him.

Me: Sis I'm sorry I have to go.

Thobile: Where to?

Me: Musa's school he's not feeling well.

Thobile: Someone I know?

Me: Tshidi's little brother, the school can't reach Nomasonto or Victor.

She got up.

Thobile: I'm coming with.

The are people who doesn't deserve cruelty like my sister she's young to go through what she's going through. She's very kind and supportive. The is is nothing that beat the prayer. We walked out of the office.

AZOLA

How long does it takes for someone to heal from the passing of their loved ones. I tried to be strong

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but with Thobile being away, I was struggling decimally I ended up going to the Sikhakhane's.

Ndu's family was very fortunate to let me in their home, they've performed cleansing for me. Well they had some Ubuntu with them, when I visited them, they welcomed me with their warm hands and allowed me to use his room plus his bed was giving me comfort. I felt safer and comfortable just being in his bed.

It's been months and my heart was still bleeding.

Mr Sikhakhane: Do things in your time you will get rid of his things when your ready.

I nodded. I was wearing his shirt, I remembered how he smelled. I did wash his, towels, blankets but not this t-shirt. I loved it so much. I couldn't foresee getting rid of his things ever. People thought I was losing my mind. Well I was not, Ndu was the only person who could endure my craziness, he was the only person who could deal with the mood Thobi but there he was taken away from us.

ZWELAKHE

When we got to Musa's school I signed the pass out form. My mood changed from ten to zero.

Voice: Uncle Zweli!

I looked at him as they walked with him to me.

Me: What's wrong boy?

Sometimes I catch people's emotions like as if they're mine. Sometimes I'm absorbing their energy. Sometimes I would feel

someone who is far, I could feel the sadness of those who are very close to me.

Musa: Uncle I don't know what's wrong with me.

I checked his temperature with my hand it was too high.

Me: Thank you mam.

She nodded and gave us the pass out ticket.

We walked out, I was holding his books.

Musa: Uncle I'm sorry for giving them your contact, they wanted to take me to the hospital, I hate hospital.

Nobody like hospital

Me: It's okay boy, no harm done.

VICTOR

My mother asked me to drive her home, I left my phone at the office.

Mom: When will Noma move in with us?

Me: When she's ready Ma.

She shook her head.

Ma: Between you and her who's the man?

Me: Ma you know that your husband doesn't like Noma.

Ma: But he likes her daughter.

Me: Nelly she's his first grandchild remember?

Ma: Why do you still allow that man to bully you Victor? You need to man up.

That made me to question myself, did my mother got married with my father willingly?

Me: Why do you hate dad?

Ma: I don't hate him.

Me: It doesn't seems like that.

Ma: Your father he's a great man of God.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

[Third minutes later]

We were sitting there, silently, only our breath, sigh, cough was fulfilling that three room shake. As much as I wanted to hate him for rejecting me, I wanted to hate him for leaving my

mother while she needed him the most. A part of me was upset and confused, because wow that man left us and I had hoped that he would come back one-day. I had endless questions like why didn't he accepted me like my father did to his daughter? the was no use to.

Enock: When will Khanyi comes back?

Like really now?

Me: Aunt how long he's been sick?

Maria: His been sick for two years and calling me with your mother's name for a while now.

I freely my tears.

Me: How many children do you have?

She looked at him.

Enock: We had two children they both late.

Sham poor man.

Mabuza: Uphi uMusawenkosi? (*Where is*)

Me: At school-

I was disturbed by a knock, I knew it was not Vee, that one only knock when he's already in.

Before I could say 'come in' Musa walked in followed by Zweli and Thobile.

Me: Musa what are you doing here this time?

He hugged me so tight. His body was burning.

Me: Your temperature is too high.

Musa: I'm dying mom.

We break the hug.

Me: Don't say such things boyezer.

I got up then made his towel wet.

Thobile: I was about to advise you to do that.

Oh I had visitors?

Me: Sorry guys you might take a seat. I will be with you shortly

They did that. I put the towel first on his head, it seems like like I was playing.

That left me without no choice but to ask him to get into the cold water, even though he was not on for that. I left them there and attended my little brother.

Maria: Water solutions might also help.

Me: Please help me with that aunt.

I instructed her where to get sugar and salt. She boiled the water.

Musa: I'm feeling cold mom, and you are letting me bath with the cold water.

Me: Boyza I know what I'm doing.

Musa: You know what you are doing?

I nodded.

Musa: Why don't you tell me that you hate me, I'm not your blood you have the right to hate me Nomasonto.

Me: One more word from you Musa Mabuza I swear I will forget you.

Musa: Of course I'm Mabuza I'm just like my father, sister, and that uncle of mine.

I cut him before he could say hurtful things.

Me: Shut up Musa.

Musa: No you shut up and let me out of this water.

For a moment I thought he was into drugs, but no he was sick and his emotions were everywhere. Musa respect me

Me: Okay brother I'm so sorry.

I gave him his dry towel to dry himself. I walked out and join my visitors.

Me: I'm sorry for that brother Zweli and Thobile.

They nodded and explained that the received a call from his school.

Me: I'm sorry for that brother Zweli, I'm sorry for making my responsibilities yours.

Zweli: We now family, you no longer have to do things alone.

He said that whilst he was looking at Mr Mabuza.

Me: Oh guys meet Mr Mabuza.

Zweli: As in your-

I nodded after Mr Mabuza cutted him.

Mabuza: Where is MaNkosi?

I swallowed, where was I suppose to start?

Me: Aunt does he have any medication?

Maria: The doctors never find anything wrong with him.

Zweli: I'm very sorry to be forward but I need to release this.

Mrs and Mr Mabuza you need to bring the kids to their
ancestors.

Vee once said he suspected that he has a calling I didn't believe
him.

Enock: Tanzania is very far.

Zweli: Uyazi mama Nelly, we can rejoice his return, but what he left behind will be the one thing that will be hunting him, Musa, Tshidi's and my son too. (*You know Nelly's mother*)

I looked at everyone in that room.

Me: What should we do now?

Zweli: Before Tshidi's imbeleko, bab Mabuza has to fetch his late kids's spirit and bring those sprit home.

Enock: Are you a prophet?

Zweli: I'm just a massager.

Enock: Hubani uTshidi? (*Who is Tshidi*)

Zweli looked at me.

Me: Dad you remember the DNA test we did years ago?

He nodded then glanced down. He then cut me.

Mabuza: I'm sorry baby, I was selfish to ask those tests, I had to accept you as my daughter.

Me: It's okay dad, spilled water can not be undone.

I got up and went to check on my little brother

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he was lying on his bed half naked. I checked his temperature it was getting better.

I joined them again.

Mabuza: When will mom comes back?

Me: She won't come back.

Mabuza: She's married?

Me: Dad remember the last time you were here?

He nodded.

Mabuza: She was lying on our bed, telling me that those tests were faked and I didn't believe her.

I nodded repeatedly. He still remembered that but how was I going to tell him that she's no more, I tried to explained about his daughter but I kept on failing. What if that will kill him, what will I tell Musa. I felt a kiss on my cheek followed by a thumbs wiping away my tears.

Me: Thabethe my father he's here.

That idiot just sat down. He didn't even apologies.

I looked at thee Mabuza then scratched my hands. Believe me when I say I needed a drug to face that man who caused pain for my mother. Luckily I had a some pills I used to use when I was still a prostitute. I took two dose then drank water.

Mabuza: Can anyone tell me where is my wife.

I got choked by water. I turned and looked at him, the courage from that man. "*My wife*" really

Me: Ex wife dad.

Mabuza: When will she comes back.

That man abandoned us yet he was there asking for his late ex wife, I swear he didn't notice that his son was not well. I sat down try by all means to face that man.

Me: Brother Zweli and Vee please be my witnesses here.

They nodded.

Me: This man here he's Musa and Tshidi's father.

He cut me.

Mabuza: When did your name change to Tshidi.

Me: Shut up dad.

I shouted. Everyone looked at me.

Me: As much as I want to hate you, but I can't, mom would want to forgive you. You didn't just abandon us dad you made my mother's life to be cut short. But because you had your own reasons to do that, I forgive you, for everything.

Mabuza: What do you mean I cut mom's life short?

Me: When you abandoned us, she suffered with a stroke, it was very hard especially that you divorced her and accused her of having an affair while she was faithfully to you, dad I want to hate you for breaking her heart and that sent her to her early grave, she will never see her children, she never got a chance to speak or touch her daughter, I want to hate you because I have never had my life as a child I became an adult at a very young age.

Thobi and Maria cried.

Me: She passed on four months after you left.

Mabuza: She was in pain? Did she needed me?

I looked at him without anything to say. The little girl in me was crying. Why couldn't he love me the way my father loves his daughter? I felt unworthy. I also felt guilty, why was I born.

Me: Did you ever think about her?

He nodded.

Me: Did you ever think about us?

He still nodded. I asked myself over and over, why did I suffer as a child? All I wanted was his attention and acknowledgment.

Me: Dad we needed you, my brother needed you and you were nowhere to be found.

Enock: I'm sorry Sonto.

He was crying.

MAVIS

Siphelele liked to trick me, instead of taking me home he took me to the same park where I made myself a fool by kissing him. It's easy to confuse the heart-pounding, cheek-flushing rush of electricity with falling in love. I was falling deeply in love with Lele but failing to confess my feelings. The first question was does he has the same feelings I had?

Me: Tell me here when you spend much time with me, when do you get the chance to see your girlfriend.

Siphe: I do get a chance to see her.

I swallowed my saliva.

MATSHIDISO

I could no longer control my hands they were shaking in an odd trembling rhythm, I was hungry, lonely and sad. I heard that voice just when I was about to take a bath.

Me: No go away.

Voice: You don't need to bath, no one cares who you are.

Me: Leave me alone.

Voice: You are alone sis.

It giggled. I looked around me there was no one there. But I heard voices laughing at me.

Me: Please go. (*whispered*)

Voice: Why are you still breathing you have no one, your son he's there Zweli left you not to mention those you called parents they have their own daughter.

The voice was telling me the truth, the why was I trying to pull myself together.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

Later on. That voice kept on telling me that I had no one, I was feeling anxious and I didn't understand myself what was wrong with me. I closed my eyes trying to avoid that voice.

The voice kept on telling me that I was worthless and had no one.

Voice: Tshidi the only way to escape loneliness is death.

I covered my face with a pillow but it kept telling me that. I got up from the bed and walked to the garage.

Indeed somehow the voice was telling me the truth, I had no one. I walked to the garage to find the object that was going to help me to escape the loneliness.

When I got there there was a five liter petrol. I didn't hesitate to take it and started to drive around the house. I never realised that my house was that big until this day.

NOMASONTO

Finally I got the courage to tell that man to about Tshidi, even though it was hard, but yeah drug I took gave me the couraged. Receiving news of any form can have an instant effect on our body and cause our flight-or-fight response to kick in quickly. He was crying and apologizing for everything and every words he ever said to me ages ago.

I won't say I was brave becouse I was driven by the drug I took earlier. I know I shouldn't be depending on drugs each time I need to face obstacles but had to face that man without feeling bad. Because yeah it was wow.

I always prayed for that day to come and it came, my father came back.

Me: You done nothing wrong dad, you did what you had to do.

Enock: Where does she stay?

I looked at Zwe.

Me: Brother Zweli he's her fiance.

Enock: You are telling me she's getting married?

Musa: They both engaged.

As he walked to us. He looked much better.

Me: Look who's awake.

He smiled then sat down.

Musa: I'm sorry mom for what I said earlier.

I nodded.

Me: Next time you talk to me like that, I will get arrested trust me.

Musa: Any punishment will suit me.

I liked him because he takes fully responsibility for his actions.

[AN HOUR LATER]

Whilst we were still sitting my father ask to lie down, I had to talk to Musa.

Me: Boyza you we will share a bed for few days.

Musa: What about uncle Vee.

I looked at his uncle Vee.

Me: He has-

Vee cut me. Then whispered.

Victor: You welcome to my house at any time.

Zweli's phone rang he answered it.

Him: I can't hear you.

He walked out of the room. I begged my little brother to let that man to use his bad. Zweli walked in he was sweaty.

Zweli: I'm sorry guys I need to go

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Tshidi she's trapped on fire.

That shook us, Thobi asked him to repeat what he just said, he did.

Me: I'm coming with.

Zweli: For now call your parents then I will keep you informed.

Thobi: I will drive brother.

He tried to protest but his sister was not giving in.

Victor: I will drive him Thobi.

They both got up.

Me: I haven't bought the Sim card.

Victor: Use my phone.

He threw his phone on the table. They walked out.

VICTOR

No matter what the bad news we receive, we have to try very hard to be strong. I know that Khoza was devastated and jarred at the same time, Khoza's world was upside down.

Thobile: I'm sure that she will be fine. She was trying by all means to encourage her brother.

When we got there, the house was really on fire. Zweli ran out of the car. Firefighters tried to stop him but he got into the house.

Thobile: Zweli...

She was also running after him, I block her.

Me: You need to trust your brother.

Thobile: My brother he's in there.

Me: I know-

Sometimes our adrenaline might be pumping and your mind may begin to race to several worst-case scenarios in seconds.

ZWELAKHE

I don't like movies but what I was seeing that day only happens on movies. The fire was huge, and she was shouting out for help.

Tshidi: Help.... Some..

She coughed.

Me: Hang in baby I'm coming.

She coughed, her coughed was coming from the living room. The only thing that crossed my mind was if she doesn't make it I won't what will I tell my son.

ONLY HOPE LEF

ZWELAKHE

The heat, smoke, and the lack of visibility, was making me to lose hope. It was hard to find her, the flame was increasing, lucky the room she was in the was no flame only smoke coming from the other side, what does was firefighters doing, all the had to do was to save life.

I crouw there and I was calling her name, I was struggling to find her, I was the one now who was smoking the smoke, I was the one who was coughing. After some time of search I finally reached her.

Me: Tshidi!

Her: Rre...

That came out as an whisperer. That's when I heard a fire alarm.

Me:It's okay I'm he...

I coughed. I was determined to save her or die with her. Death alone was no longer death, it was unbeliever, I was facing it. I sat her up, reach under her armpits, and grab her wrists. Fortunately the fire fighters were there to rescue us.

NOMASONTO

The following day. I didn't get any update about Tshidi, I thought since Vee left his phone with me he was going to come for it and update me. He didn't, that made me to be more worried.

The first thing I did was to prepare a porridge for Musa, Mr Mabuza and his wife. As I was busy his wife walked to me.

Maria: Morning Sonto.

Me: Good morning aunt how did you you sleep?

She took a deep breath then sat down. I looked at her.

Me: Is everything okay with my father.

She nodded.

Maria: I was expecting that coming here he will be fine. I was sure that he would be better by now.

Me: It's still early aunt, he will be fine.

Maria: But I'm grateful that he managed to sit for couple of hours yesterday. That's a blessing right?

I smiled then return to what I was doing.

Me: God he's watching over us.

She nodded then said. "**Amen**" I wasn't praying though.

VICTOR

Zweli managed to save Tshidi's life, but they were both admitted. He's a soldier that protect the nation, he is like a mother protecting their child. We slept at the hospital waiting area, Thobi didn't want to leave without seeing her brother. Mr Radebe walked to me, I had to ask him to take Mrs Radebe home.

Rre Radebe: Any news?

I shook my head.

Me: Same old.

He looked at Thobile she was pacing up and down, I tried to stop her but I was not winning.

Rre Radebe: Thobi you need to calm down.

She kept on pacing. I asked Mr Radebe to land me his phone there I had to call my brother to come calm that girl down.

He answered after few rings.

Me: Sipe I have a situation here.

Sipe: Good morning to you to big brother.

Jokes are powerful tool for bringing people closer together,
managing conflict

Advertisement

and reducing tension. but the are times to be serious

Me: Fuck that.

He laughed.

Siphe: What happened brother, why are you calling me with the unknown number?

Me: Please come to Netcare Sunninghill Hospital

He hang up.

An hour later. Sipelele showed up. He didn't even ask what happened, he walked to her. Siphe has his technics, to make one calm down, I don't know how he does that but yeah he's good at that.

Siphe: You are not making the situation better by doing this, if can calm down, and wait for doctors to give you an update.

She sighed

Thobile: Please tell me that they will be fine.

He nodded as he walked her to us, they both sat down.

Siphe: You guys look terrible.

We didn't sleep well how we were supposed to look good? I explained to him what happened. The tension and trauma was differently, it was like we were tackling the mountain ahead. Love can drive one crazy, Zwe saw how big that fire building was but he risked his life to save his love of his life.

MAVIS

After a morning prayer I received an WhatsApp from Lele.

Him: *Sorry I will have to schedule today's adventure, sis Thobile need a friend by her.*

I responded him.

Me: *What's wrong with her?*

Siphe: *Brother Zweli and Tshidi were trapped on fire.*

Oh my goodness.

Me: *Really?*

He didn't respond, I closed my eyes and pray again.

Me: Father I come before you again this morning, please save them, brother Zweli he's a great person, he doesn't deserve any pain. If he ever done you wrong please take his sins and give them to me, our church need him the youth need him, Samukelo need his parents father don't let them die Amen.

NOMASONTO

When I got to the hospital they were still on sitting on the waiting area. I walked to them.

Me: Any news?

I didn't bother to greet them.

Thobile: Zweli he's awake but Tshidi she's still in critical, condition.

Me: What happened to brother Zweli?

Thobile: He was being a super man.

Victor: He did what he had to do.

Thobile: By risking his life? How could he do that?

I'd do anything to save my loved ones. No matter what are the out come.

Me: Have you seen him?

They shook their heads.

I sat next to my father I could see that he was broken but trying to be strong.

Victor: How is Musa and Mr Mabuza?

He was just seeking my attention. I gave him a faint smile.

Me: Musa he's fine but he didn't go to school, then my father he's still in pain.

Thobile: Poor man, let's hope Tshidi make it.

Yeah she has to, he was looking forward to see his daughter, and that happened.

Dad: What are you talking about?

I looked at them they shrugged.

Me: Mr Mabuza he's back.

I was supposed to tell them immediately, but everything happened just like a dream. I was in a condition of schizophrenia, I was associated with a shock of . Physical illnesses, like heart disease and cancer, have also been associated with vivid dreams.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

ZWELAKHE

[*MONTH LATER*]

Seconds, minutes, hours, days and weeks passed my fiancée she was still on the coma. From smoke inhalation to respiratory depression, low blood pressure, rash then coma what next? I was ambiguous grieving for someone who was still alive. Well only life support machines was giving us hope that she was alive. I'm to blamed for that, I left her knowing very well that she was in no position to be alone. Tshidi she's forgetful, maybe she was trying to do something to eat she then forgotten about that. No man it doesn't make sense.

Thobi sat next to me. My actions put her on a coma.

Thobi: Zwe you need to eat.

I heard her, maybe it was the fifth time she was telling me that, I had no reason to eat while she was still there.

Thobi: You can at least say something, shout at me so that I will see that you are fine.

Me: Just go away.

Thobile: I know it's hard Zwe, but we need to be strong for her.

She was frustrating me, I banged the table.

Me: Argh Thobile can't you shut up. **(Shouted)**

Thobile: I was just saying.

What is the easiest way to tell one to shut up. She hitted me with her phone.

Thobile: She's also my friend, my nephew's mother and my sister in law remember?

Me: Whatever sis.

I was not interested in whatsoever she had to say, she's a lawyer and a community builder she wouldn't mind to give me zillion lecture. I was so drained, I became my father's son, I became that man who runaway when things turn up to go wrong. I look no different from him.

Me: I hate myself, I became David Khoza's son.

It just came out. Life seems to be unfair at times

Thobile: We cannot underestimate the impact of personal factors like emotional regulation, cognitive responses, secondary stress, coping style, prior history of trauma, and access to support and resources in determining how a we responds to such event. Yes you are his son, but you are more productive than than dad, you take responsibility for your actions than he does, if it was him he shouldn't be here, but you are here and blaming yourself.

If I had ear blocker I was going to block my ears.

Thobile: You are not in control Zwe, no one is, you thought you were sending her a message, brother you can blame yourself all you want and you beat yourself up, but there is nothing, you did not do to protect her, you ran in that house and saved her, you touched death just for her, sometimes the world seems profoundly meaningless and unjust, it shatters and each of these assumptions and lead to a sense that the world is unsafe and unpredictable, that others are malicious and evil, and that you are powerless. If you keep on doing this to yourself, you will end up questioning your faith and to feel abandoned by God. And I believe that is the last thing you want. She need you to be strong for her, Samu and Phawu need you to be.

I paid attention to that, community builder, lawyer and sister of mine. Then looked at my hand the one that was caught by fire that day. It's the same very hand that touched death, I guess the mark that will remind me of that evening. I remembered screaming for help, the last common word she said was "**Rre**" I always been Samu's dad to her and I just failed a simple task, which it was to talk to her as I used to and make her understand that I couldn't choose between her and my family I love her as much as I love my family.

Me: I touched death for the love of my life, but still she's not responding to any medication. She's there lying, she doesn't move, smile, shout

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demands that's unlike her.

I had endless questions, how did the fire start? Was she sleeping? Was she trying to cook then forgot to switch the stove?

Thobile: We are not in control.

Step sisters like Thobi are priceless, she took unpaid leave just to be there for me. Risk her job just to take care of me.

Me: It's visitors time sis.

She became so protective, I should be the one to protect her.

NOMASONTO

I gave Mr Mabuza, a glass of water to take his medication.

Enock: Thank you.

To much responsibilities for one person, I needed to find a job, I can even agree to wash pet just to earn, I cannot depend on someone for the rest of my life, especially a man. What if one day he wakes up and decide to leave?

Maria: Unazidi kuwa bora kila siku. (*You are getting better each day*)

Enock: I wish I could recover faster, so that I get to see my first born.

I looked at him, and felt sorry for him. How could the world be that cruel, a daughter had always wanted to meet her father and when finally that time came she was faced with a tragic inhaling smoke, she had to many complications. She was put into an induced coma for weeks so her body could fight life threatening whatever infections that was.

Twenty minutes later. Vee Knock at the door then entered. He doesn't wait to be invited in.

He sat down and greeted us.

Me: Coffee?

He shook his head.

Victor: I hope you are ready, I don't have the whole day.

I nodded, he volunteered to take me to the hospital, I could use a taxi but Mr Thabethe doesn't want his baby mama to stand on the queue, according to him he wanted me to move in with him and his parents. I'd give anything to have him but moving in with his parents, that was not going to happen. Who lived under their parents roof on his age, he was married and he's getting married for the second time but still under his parents roof.

The journey of life is devided in two path there is bad times, but there is a hell of a lot of good times too.

Me: Aunt everything you need it's on the cupboard, if you need anything ask the lady next door to call me.

She nodded.

Enock: Sand my regards to my baby girl.

Me: I will dad.

I got up.

MAVIS

Tshidi's condition scares me, I just didn't understand why she was unconscious. I was driving to the hospital with Judy and Banele.

Banele: I don't understand why are we all going there, we need to give her and her family sometime time alone.

I glared at him through the mirror.

Me: And we are her friends.

Judy: There is no friendship here, we are only there for one another only when the light comes the darkest we turn our back for each other.

Me: You can say that again Judy.

We should stick together but with them you would deny when they are in trouble. I know that we don't always have control over people, but in order for Tshidi to recover we need to show her more support.

An hour later. We finally reached our destination, I packed my car behind brother Zweli's car. We walked there. The last time I went there was two weeks ago I was with Lele but unfortunately today he couldn't come today.

When we got there, brother Zweli and Thobi they were already there.

Zweli: I need you, Mme Samu.

He was holding her hand.

Zweli: I know you will pull through, remember at University, you were a nuisance there.

Thobi: And lazy to study, I never seen anyone who hate books like this girl.

They laughed. She never loved books but she was a pain in the neck.

Me: And a bully too.

They turned and looked at us. We walked in.

We greeted them. Thobi explained that the doctor said we must talk to her, she can hear us.

Zweli: Those were the good times, Tshidi please come back to me.

His sister cut him.

Thobile: Come back for us not him alone, Tshidi I know the are times we don't see eye to eye, but it doesn't mean that I don't like you, I do even though you love to press that red button, I miss you. My brother he's falling apart, please Tshidi if you don't make it for everyone, then come back for Samu and my brother.

He was indeed falling apart. Victor and his golden women walked in.

Victor: Sanibonani. (*Greetings*)

We exchanged greetings, funny enough he acted like we never had history. He didn't even look at me.

Sonto: Hello sis, I know you can hear me.

She took a deep breath.

Victor: She will wake up and throw her tantrum at you.

Everyone laughed, Tshidi cannot be confirmed, she can behave like a child sometimes especially if she hates you.

Sonto: Dad says I must send his regards, he's looking forward to meet you. Please Tshidi come through for everyone.

She looked at me then Tshidi again.

Sonto: I'm the last person you want, but MaNkosi would want me to be here for you.

The doctor walked in. He looked at us then smile.

Doc: If you guys keep on doing this I promise she will be awake at anytime.

Zweli: She's not responding.

Sham he was worried. Well everyone was worried. The mood was unceremoniously killing me to be in the ward, and I asked myself for the millionth questions, did I ever exit in Victor's worlds?

Doc: Telling her about the special moment might also help.

We nodded. He made the necessary checks up then walked out.

NOMASONTO

Each time, I looked at Mav, guilty was kicking me. I was trying by all means to be strong but I was failing. My phone rang. I looked at it, well that's was not my call. I answered it.

Me: Hello.

Voice: Hi Mrs Thabethe.

Me: Ms Mabuza.

Her: Oh I'm sorry mam can I speak with Mr Thabethe.

I looked at him then gave him my phone. He took it then told the caller that he will be there within fifteen minutes.

Victor: Thanks for reminding me.

He hang up then gave me my phone.

Victor: That was a business call I'm sorry we have to go Noma.

Why was he involving me there? He apologized to everyone.

Victor: Let's not keep our prospect Noma.

Our prospect?

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

AZOLA

When the talk about bad timing, they were talking about Thobile's manager. That man made me to take a journey to Gauteng, he wanted to discuss something with Thobi hopefully he's not going to fire her.

Me: People like you are toxic.

Him: Okay.

Me: I had plans, I didn't plan for all this.

He nodded then apologized. What made me mad is that I was going to the family attention seeker herself. Seeking attention is a huge problem when it happens all the time. Even charming attention-seeking can become controlling.

ZWELAKHE

Victor and Sonto exited the ward, they left the ward quiet and tense. I could tell that she was not ready to leave.

Thobi: Poor Sonto she doesn't want to go wherever brother Victor wants her to go.

Mavis: That's not Vic.

I looked at her. It must be hard for her. Going through a breakup can be very difficult and stressful at the same time. There was nothing we could do but we all choose what we think is the right thing. We can judge all we want, but he chose what he needed. Thobi looked at her phone then smiled.

Thobi: Someone she's about to lose her job.

She changed the gears and brought the tension alive.

Me: Poor person.

Thobi: Which works for my favor I can just relocate to East London to be with mom and my son.

Me: We are talking about you here?

She nodded. I never saw anyone who was happy about losing their job but there she was and happy. Unless You are Unhappy with the job she love's her job.

I looked at Tshidi. And forget about everyone in that room. If was given an option to exchange lives. I'd exchange to have Tshidi's pain and suffering attacks. Looking at that brave lady lying there helplessly was getting to a point were I just want to scream and scream. I didn't know how to cope. I kissed her forehead, I wished she could shout at me, she could tell me where to get off, I wish she could piss me off.

Me: Frick out Tshidi.

They laughed at me.

Thobi: You don't wish her to right?

Me: That will give me strength.

I looked at the machine then Tshidi again.

Me: Ngiyakuthanda. (I love you)

NOMASONTO

I hate a person who decides for me, I wanted to be next to Tshidi but Nelly's father had his selfish reasons.

Victor: You can be angry all you want Noma, but business is business.

Me: I hate being put in a powerless position, which will leave me to wait someone else's actions, that's something I can't stand.

Victor: This is for your own good.

I looked at him. I wish I could strangle him right away.

Me: My own good to be disgraced in front of your ex wife,
that's my own good Vee?

Victor: You need to trust me.

Me: Trust you Thabethe? you are the last person to be trusted.

Victor: Why are you always fighting with me?

He was getting angrier.

Me: Just focus before you crush with me.

Vee: At least I will be at peace. Dying with my Noma.

Me: Stop being egocentric right now, my child can't have both
her parents gone. My brother needs me too.

He laughed.

Me: I'm glad you find that funny.

He just ran his hands on my thighs. I closed my eyes and opened them again.

Vee: This skirt is too short.

That was new from him.

Me: Is there any problem with that?

After an hour, we reached our destination. We walked to something like a boutique store. Judging by the range of man and woman style. From clothes, jewelry and bags. There was a lady waiting for us she got up as soon as she saw us, she got up and welcomed us. She then led us to her office.

Lady: Mr Thabethe, finally you showed up.

Vee: My apologies for being late.

Lady: Go away. Can I get you anything to drink?

They laugh.

Vee: Mrs Mofokeng meet my beautiful fiancée Nomasonto Mabuza.

She extended her hand to me.

Her: It's my pleasure to finally meet Ms Mabuza, I'm Disebo Mofokeng, I'm looking forward to work with you partner.

I smiled then removed my hand from hers. I looked at the man who brought me there

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he had a lot explanation to do.

Me: Thabethe!

He just smiled.

AZOLA

When we got to the hospital reception the receptionist had to call my nephew to confirm that I was indeed his aunt.

Him: Thanks Mr Khoza I will let them in.

He directed up to the ward. Don't get me wrong, I like Tshidi, but she got all the attention from the family, they've forgotten about us. She got all the support, whilst I was there in another province with my huge belly. Excessive attention seeking results in a situation where that person commands someone's life. Attention seekers tend to become a massive problem when it happens all the time. Even charming attention seeking can become controlling. Many attention seekers make tragedies out of trivial concerns to get our sympathy.

We got to her depressing ward, only machines was beeping. No body was saying anything.

Me: Mama Phawu.

She turned and looked at us as we walked in.

Thobile: Sister.

She smiled

Me: Wipe that smile.

She got up and hugged me.

Me: Okay I miss you too.

We broke the hug. She looked at her manager.

Thobile: Advo.

Manager: No hug for me mouthpiece?

Thobile: Forget it Advocate.

We exchanged greetings with everyone.

Thobi: So you are here to fire me?

Manager: Why would I do that?

Thobi: Because I took-

He cut her.

Manager: Our attorney firm lost an deliciated Advocacy months ago. We can't always lose a delicate Lawyers.

She wasn't expecting that. Her facial expressions says it all.

Manager: We have a murder case around here and you are the right person for this case.

She looked at him. She looked so disappointed.

Thobile: I believe you have an hour to brief me about the case.

He nodded.

Thobile: Excuse me guys duty calls.

Zweli nodded.

Zweli: Thanks Siya for taking that mouthpiece of yours.

They walked out. Zweli looked at me.

Me: You look terrible.

Zweli: I feel terrible aunt, I feel helpless, she's not talking to me, she's not shouting at me.

Me: It's okay Zweli you, have every right to feel that way.

He nodded.

Zweli: I failed her, I failed our son aunt.

I sat where Thobi was sitting and hold his hand.

Me: Thobi told me everything, it's not your fault, you didn't know this was going to happen.

He looked at her, my nephew was hurting, after all he needed us than I thought.

Me: Uyamkhumbula uThembeka? (*You remember Thembeka*)

He nodded, that was my mother's name.

Zweli: Grama was going to say "*Makoti no matter what keep God first, nothing beats the prayer let's pray kids*"

He was trying to emulate her voice.

Me: Then she will take her time praying for the whole world.

Zweli: And her prayer kept us strong.

Me: Let's pray.

We had a chain prayer.

NOMASONTO

Well God remembered me for once, he had recognized me. Vee bought me forty percent of boutique store. Tears couldn't stop falling. We had a champagne to celebrate my partnership with Dee.

Victor: She will attend business courses whilst being around. I believe you don't mind?

School? That was going to be difficult for me to comply. She nodded. I wiped my tears, I never waited for a man to sweep away my troubles. But there Victor was a God sent.

Desebo: She's speechless.

Vee: You won't believe that she nearly swallowed me alive.

We laughed.

Me: Stop lying, you hijacked my plans.

Vee: It was a surprise.

We toasted. Life was getting great, from a prostitute to man stealer now a business woman. How great is life.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

[LATER ON]

I was drunk with happiness. We had a to go take the kids from their school, we started by fetching Nelly before we headed to Musa's school.

Nelly: Mom don't ever sit in my seat again.

Me: I miss you too baby.

Nelly: Angishongo ukuthi ngiyakukhumbula, uhleli esihlalweni sami. *(I didn't say that I miss you. You are sitting on my seat)*

Victor: Forgive her princess it's just a once off thing.

She rolled her eyes. She suddenly had an attitude that I don't like.

Me: How long are you planning to keep my child away from me?

Nelly: I'm not coming back to that matches box house of your mom.

I laughed a little not that I was offended.

Me: Matches box?

She never step her foot to my house since she visited her father. Even Mr Mabuza himself never met her. In her world she doesn't want to live there anymore.

Victor: Relax she doesn't know what she's talking about.

Me: That's it we are going to that matches box house of mine.

Nelly: Dad you won't allow that to happened?

He shook his head. We shall see.

We took Musa and headed the road inserted of him taking the route to my house he took a different route.

Me: You are taking the wrong direction.

He kept quiet.

Me: Thabethe I'm talking to you.

He just nodded.

AZOLA

Her friends were ready to leave.

Zweli: Thanks for your support guys.

Mavis: That's what friends are meant to.

Me: We will keep in touch.

She nodded. Honestly she looked different then the last time I saw her. She was engaging the acts of kindness.

Me: Divorce is doing good in you.

Mavis: Life is good aunt.

Life seems to be good when things are good.

NOMASONTO

[THREE HOURS LATER]

Believe me when I say Vee had the habit of hijacking my plans. We went to his house. We had dinner, I shivered in the cold air, I munched sausage.

Mrs T: When will you move in Makoti?

Me: I don't know.

Vee: You don't know or you don't want?

He's the one who supposed to move out of his parents house.

Pastor T: A man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife

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and the two shall become one flesh.

That man doesn't like me but he got my credit for that.

Victor: But Mavis used to stay with us.

Pastor T: She's not Mavis Victor.

Vee: Dad you need to expect that I'm old now I no longer need your approval.

Pastor T: You are making a mistake son she's not the one for you, you will regret letting Mavis go.

Vee got up.

Victor: Let the time took it cause dad.

He walked away from us. After waiting for an hour there was no sign of Vee, his parents and Nelly retired to their rooms.

Siphe: Musa we will share a room.

He nodded. I was not given an option.

Me: We are going Siphe.

Siphe: My brother just sent me a text, he said you join him on his room.

Like really? I walked to his room he was lying there. There was a broken glass beside the bed. I cleaned that up. His gaze met

mine for many minutes before he turned to look at the point above my head.

Vee: Get me a glass of water.

Me: Please take me home.

His fist clenched tightly on his lap. I never seen him show a reaction of anger before and that made my stomach twist uncomfortably.

Me: I need to get home.

He took off his shirt.

Victor: You not going anywhere.

I sat on his bed. I felt his anger.

Vee: After sending the kids to school tomorrow morning, we will start looking for our own place.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

After dropping Musa and Nelly to school we started looking for a place to stay. My heart was warmed up the thought of leaving the place I grew up, the place called home for twenty seven

years I was going to say goodbye to my home. The place that had all memories, that was not settling in my mind.

We met with Three different Agencies they didn't know what was their story. We met another agent, Vee seems to trust her.

Agent: What kind of apartment are you looking for?

Vee looked at me. I shrugged.

Victor: It must have a Three to four bedrooms.

She nodded then gave us a catalog. Vee picked the apartment but he was surprised by the price.

Victor: R11, 700?

She nodded

Her: It include 4 Bedroom 2 Bathroom including 1 tiny shower room ,Kitchen, Diningroom, Lounge,Pool and Braai in ComplexOn 3rd floor Lift in Complex.

Victor: We are taking it.

I thought he doesn't like it.

Agent: Are you sure?

He nodded.

Agent: Okay can we meet up this afternoon I will take you there?

Victor: 3pm will be fine.

If I didn't know better I was going to say, he doesn't want me around Tshidi.

Victor: Give me your details, so that I pay my deposit immediately.

Agent: There is no need to rush sir, you need to see the apartment before you make rush decisions.

MATSHIDISO

I was at peace, at the unknown place but it had peace without no pain, no troubles. But with my mother and my other two siblings.

Mom: I'm afraid you have to go Nana.

Me: But I enjoy being with here. I love to be here.

Khosi: It's not your time yet, sis we will be fine.

Have you ever been in a place where you feel wanted? That was the place I was in it was peaceful. No pain and no sorrows.

Makho: We will always be with you sis, don't worry.

Funny enough the named them similar names, my sister's full name was Makhosazana, then brother was Makhosonke. To differ their names so that we don't get confused when we call them, we call my sister Khosi then brother Makho.

Mom: Take this.

She gave me a pink stone

Mom: This pink tourmaline is known as the stone of peace, is able to dispel negativity while enhancing the feeling of tranquility.

I smiled. My brother gave me the purple one.

Makho: Amethyst also symbolizes incredibly protective, healing, and purifying. It will help you to get rid of negative thoughts and bring forth humility, sincerity, and spiritual wisdom. It's also help promote sobriety.

I was ambushed by happiness.

Me: Wow guys, they both beautiful.

Khosi: Don't keep them on your bedroom.

Me: Thanks guys.

Mom: You like them?

I nodded

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happiness streaked through me like a comet. I felt loved, lighter and wanted.

Khosi: Because I didn't get you anything, let me make you a necklace with those tourmaline so that we will be closed to your heart.

Tears of joy streamed. Indeed I was loved and wanted.

Mom: We have no time Khosi.

Khosi: It won't take long aunt.

She shook her head.

Khosi: Kumbuka kwamba anahitaji kuwa na amani, anahitaji kuchukua roho zetu kutoka Tanzania na kuwaleta nyumbani. Ili kila mtu awe na amani, mkufu huo ndio utakaomruhusu kufanya kile kinachohitajika kufanywa. (*Remember that she needs to be at peace, she needs to take our souls from Tanzania bring our souls home. In order for everyone to be at peace, this necklace will allow her to do what needed to be done*)

Ma: Okay but remember that time is ticking.

She nodded.

Me: Guys you need to teach me Swahili.

Mom giggled.

Ma: Suka udlala angithi, a hukwazi ukukhuluma isiZulu kodwa ufuna isiSwahili. (*You're joking, you can't utter Zulu but you want Swahili*)

We laughed.

Mom: You need to build a relationship with Sonto.

Me: Why?

Mom: You need to make peace with her. She's been through the most as you are, she deserves better Tshidi, remember that she gave up her education to take care of me and your brother.

I nodded repeatedly.

ZWELAKHE

Another day, without hearing her voice felt like a year. I joined my sister and aunt for breakfast.

Me: Good morning.

Them: Morning Zweli.

Me: What time did you come back last night?

Thobile: 9pm.

Me: It's not safe out there sis.

Thobile: I know and I'm sorry.

I nodded. She dished for me.

Thobi: Zweli I don't have the energy to beg you to eat your food like I'm begging Samukelo I don't have the energy of doing anything today.

She yawned.

Thobile: I'm so tired. My entire body feels like I was carrying heavy things.

I glanced down.

Azola: Tell me about the dream.

Thobile: I don't remember most of my dreams sis, now that you asked the is something wrong with me, I felt like the is someone who is watching me during my sleep, but I can't see who it is. This morning before I woke up I felt like someone was watching me but I couldn't speak or move, I tried but I couldn't. I tried to scream, my voice was distorted I couldn't do anything at all sis.

I lifted my head and looked at her. My heart leaps with sadness, I felt guilty because I couldn't help her. God trusted me with this gift if not he wouldn't have given me it to me. He wanted me help his children not to be selfish with it because he knew that I was the right person for it.

Thobile: Brother please help me.

Me: With?

I just pretended like I don't know what she was talking about. How do I tell her that she had a spiritual husband? Where do I start?

Thobile: Zweli when I sleep on one side, I do not move and I wake up sleeping with the same side. but I feel tired in the morning. Can you consult and check what is happening with me.

I nodded.

ANNA THABETHE

Honestly I love my husband and I want to see him happy, but sometimes I think he is still attached to his ex girlfriend, he want to keep her closer hence why he want Mavis to be with our son. I feel like he want to get the chance to see Millicent with their tired knot from the Ncumalos and the Thabethes.

Well I don't hate Mavis, she's a great child, and she's been used all this years by my husband and her own mother. What kind of a mother who agrees for her daughter to get married at the young age. Yes she was twenty plus she agreed because of Thabethe's status or maybe both Mavis and Victor they were pleasing their parents. Look now it ended in tears.

Pastor T: You can be angry all you want Anna but this is my house, I'm the only head in this house.

Me: Tell me here do you still love her?

Pastor T: Love who?

Me: Millicent.

He kept quiet for few minutes.

Pastor T: What do you want from me Anna? I choose you not her, I made you my wife not her.

He half shouted.

Me: You busy linking the Ncumalos with my son because you want to keep on seeing her.

Pastor T: You don't know what you are talking about.

Me: I do?

He got up.

Pastor T: I need to pray.

He walked away from me.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NARRATED

It's natural to worry about your children if they didn't come home. Worries becomes excessive when it's persistent and

uncontrollable. Mr Mabuza was worried about Sonto and Musa. Sonto left yesterday she promised to come back but she didn't.

Maria: Maybe she went to the Radebe's or her in-laws.

She was trying by all means to calm her husband down.

Mabuza: She should've told me.

Maria: Stop feeding your thoughts with negative thoughts, you will hurt yourself.

Mabuza was getting better each day. But because he was worried about Sonto, the young lady who can do anything for Musa and Nelly. The lady who knows each corner of this area, we are talking about Nomasonto here the super women herself. He was feeling restless and he was also jumpy. Insomnia, headaches, stomach problems, and muscle tension ran through him.

Maria: Let me ask the neighbor to call her.

Mabuza: Tafadhali. (*Please*)

She walked out from the house. And went to their neighbor who always helps them, to reach to Noma telephonically.

Approximately Noma did notify her neighbor that she's fine and Musa too.

Neighbor: I'm sorry Sisi, it flips my mind, she did call.

Maria: It's okay dada. (*Sister*)

Poor neighbor looked at her.

Neighbor: I'm Fezile.

She almost laughed at her, but remembered that she didn't understand her language.

Maria: Oh.... Dada means sister.

She explained. They both laughed.

Fezile: What language is that?

Maria: Kiswahili.

Fezile: Swahili?

She nodded, Fezile suggested that she must teach her Swahili and she will teach her isZulu.

ZWELAKHE

Hope is the medicine that is provided neutral. I had hope that she was going to come through for me. I kept on asking her to yell at me, accuse me of cheating.

Me: Just act act crazy. Drive me mad I will be happy.

My sister laughed at me.

Azola: You are being crazy like her right now, you want her to drive you crazy you will be happy, you are crazy, you need someone to examine you.

She was also laughing. Tshidi moved her hand from me then slowly removed the oxygen.

Me: Babe!

I got up. She coughed.

Me: Tshidi!

Happiness glowed inside me, I felt the sudden flare of joy. I wish I could pick her up kiss her, apologies for leaving her, but she looked so confused.

Her: Where am I?

She whispered.

Thobi: Wow... I will get the doctor.

I nodded she started walking.

Me: You are awake?

Tshidi: Where is Khosi?

I had no idea who she was talking about.

Me: Who is Khosi?

Tshidi: My sister she promised me a tourmaline necklace.

I was still confused.

Azola: What are you saying?

Tshidi: Mom!! Makho!! Kho-

Thobile walked in with the doctor.

Doc: Finally.

MATSHIDISO

I was in that room with the people I don't know, they seems worried.

Man: Any pain?

I shook my head. He asked me few general questions. Like my name and surname. He was taking notes of every respond I was responding him.

Man: How many people are in this room?

Me: Four including myself.

Him: How many kids do you have?

Me: None.

He wrote down.

Man 2: Hai Mme Samukelo.

Man 1: Give it a time Khoza.

Khoza, that sounded familiar and closer to my heart.

Khoza: Did she lost her memory?

Khoza freaked out, when I was asked I'm I in a relationship and I said "*no*"

Khoza: You don't got to tell me to calm down, I'm losing her, and you are telling me I must calm down.

He was shouting the poor man and those two girls.

Me: Who are you? Why are you so angry?

He held my hand and kissed it.

Khoza: Mme it's me, Zweli your fiance, don't you remember?

Doc: She has, condition called post-traumatic amnesia.

He ensured them that it's normal for the patient who was injured or conscious.

Doc: PTA is a state of confusion that occurs immediately following a traumatic brain injury she is disoriented and unable to remember events that occur after the the being trapped in fire. She might not be able to state some of the things, where she is, and what time is it. You need to bring some old event memories, post traumatic amnesia is considered to have resolved. New events might confuse her more, remember she was consciousness for months.

Zweli: How long does that post traumatic amnesia of yours last?

Doc: Mild 5–60 minutes, moderate 1–24 hours, severe 1–7 days and very severe 1–4 weeks.

He looked at me.

Me: I want my mother and my siblings.

Girl 1: Okay I will call them.

Then Zweli started telling me how did we meet.

Zweli: You were the only person I reached out to, and referred me to her uncle.

Me: So you found her?

He giggled.

Zweli: You won't believe this she was abducted by our uncle.

What kind of an uncle is that?

Me: Did he hurt her?

Girl: Uncle Zak was going to do anything to save his loved ones.

She walked to us.

Me: Did you find my mother?

She nodded. Zweli continued telling me those stories.

Have you ever watched a movie that got you confused, you repeat it just to watch it again and got so much more and if you watch it a third time then you wonder what you were confused about at all in the first place? That was me, I was confused at first but he kept on taking me back deeper and deeper times, how I was that arrogant girl, who thinks this world owes her

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I attempted to take my own life, I recalled that evening. I began to cry. I wasn't able to tell the difference between dreams and the reality.

Me: You left me in that house Zweli.

He apologized and asked what happened that evening. Mind me the doctor was taking notes.

Me: That voice kept on telling me that I'm no one, I had no friends, family that I'm just a walking corpse, that voice was the only thing talking me.

My eyes were clouded with tears, I was at peace why did I come back to that tearful world?

Thobile: I'm sorry.

Me: I... I wanted to end the loneliness, at first I wanted my body to burn to ashes. After feeling the heat of the flame, I realized that was not the solution, I tried to stop the fire but it was too big. I tried to escape but I couldn't.

Zwli hugged me, I just cried.

MAVIS

An hour later, after receiving a call from Thobile asking me to go to the hospital. I cancelled the movie date with Lele, He volunteered to come with me. Lele and I walked to the lift. When I was about to punch the button somebody shouted.

Voice: Hold the lift.

I should've known it was my ex husband, he was with his golden woman, they entered. Victor pushed the floor number. Then greeted us. On the way up, It was unsettling, I couldn't wait to be out of that lift. The lights dimmed.

Noma: Oh my goodness the history repeat it self

The elevator stopped moving, it was dark in there. Victor lighten his phone light, Siphe rang the emergency bell. I was irritated because I was stuck there with those people who brought nothing but pain in my life.

Siphe: Ladies please don't panic or shout.

We nodded. I wanted to be out of that lift that's all.

Sonto: The last time we were trapped in the lift it took hours to get help, Vee make a plan, I want to get out of here now.

I sigh, I don't know but yeah golden women had a way to soften Victor. He just hugged her and tried to calm her down. I pushed the button again. I thought of screaming, but I didn't want to make a fuss, so I just left the bell ringing and went to stand on the corner.

Me: Lele just take me out of here.

Lele: We both stuck here sis Mav.

Vic switched off his phone light. He knew very well that I was scared of darkness, he did that purposely. I tried to stay strong but I was scared.

Me: Lele give me your phone.

Siphe: My phone is in the car.

I freaked out.

Me: How could, I be this stupid, I left my phone in the car too.

Sonto: You can use my phone.

Me: Shut up bitch.

Sonto: Excuse me.

Me: I said shut.

Siphe: Okay sis Mav the is no need to do that.

I clicked my tongue in reaction of frustration.

Sonto: Nonsense.

Me: Come again.

Mind me Vic lighten his phone again.

Me: She's a bitch she has to hear this.

Lele tried to calm me down, but I was taking all the all the anger that was buried inside me to her. That was my only chance to let it out.

Sonto: That big mouth of yours got you here.

Victor: Mavis that's enough.

He shouted.

Sonto: She shut up.

Me: Enough Vic nothing it's enough here, you turned into something that I don't even recognize any more.

Lele: Sis Mav stop it please.

Me: You watch out Sonto.

She giggled aggressively enforce that made me more anger.

Me: Homewrecker!

She sat down whilst laughing. Victor switched off his light.

Sonto: Homewrecker? Wow your home needed to be imitated, Mavis, your home was long dead before I came through.

I exiled

Me: What do you know about dead home?

Sonto: Home is a home because of a woman who knows how to warm a man's bed, who knows his stomach and his emotions. And I arrived. You must thank me for saving you.

Me: Ngizokushaya. (*I will beat you*)

Sonto: Just try and see if I will let you get away with that this time.

Victor: I will shut both your mouth, myself.

Sonto: You won't get away this time Mav.

Victor: Noma what else are you not telling me, firstly it was my child now this what else are you not telling me?

She kept quiet.

Victor: Noma are you still here?

Sonto: Nothing beside of telling you that I love you Vee, Mavicaro.

If it was just the two of us I was going to teach her the lesson she was not going to forget.

ZWELAKHE

My emotions were mixed, happy and angry, why did I leave her there.

Tshidi: Can anyone call Sonto please.

I looked at her. She was being nice to everyone.

Me: Are you alright?

She nodded repeatedly.

Tshidi: I want to make peace with her, it's not her fault that we were switched during birth.

Azola: I think I like this new, Tshidi.

We laughed

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

Seconds, minutes and hours passed, we were still stucked there. Luckily the lights went on. I was trapped and frustrated. I scrambled up the sides of the lift to bang it the trap door. The priority attention from a lift contractor kept on saying "*Calm down. Don't be panic. Keep reminding yourself that help is coming*" Like seriously for how long should we keep reminding ourselves that?

Me: Just shut up and do something.

I was desperately needed to be out of that place. The trap doors were locked.

Me: Hello can anyone hear me?

I was already defeated laid on the floor. Thoughts of a slow death consumed me. Who will take care of my girl, I had no cigarettes or any drug to calm the shit out of me. I tried to sleep.

Vee suggested that, I should quite smoking and depending on drugs in situations like that. Wee ma! I will do anything to keep him with me. It's not like I was an drug addict. I was only taking them when I come across difficult situation. Situation that will want me to forget about being Sonto and be Noma the man stealer.

Victor: Noma are you still with us?

I will never take a ride using the lift trust me.

Siphe: Sis Sonto are you alright?

I nodded then kept quiet.

Mavis: Tsuuu, the energy girl went quiet.

She then laughed. I decided to keep my big mouth shut, than exchanging words with her.

Victor: Shut the hell up Mavis.

Mav: Nywe nywee Mavis.

She continued laughing. I wanted to join her but the situation wasn't allowing me.

Victor: I will shut that big mouth of yours trust me.

He roared with uncontrollable fury. It's extremely rare to find him angry.

Me: Nelly and Musa.

I was trying by all means to forget about myself and think about the kids.

Mavis: Where did the energy disappear to golden women?

Siphe: Sis Mav you've said everything that was on your mind just let it go.

Mavis: Lele uyazi okungiphatha kabi yini, I will take my last breath with the memory of your brother and his golden women. *(You know what bothers me)*

Siphe: Nobody is going to take the last breath here, all we need to do is to calm down and pray.

Victor: You can even say my golden queen.

He was not creating peace, he was creating conflict on its own.

Siphe: Brother I'm trying here.

Victor: Tshela intombi yakho ukuthi ithule. (*Tell your girlfriend to shut up*)

I've known Siphe for the shortest time, but I could tell that he was holding his laughter. He just glanced down then looked at Mavis.

MATSHIDISO

The was an disturbing alarm.

Making noise for the past Three hours.

Me: How long does it takes to get here?

Thobile: Let me try her again.

She dialed her phone number.

Me: Put it on a speaker.

She did, it rang until it went to voicemail, she tried again then it was picked up.

Voice: Thobile get us help, we are trapped on the lift for three hours now.

I looked at Mr and Mrs Radebe they looked at each other.

Thobile: How many people are trapped in there?

We heard him, telling Sonto to stay calm.

Thobile: The emergency alarm has been going crazy for ages now, just try to keep calm I will go check what is happening.

Victor: One more thing mmeli

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please fetch the kids from school. (*Lawyer*)

She nodded as if he was in the same room as us.

Thobile: I will do that.

Victor: Take them to the Mabuza's or Radebe's.

She nodded again.

She walked out. Without telling us anything.

Me: What do we do now?

Mrs Radebe: You need to calm down.

Me: And then what?

Well I was told that Mr Mabuza has returned. But still my wedding was on hold due to some ritual Mr Mabuza had to be performed. The thought of I will never get married ran through me leaving my heart feeling heavy.

NOMASONTO

Hours passed, how long does it take to get help. I just lost count of time. *"Is there someone in there?"* The intercom said

We all said "Yes."

Victor: Just get us the hell out of here.

Few minutes later, with no warning, I felt a breeze like the lift was moving. It was on my mind, there was no lift that was moving. I wanted to get out of that hell.

Victor: What time is it?

"22:00" The machine said.

Me: The heck?

The creature of fear walked through me it left me numb shaking. I was truly terrified in that elevator, there was no air in there.

Victor: We had a meeting.

Me: It has a lift Vee, I can't live there.

Victor: Yeah that, we will figure something out.

Siphe: You really moving out?

Victor: Is for the best brother.

Siphe: That will kill mom.

He nodded.

Mavis: Your sangoma is so strong Sonto.

Me: Very strong gogo Mav.

I don't know when did she got up and walked to pull my hair, I refuse to be disrespected by another woman. I got up whilst she was pulling my hair, I tried to push her, she was too strong, I panch her on the stomach. We started swearing and scratching each other mind me she was able to bite me my shoulder.

Me: Aww!!

I punched her on her ear.

Mavis: Aww, Ma!!

Vee and his brother tried to stop the fight but they both received few punch and slaps. It took them 20 minutes to separate us successfully.

Mavis: Let go of me Lele.

She still had the energy, even though she was running out of air.

Siphe: Who are you?

Victor: She's a flighting hoe.

Mavis: You see what you pushed me to do Nomasonto.

Siphe: Let it go.

Mavis: I'll catch you hoe.

She was breathing very heavy.

Me: I will be waiting babes.

She sat down. That left me disgusted because we were fighting over an ass proud guy. I was also running out of breath, I sat there trying hard to meet the increased demands of my breath.

Mavis: You hit like a man.

Me: You bite like a toddler.

Mavis: You are too forward.

After some time the lift final slide open. The emergence personnels were waiting for us, they questioned few questions and suggested that they will keep us for 30 minutes or an hour.

Victor: Ngabe uzizwa kanjani. (*Are you alright*)

I nodded.

Victor: Did she hurt you?

Me: No.

Even if she did what he was going to do. Because that was between me and his ex wife.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

[TWO DAYS LATER]

Morning should motivate us right? I'm a perpetual oversleeper, alarm clock ignorer and morning hater. I opened my eyes then closed them again.

Sometimes struggles is exactly what we need in our life. If we were to go through our life without any obstacles, we would be crippled I swear. It's been two days since the indicate of being trapped on that lift, fighting over a man or should I say a guy. I can't get that out of my mind, it seems cea. I haven't get the chance to go check on Tshidi, since I walked out of that building.

Just when I thought, I've conquered, it turns out I still had a long way to go, my business partner's husband was one my biggest client. Yesterday I went there just to see how things are going. I pumped into him there, he was suprised to learn that I'm his wife's business partner. Fighting is not my cup of coffee.

But winning the battle is the proudest moment of the battle is
thee coffee for me.

Victor: I know that you are awake.

He kissed me leaving the teeniest on my lips.

We are ranting a guest house for the next two weeks. Musa
he's staying with the Radebe's for a while and Nelly on the
other side refused to come with us. It was only fair for Mrs T,
poor woman she doesn't like the fact that her son is moving
out. I opened my eyes then gasped.

Me: Let me prepare myself for the day.

Victor: I'm not getting my morning glory this morning?

Me: Forget it.

Just when I was to get up. He kissed me, I couldn't help it. I winced and cringed slightly. I instantly pulled away. He stroked my neck with his thumb.

Victor: Is anything wrong, when you are giving it to me?

I shook my head. Suddenly the room went quiet for a moment. He tipped my chin up and making me to look him in the eye.

Vincent: Just one round.

I sneezed unhappy, he shook his head, then said "*Thokoza*" We laughed about that.

Victor: Please. Baby give it to me.

He finally released my chin and stroked my cheekbone, I signed.

Victor: Help me out.

His fingers ran to my thighs, and he took a deep breath with his small touch.

Me: Just promise me that you, you won't ride me like a horse.

Victor: I will ride Noma not a horse.

We laughed, this guy.

MATSHIDISO

I couldn't wait to be discharged, but doctors, were saying I'm a danger to myself. So yeah I was seeing my Psychologist whilst I was still in there. He come to check on me five hours before visiting hours then head back to depression center.

Psych: Now forget about me being your Psychologist.

Me: Okay Mr Nyathi.

Psych: Now I'm not psychologist I'm a friend.

I nodded.

Psych: What drove you to want to end your life?

Me: I heard the voice telling me that I'm have no one.

Psych: There was no voice Tshidi, your mind was telling you that and you allowed that.

Me: I was alone and feelings lonely and all by myself.

Psych: Next time you feel like you are all by yourself take a road trip, or visit the desert. Or perhaps take a book or music album you've been waiting for, or watch your favorite show. I've been there, I'm not going to tell you about the boring Psychology Dumezweni Nyathi, I will only remind you this, you have so much to live for. So many people care about you. When you crawl through hopelessness and despair, it's often tough to visualize what's ahead. You need to remember that you are needed and loved. There are times, we may feel disconnected from family, friends, or from society at large. We may also be experiencing a phase of fatalism, a sense of not belonging or of being noticed. Loneliness is something that we will feel sometimes, but when times go we forget that we once been there. Life is a gift some people die too soon with being said they are not lucky enough to know what is life. You should be happy. Because you are given a second chance, you survived death. Remember that life does not only belong to you, it also belongs to those around you. You need to take care of yourself

because you are important to us even though you sometimes forget that, but you are important to us.

That speech made me to question myself, I'm I worth it?

Me: Tell me here about these ongoing feelings of failure and shame.

He brushed my hair.

Psych: Failure is accompanied by a variety of emotions like embarrassment, anxiety, anger, sadness, and shame, you name them all. Those feelings are uncomfortable, and many people will do anything they can to escape feeling emotional discomfort. Honestly minimizing your pain won't make it go away. Distracting yourself or filling the void you feel with food, drugs, or alcohol won't heal your pain either. Those things will only provide you with some temporary relief. Be yourself, think about the girl who once had a dream, I'm not a girl but I know that most girls loves fashion, and beauty. Whenever you feel like a failure so lonely do some shopping or call a friend or your

annoying sister in law. We laughed. That dude was twisting my words

I didn't say she's annoying, I said she always has something to say.

Me: When she walk through that door, you won't even wish to be in the same room with her.

He nodded.

Psych: She's a true friend, because she's not afraid to tell you the truth, consider yourself lucky, you have a someone like her, keep her closer. Embrace your emotions. Acknowledge how you're feeling and let yourself feel bad for a bit. Label your emotions as you allow yourself to experience them. As I said before and I'm repeating my words, whenever you feel like a failure or lonely, use a shopping therapy, call a friend or practice a deep breath, take a bubble bath, go for a walk, or play with your games on your phone or watch the show you love, in order to deal with your pain. Not every skills works for everyone, however, it's important to find what does for you.

Me: I'm thinking.

He frowned.

Me: I want to build a relationship with Sonto.

He looked at me confusedly.

Me: Remember the girl I told you about while I was at the centre.

He nodded.

Me: I want build a relationship with her, I know that I was bit hash on her.

He cut me by laughing.

Me: I'm glad you find it funny.

He apologized.

Psych: Bit hash, no Tshidi you were hash, you accused her of sleeping with your man, you hated her before you met her.

He made me to feel bad about my actions. The girl who had everything growing up, would fight for a spot, she would make sure that Mrs and Mr Radebe take her for a weekend away. So building a relationship with Sonto should be easy. I had a dream growing up, and that dream was blocked by me blaming someone I never been in her shoes.

NOMASONTO

Morning glories are the best right? He kissed me on my neck leaving the wet kisses all over my body. He came back again leaving his wet kisses.

Victor: You test so sweet I can't wait to reach my own world, honestly I count myself extremely fortunate that I have the privilege golden queen like you.

I swallowed hard. There was an inconvenient lump in my throat, and it was difficult to look him in the eye. I inhaled carefully, then met his eye. I reached up and grasped his wrist, and finally said something.

Me: Get in to your world then.

A huge smile broke across his face.

Victor: No morning after pill right?

I closed my eyes, I wanted him in that's all. I nodded he kissed me once more. And went to rub my clit the moisture came through for me, while I was still enjoying his fingertips. I felt his tongue.

Me: Oh yes! Oh! Stop cursing Vee.

The intense pressure made me to scream and toss.

My legs were shaking with an unusual tremor. He stopped.

Victor: Oh fuck Noma, you are so sweet.

With my eyes closed, an unexpected dick entered.

He was now on top of me, he slowly pumped in and out, he moved in circle movement.

Me: Aw! Baby!

Victor: Aww!! Oh baby!

Me: I need you!

Victor: We need each other.

He went faster, I moaned his name, He groaned.

After our encounter, we took a shower then a breakfast. Then headed the road. Well my classes will begin next week. Since I didn't have grade nine onwards I will be doing *SMME*. It's similar to business world tii. It will allow me to create small businesses and unlock the shut door of unemployment. (*Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises*)

Upon our arrival at the shop. Shop assistance were waiting outside. Luckily she gave me the duplicate keys and the access code. We got out of the car, we greeted them, I opened the butler then punched the access code. We got in.

Victor: I'm a call away from here.

I nodded. He kissed me then left. We started cleaning the store. Disebo and her husband walked in whilst I was helping the cleaning lady to clean.

Disebo: You shouldn't be doing that.

Me: I'm just helping sis Dee.

Disebo: Okay I will be at the office.

I nodded they walked away from us. Having something to do is a purpose every day it makes life meaningful, sunshine, moonshine, flowers, a gentle breeze, trees, animals that's nature everything in this world is natural so both happiness and joyfulness are part of nature.

Thirty minutes later, I joined the couple on the office. The awkwardness that was in that room made me to want leave that office. But the thought of she's my business partner and

that's her husband I'm going to pump in to him like it or not came to my mind. Her phone rang she excused herself from us.

Amos: Noma what is your game plan?

I looked at him confused.

Amos: You want to break my marriage Sonto?

I kept quiet.

Amos: Why did you choose to be my wife's business partner?

Me: Because I want to tell her that her husband, take all his money and give it to sex workers.

His eyebrows curved upwards. I laughed at him.

Amos: I'm watching you should she find out I'm going to make your life miserable.

Me: Ingabe leso yisixwayiso? (*Is that a warning*)

He nodded then got up.

Amos: You are a smart girl Sonto, sell your potion to somebody else.

Me: Forget it Amos I'm not going to do that. You know why?

Amos: Why?

Me: What happened behind the closed doors should not be seen. Trust me I won't do that. You need to relax.

He took my hand and kissed it. Just like that he walked out.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

I was walking on the hospital corridor, with my eyes clouded on my eyes. Visiting Tshidi was the worst thing I had to deal with. Knowing very well that I will be seeing with that golden women. But Tshidi she's my friend and needed a friend. No one will stop

me to be her friend and nothing. What is love when you get in happy and walk out sad?

Accepting that someone you once loved with all your heart, someone you chose to bare your soul doesn't care about you is hard. Divorce is stressful itself. I was trapped and under a lot of pressure of moving on.

At the entrance I bumped into Siphe his phone fell.

Me: My!!

He picked his phone.

Siphe: I'm sorry.

I was the one wasn't looking where I was going. But he is the one who apologized.

Siphe: You are crying.

Me: It's hard Lele, I just can't help it.

Siphe: Hey, come here.

He brought me for a hug.

Lele: I know it's hard. It's an emotional roller coaster ride that no one wants to ride alone. Let me help you to ride it.

Someone coughed. I looked at them. I forgot that I went there to see someone. We broke the hug. Why didn't I get married with Lele instead of his brother?

Me: You are going somewhere?

He nodded.

Lele: I will be back in few.

I nodded and walked to Thobi, Azola, Zweli, Tshidi and Mr&Mrs Radebe. I greeted them.

Tshidi: Are you sure that you are fine.

I nodded. Honestly I wasn't, all I needed was some time alone, somewhere, where nobody knows me, I wanted to start afresh, but I didn't know where to start. The divorce turned my world upside down and trigger all sorts of painful and unsettling feelings.

NOMASONTO

Disebo was teaching me how to use a till. I had a long way to go.

Dee: Basic math and interpersonal communication is strictly prohibited.

I nodded.

Dee: Being friendly towards customers and make them feel comfortable. Sometimes we come across difficult customers but the consumer is always right.

Me: Thank you.

Dee: You might sometimes come across questions and answers. Answer questions and help them locate items. This requires a thorough knowledge of the store so you can provide accurate information.

I nodded, I was tired. I checked the time, she smiled.

Dee: You need to complete the checkout process. This will include handling money, using a Point of Sale, system, scanning items and placing them into bags. Sometimes, we are, required to discuss various aspects of the business, such as current promotions or rewards clubs.

Me: So we do promotions?

She nodded. We did that point of the sale then scan all the items. She took notes of items that are needed.

Dee: That's it for today. You have completed your second day.

Me: Final, it seems easier but it's difficult.

We laughed than walk to the office, we had snacks. Her husband budge in just before I was about to leave.

Amos: Ladies.

Dee: Baby.

Amos: You ready to go?

She nodded. My phone rang. It was Vee.

Me: Sthandwa sami. (*My love*)

Victor: I won't be able to come fatch you.

Me: It's okay I will use a taxi

Victor: Request a taxi.

Me: Vee stop giving yourself a gray hair. I'll be fine. I will pass by the hospital.

Victor: As long as you are fine Noma.

Me: Okay.

At least I could breathe. He hang up, I signed then put my phone on my bag. Request a taxi, that was something I will never do, I will use a taxi just like everyone.

Dee: It's everything okay?

Me: Everything is good babes. I hope we done for today?

She nodded.

Dee: We can drop you off.

Me: It's okay I will catch a taxi.

Dee: I insist isn't it honey?

Honey was miles away. She shouted his name.

Me: It's okay you don't have to take another direction because of me.

Dee: Baby Ms Mabuza need a ride.

Amos: Where to?

Hey Mr honey pull yourself together. I wish I could give him a wake up slap.

AZOLA

I was worried about Mav, she was trying by all means to fool us by her smile. But no maan, I work with different people everyday. I know a person who is hiding the pain behind the smile.

Me: Thobza.

She nodded then looked at me.

Me: Sometimes is okay to cry.

She looked at me confusedly.

Me: If you had an awful day at work and I drink your last ice cold beer that you'd been looking forward to all day, would you not be pissed off?

Thobile: Ungayi lapho sisi, ngizokuklinya ufe. (*Don't go there sis, I'll strangle you to death*)

We laughed. She looked at me then realized that what I was saying.

Me: Now you're sad, why are you hiding your tears? Why don't you slump around? Why don't you give yourself the right to be sad?

Zweli: People who ignore sadness cheat themselves out of an important facet of life. Sadness, or crying, isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign that you're a human and have feelings beyond what you're told is appropriate to show in public

Me: She's not weak isn't it?

He nodded.

Tshidi: Hey MaPride. This is jozi speak the language that we all understand.

We laughed, I like who she had become.

Thobile: Well Ms Jozi, there is something called release. We are working to overcome some sort of depressing demon that's trying to tear us down. When we allow ourselves to feel pain when we feel it, we're also encouraging others, either people we already know or not, to connect with our pain. To know that you're not alone in thinking, feeling, or even acting a certain way is emotionally liberating and, in extreme cases, life saving. Mavis I'm referring this to you my friend. If you accept sadness when it stares your face, it helps you to release the pain. Recalling the previous point, it's dangerous when we keep emotions hidden and buried within. Since sadness has negative associations

we often won't reach out to someone we notice is experiencing difficulty because we're afraid, not of the person necessarily but of the act of being deeply upset. Sis Azola and I we attend workshops every month we are taught about those things, since I will be this side next week, Mav you can take a five days break, and go with her.

That's what I like about her, she's isn't afraid to speak her peace.

Mav: I could use sometime away from Jozi.

Thobile: Good you need to be honest to your body, allow it to perpetually run at maximum capacity, even when you are experiencing tremendous pain.

Mav: I believe I won't be a burden aunt.

Me: You need to realise that burden sis. It is not wrong to feel that way. I sometimes find myself in a corner where I don't know how to walk out of that corner, but the truth is, the is nothing that doesn't end.

Mav: Yazi sometimes I wish I was still mommy's baby. (*You know*)

We all do right? Thobile explained to her about the workshop, I even forgotten about it.

Tshidi: Mav don't be Sisi we ndawo when you get there. (*The local sister*)

Thobile: No ways I'm the only local sister there.

We laughed.

Mav: I will be the next one then.

Zweli: You need to work hard to get to that position, I grew up there but I don't have a tittle, some one who got there yesterday she's the *local sister*.

Thobile: Ngingusisi wendawo.

She sang, making everyone to laugh, including Judy and Banele.

Mrs Radebe: Wow I love this.

Thobile: You better love this than hating this aunt. Ngingusisi wendawo.

Zweli: Tshidi you need to change her mood now. Come take her.

Thobi lean her ear to him.

Zweli: Ngizokushaya. (*I will beat you*)

She laughed.

Thobile: Here brother beat. But at the end of the day ngingusisi wendawo. (*I'm the local sister*)

Zwe got up.

Tshidi: You are going because of her. No ways.

We laughed

Zweli: Family matters are excluded. Sisi let's take a ride.

Thobile: Did you all hear that Tshidi? Izindaba zomndeni ziyakhishwa. (*Family matters are excluded*)

We continued laughing. That girl wanted to kill me with laughter.

VICTOR

My desk was filled with pile of manuscript that need to be edited. The more I feed my brain that I will continue tomorrow, it was the more I kept on delaying. "*What happened to your desk*" I lifted up my head and looked at her.

Me: Mom what are you doing here?

She walked in, I got up and gave her a hug.

Mom: I missed my son.

We broke the hug than sat down on the chair.

Me: I missed you too mom.

She gave me a faked smile.

Me: That wasn't the smile of missing me.

She exiled.

Ma: Son I want to see you happy, but moving out of the house is not a solution. Why do you allow your father to manipulate you?

She's always against my father.

Me: Mom I will be fine. It was already time for me to man up.

Ma: Please don't take Nelly away.

Me: Even if I wanted to, she wouldn't dare allow that to happen, she loves her grandparents then us her parents.

Ma: I'm glad.

Silent

Ma: Please talk some sense to your brother, he must stop seeing your ex wife.

Me: Ma I can do anything you want me to do, but standing on my brother's way of love that I can't.

Ma: Are they dating?

Me: I don't know and I don't care.

NOMASONTO

I agreed and he agreed to drop me to the hospital.

Amos: Baby is your friend married?

Desebo: You are my friend.

Amos: I mean your business partner.

She laughed at him.

Desebo: She's engaged to be.

Amos: I guess we will get the invitation then.

He must stay on his lane. The whole arrangement was making me dizzy, I was uncomfortable around that man.

Dee: Babes do you have any comments?

Me: I guess you are invited.

It took us forty minutes to get there.

Amos: Let's walk her in.

Me: Thanks guys, I will be fine.

Amos: I'm sure your sister would be happy to see your business partner.

I nodded, I couldn't argue with them, disagreement can lead to significant breakthroughs. We walked out of the car. And we started walking.

I am fighting to win so that I cannot be defeated. That man had to tie his shoes very tight because we still have the long way to go. I'm his wife's business partner and that won't change. He

better trust me stays on his lane I will do the same. That because Mav and Vee took the separation route that was not my intention. People already have some bad things to say. I didn't choose to be it just happened. We walked to her ward, everything was fine until I walked in there. The atmosphere wasn't welcoming.

Tshidi: She decided to bless me with her presence.

As we walked in. Wait is that Matshidiso? She was sitting on the hospital bed with Mrs Radebe.

Me: Sanibonani. (*Greetings*)

Them: Hello.

Mrs Radebe: Come give mom a hug.

I walked to give her a hug. Desebo cleared her throat. Oh my goodness. We broke the hug.

Me: I'm sorry babes.

She nodded, I just missed those girls at the brothel we used to call each other girls, Babes and so on.

Me: Desebo meet my lovely Mother, handsome dad.

The atmosphere came back as I said handsome dad.

Tshidi: Handsome dad wow.

Honestly ever since I met her, I never saw her smile. I introduced everyone besides Mav and the other lady and a guy.

Me: This is Mrs and Mr Mofokeng, Mrs Mofokeng she's my business partner.

My mother looked at her husband.

Me: Not that business partner mom.

She exiled. She almost put me on the hot plate.

Desebo: It's my pleasure to meet you all. As she said I'm her business partner. We own Equitas glamour boutique store.

Mom: It's our pleasure to meet you child.

With all being said, they said their goodbyes and walked out. Leaving my mother wearing her smile.

Ma: And when you were planning to tell me that?

Tshidi: Mom she was waiting for her sister to come back.

Mrs Radebe shrugged.

Ma: Okay you are back Tshidi I'm waiting, do the right thing.

Tshidi: Sonto I'm so sorry for all the things I said and things I did to push you away. I was drove by jelouse, especially to watch you playing a happy family with my family. Sonto I had everything and you never did,I believe when I was to be put on your shoes I wouldn't survive an hour just like I couldn't survive loneliness. You were there for my mother and you are still there for my father and brother, for that thank you.

Tears streamed down. I could believe that I was hearing that from her.

Tshidi: I'm deeply sorry that I hurt you. Mom, dad, Zweli and everyone in this room I'm really sorry.

Mom: Thank you Matshidiso, I've been waiting to hear that.

She cried. I was extremely happy. We shared a hug and cried together. I've always wanted her to allow me to be her sister, we might not be blood sisters but our creator made us to be.

Tshidi: If you don't mind next time when you come here, please come with Nelly, Musa and Mr Mabuza I would like to know them better.

Me: I can come with Musa and dad tomorrow, bringing Nelly here it will take me ages.

She looked at Zweli.

Tshidi: Godfather please make a plan.

He nodded. I don't think she still consider him like that, all Nelly needed was a father. Not everything. "*A father and his grandkids are here*" we looked all looked at the door.

He was carrying Samukelo.

Thobile: Wow Phawu.

She kept on saying endless "wow"

Boy: Mom.

He ran to her.

Man: Samu there's mommy.

He put him down, instead of him going to his mother he went to Zweli.

Zweli: Mfana wam. (*My boy*)

Thobile: Dad what a surprise?

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

ZWELAKHE

I looked at this man before us. When they say people keep their promises they mean him. He is based in New York but do come to check on us when he gets the chance to do so.

Dad: Princess and Babo, why don't I feel welcome?

My sister looked at me then looked at my nephew.

Thobi: Boy tell your granddad, that mommy she's also a visitor.

Phawu: Tat'omkhulu umama uthi naye ulundwendwe apha.
(Grandpa mom says she's also a visitor here)

Time await for no one. Not so long that boy was fitting in my palm now he's a grown. My father asked to have a word with me. We walked to the cafe with Samukelo. We sat there and ordered a coffee.

Me: If it's about your house, don't worry the insurance company is busy with my house, I will be out of your house next month.

Dad: Hey I'm not that idiot anymore. My home your home.
Everything I'm doing belongs to you and your sister.

We laughed.

Samu: Tata ndifuna uYaya. (*Dad I want Yaya*)

That made me think how did he managed to come with the kids. Because when i check the last time I took my son I had to lie to him.

Me: How did you manage to come with the kids?

Dad: I kidnapped them.

Me: The hell?

Dad: That's rich coming from you Babo. I had to take them to the games expo along with their aunt. It was hard but since I promised Phawu a ball I will have to get one for him.

Understandable, Phawu and Yamkela are always together.

Dad: Your mother was telling me that you don't want to accept your calling.

Me: How did you get into that conversation?

They aren't together, my mother she's married with Sanele Mazibuko, aunt Zola's brother, and my father was married with Thobi's mother they got divorced and she's in jail for murderer.

Dad: She called me week ago and asked me to come down here, she's worried about you and sister.

Me: Oh and she tell you why she's worried about us?

Dad: Remember that her ancestors can send her a message through her dreams?

This man seems to forget that I know my mom more than he does, I nodded, giving him the satisfaction.

Dad: Here is the thing, my mother in law, Thobile's grandmother from her mother's side, signed up her riches with my daughter's soul.

Me: Did mom told you all of this?

Knowing my mother well she won't tell him that. He shook his head.

Dad: She didn't put everything into details, she told me that, Thobi she has a spiritual jelouse husband.

Me: And you had the idea of her grandmother is responsible for that?

Dad: No babo, I consulted, the healer didn't say it's my mother in law, but how he described her. And he also mentioned that you need to accept your calling.

MAVIS

Being in the same room with that women again, was making my blood to be cold. Trust me if her parents were not around I was going to deal with her.

I was married with Vic for years he never thought of moving out, nor to get me a percentage of any company, yet he bought a company for Sonto.

Thobile: Say hi aunt Mav.

Phawu: Hey aunt Mav.

Sometimes I can't believe that she has a child, well I thought she was fooling everyone until this day.

Me: Hey Phawu.

Phawu: Mom why don't I have a father like Samu and Yaya?

Thobi looked at aunt Azola.

Azola: Phawu look your dad he's in heaven, he will come back on the judgmental day.

Phawu: When is that aunt?

Azola: When you have grown up to understand what is going on.

Tshidi: Thobi are you alright?

She shook her nails.

Thobile: I knew that this day was going to come. I just didn't accept it to be so soon.

Azola: Phawu baby, dad will come back okay.

He nodded and wiped off his mother's tears.

Phawu: Don't cry mommy.

She frowned then got up.

Thobile: Excuse me, I need some air.

Azola: Okay sis.

She walked out. Phawu sat on his mother's seat.

Phawu: Aunt did I hurt mommy?

Azola: No baby, you will never hurt mommy, you will protect her

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Yamkela, Samu, Gogo and aunty Zola.

Phawu: I want to go home.

Tshidi: Come sit here baby.

He went to his aunt.

ZWELAKHE

The past few days, I keep on spilling water, I know that my ancestors are trying to connect with me. But with me being distance plus everything that is happening to me, it's hard to pay more attention on what they has to say.

Dad: Son please help your sister out.

Me: For now I will just keep her in prayers, there is nothing that beats prayers.

He nodded. There is nothing that I dislike more than to be encouraged to accept my gift. Having a calling it is not easy, the challenges I'm facing now will be sized.

MATSHIDISO

I know I don't care and I hardly focus but when I looked at the Phawu and his birthmark on his wrist, I'm sure I also saw the same mark on my psychiatrist wrist. The more I debated with

my heart, it was the more I remembered that he once told me about his family and his twin brother. The twin brother that raped his daughter.

My inner friend decided to visit me, when I was still enjoying the company. I don't know but that demon of my inner voice seems to be jelouse, it was controlling me.

Me: Guys I need to rest.

Mrs Radebe got up from the bed.

Azola: Are you experiencing any pain?

I shook my head.

Me: I just wanna lie down and rest.

She nodded, I had to lie I needed to be alone. Oh my goodness. I looked at Phawu then I remembered that his mother told me about how he was conceived.

Me: Aunt!

She looked at me

Me: Phawu had a twin if I'm not mistaken?

She nodded. The situation needed me to focus, but how would I focus when my mind and friend that lives inside me keep on telling me that I need to be alone, meaning that I need to ask those people to leave me alone. I remember my Psychologist's words. "*When your mind or you hear the voice again just call a friend*" but it wasn't allowing me to do so. Sonto's phone rang. She looked at it then answered.

Sonto: Sonto speaking hello.

I must admit she's not a bed person.

Sonto: What the, where did you get my contact?

She squawked.

Sonto: Look Amo we both love our partners and we don't want to hurt them right?

Mav coughed.

Sonto: This is not the good time.

She hang up.

Sonto: Sorry guys I have to go.

Rre Radebe: Are you alright?

Sonto: Yeah is just someone who thinks that I owe him decided to ruin my day.

Mrs Radebe: Do you owe that someone?

As for that someone

Sonto: No mom, he just needs my attention and that won't happen, he stole my cellphone number from a friend.

Rre Radebe: Block that person, remember your-

He kept quiet.

Sonto: Say it that, I'm done with my past, I'm looking forward, if he's looking for war I'm on for it.

Her phone rang again, she threw it against the wall.

Sonto: Arg...

Mav: Super Mario.

I wanted to laugh but the situation wasn't allowing me to.

Sonto: Shut your trash Mavis.

Voice: This is not the time or the place ladies.

We look looked at him, it was Siphe. Was surprised to learn that him and his brother they were coming to check on me. I'm not their favourite person. But they were always there.

Sonto: Guys I will see you tomorrow.

Siphe: I will take you to the hotel.

Sonto looked at Mavis.

Mav: In your dreams Lele, she won't get into your car.

Poor Siphe, he shook his head then picked up the peaces of the phone. He placed the battery back and closed the phone.

Siphe: You too you need to stop behaving like like school kids.

Mav: She's...

Siphe: I don't care who did what where and when, sis Mav you have turned to someone I don't even recognize.

Mav clapped her hands. Siphe gave Noma her cracked screen phone.

Mav: Wow Sonto everyone is turning against me.

Siphe: Let's go Sis Sonto.

Sonto: Thanks Siphe, I know my way to the taxi rank.

Siphe: Okay so long you will be fine.

She nodded.

Rre Radebe: Thanks Siphe I will take her home.

She got up and said her goodbye.

Me: Please don't forget to come with Musa and Mr Mabuza.

She nodded, Mr& Mrs Radebe said their goodbyes too.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

Zwe and his father walked. Have you ever play the role that you never played? That was me playing the role of investigator. I asked doctor to call my psychiatrist.

The impact of trauma on children is determined, in large part, I never been worried by anyone either then myself. But there I was worried about Phawu's identity.

Zweli: Where is everyone.

Azola: Tshidi needed to rest. I'm waiting for you and Thobile.

Rre Khoza: Where did she disappeared to?

Azola: She went to the bathroom.

I feel like I owe that family, with out Zweli and his family I wouldn't be able to find my family but he did. Thobi walked in her eyes had tears.

Zweli: Sis what happened?

She just hugged him and cried. I wish I could tell them my suspicions but what if I'm wrong?

Thobile: He's grown now, he needs to know the truth.

I just felt sorry for the boy by the time he finds out the truth he will be hurt. He will feel like he's been betrayed by his mother and grandparents, I've been there I know the feeling of being betrayed by nature, the feeling like my entire life was a lie. I don't want scare her or give them false hopes, because truthfully everyone is different. But in my experience, I believe the the child has to know the truth right away.

NOMASONTO

I had a headache, that didn't want to go away. How could Amos be that stupid? How could he asked me out know very well that I'm his wife's business partner. That man was trying to ruin my life. He stole my contact details from his wife. I will never let anyone to stand on my way, especially those who were my clients, our business ended there. I was trying very hard to forget about who I was before. Forward is where I was going.

MAVIS

I thought it was going to be easy, I thought I was going to move on without holding on my happiness. But I was failing decimally. Me and Siphe we decided to go to the park, funny

enough we just stood next to the car. Just having our conversation here and there.

Siphe: Time will heal all the wounds. That was only a belief or common assumption, many people expect time will help them overcome difficulties.

Me: We (*hey*) Lele you don't know how I feel let me put you on my world for a minute. I feel sad, angry, guilt, and betrayed that is how I feel.

Siphe: Those are the feeling of difficulties sister they will fade away soon

Me: Time does not heal Mr Thabethe.

He nodded.

Siphe: Time can be used well for the purpose of healing. The hatred you have for Nelly's mother, will ruin your life, or worse it will hurt the innocent people.

Me: You saying she's innocent? Coming into my marriage with a baby she's innocent?

He kicked the tyre, any way what did I accept, he's a good Thabethe, he might not be mama's boy but the Thabethe blood line run through his veins.

Siphe: I didn't say that.

Me: What did you say then?

Siphe: Hatred can triggers your mind to try to predict what does the person you hate do and with who as a defense mechanism. That might lead you to anxiety, restlessness, and paranoia, which will affects your mental health. Hatred negatively impacts the nervous system, immune system, and endocrine system. Remember that she didn't knock at your door step and took him away, my brother he's the one who brought her into your marriage, why don't you atteck him?

Me: I don't have the energy to fight with Victor.

Siphe: But you have the energy to fight his Noma.

Me: Ngiyamzonda, uyanginyanyisa. (*I hate her she disgust me*)

He shook his head

Siphe: I repeat again you are not sis Mav. Hatred can negatively impacts the nervous system, immune system, and endocrine system. It can change your life and I'm sure that you don't want to be someone you won't even recognise. Because extreme hatred can inspire violence. Get rid of it before it's too late. Hate can find a room in to your heart and it can breed more negative emotions. It can affect your personal. Hatred changes the chemistry in the brain. It stimulates the area in the brain responsible for planning and execution of motion. The part triggers aggression while feeling hateful to either defend or attack.

I was waiting for the earth to swallow me already.

MATSHIDISO

Right after everyone left my psychiatrist showed up. We played his boring games. Snakes and Ladders really? I think sometimes therapist think that people who are depressed are kids or lost their mind what is it that we do

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playing games, drowning and painting?

Me: You are going back.

He moved his counter following the snake instruction.

Psych: The I'm swallowed by the snake.

Me: Tell me here why are we playing kids games?

Psych: This kids games are the ones that encourage all my patients to talk to me without being afraid, I'm building trust with my patients, and make them understand their situation. When we play against each other. We discuss why nothing happens if their counter moves into a square at the top of a ladder or at the bottom of a snake. If they don't understand something, I encourage them, to put competitiveness aside by shifting the focus from trying to win towards just enjoying the constant ups and downs of the game. It helps them to share in their successes and disappointments, by getting them to cheer whenever their counter reaches a ladder and to hiss or boo when it reaches a snake.

There he left me speechless, I looked at board games as children's game just for fun.

Me: You are the best.

Psych: I didn't know that I'm a fan.

I laughed

Me: What makes you think I'm your fan and why?

Psych: I don't know you tell me.

I swallowed that hard lump that was stuck on my throat. The reason I called him there I wanted to ask him about his brother. Where was I suppose to start? The I looked at his birth mark.

Me: But you said if I feel lonely I must give you a call?

Psych: Yeah right.

He looked at his wrist I think he noticed that I was looking at it.

Psych: This is a birthmark it appears in the exact same spot with my family.

Me: You mean everyone in your family had the same mark?

He nodded.

Psych: Yes from my father's side. My twin brother has it, my children, aunt and uncles.

Me: Can't a person from the outside have the same mark as yours?

He shrugged his shoulders

Psych: It's common to have the same mark. Reason why, it's not possible to compare with everyone else in the world to see how many people have a similar birthmark to yours, if you

notice you share a matching birthmark with a special other, you may wonder what it means. While there's no concrete proof, sharing an identical birthmark with another person or a group of other people may indicate your souls are connected across time and space.

Me: But you said your relatives has the same mark.

He nodded.

Psych: I don't know where are we going with this conversation, but I'll tell you this, sometimes having the same identical spot might be symbolic psychic meaning. When you share a similar or identical birthmark with someone else, however, it may be an indication your lives or souls are linked in some way.

Silent.

Psych: Why are we focusing on my birthmark than the game.

Me: My friend was raped ten years ago and she has a child who happened to be a rape product.

He looked at me more like he was planning to tell me that I'm crazy I must take my medication.

Psych: So in your mind you thought that Dumezweni Nyathi might be the father?

I shook my head that was beyond.

Me: I'm sorry but I thought you might help us to locate his family.

Psych: Tshidi maybe if I ever raped a girl I was going to help you, but I never did that.

Me: What about you meet the child then you will size up your decision.

He nodded.

Psych: Set the appointment with the mother of the child.

Me: It's tricky I didn't tell her about my suspicions, but you can come here tomorrow during visitors hours. You will see the child and tell me what do you think.

Psych: I'm not doing this because I want prove you wrong, I can see that you want to help your friend. And you care about her which is good.

I sigh. I though he was going to say I'm crazy.

NOMASONTO

My phone was ringing, I couldn't answer it because it wasn't touching. As soon as it stopped ringing. I checked the time then switched it off.

When I'm frustrated by something, I break things, just to release the tension that brings me down. Breaking things like phone it's an acts of aggression when I'm mad it reduces stress.

I sat on the bed hoping that Vee will walk in through that door, but no he didn't, that made me to be worried about him. I ended up sleeping without him or knowing if he was alright.

VICTOR

I kept on working, I was trying to meet the deadline. I tried to call Noma, but her phone rang unanswered.

Me: Let me try again.

I tried to call her again, it went to voicemail. I checked the time probably she was sleeping. I sent her an SMS.

"I will be back around 22:30" I sent it.

In fact, I was tired, I kept on yawning, trying to stay awake. I ended up sleeping on my desk.

The next morning. I was waken by the clear lady, I checked the time it was 7am. Fuck me. If Noma is going to believe that I slept on the office it will be my lucky day I swear.

Me: Rose I will be back in an hour.

She nodded.

Me: Tell Thami to give me a call.

She nodded still. Thami he's my assistant.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

I couldn't believe that he didn't come back last night. I pulled my his pillow from the other side of the bed and placed it over

my face in an attempt to block out the space of Thabethe.
His pillow was cold.

Even the pillow is over my head, the angione marking the
rhyme has made me to feel confused, Vee is not expected. I
don't know why I was feeling lonely, I've been lonely my entire
life, he's just been in my life for two minutes and I was attached
to him, I wanted to feel him next to me. I missed snuggling. I
missed his warmth and his gentle presence. I sleep better when
he with me.

ZWELAKHE

I received a call from the insurance company. My claim has been approved. It took long then I accepted. I'm not complaining about that they were doing their investigation.

Thobile walked to me, funny enough her father was around but I was the only person who could calm her down.

Me: Are you alright?

She sat on the bed

Thobi: Please take me out of here.

Me: Name a place I will take you there.

Thobi: Somewhere where my mind will find peace.

Me: Okay give me few minutes.

She got up then walked out.

VICTOR

I stood at the door planning how to face that women. She opened the door just when I was about to knock.

She looked at me.

Me: Uhm...

She just stood there and said nothing.

Me: I'm sorry I slept at the office.

Sonto: I'm also going to work.

Me: Give me a minute I will drop you there.

Sonto: You don't need to worry I will catch a taxi.

ANNA THABETHE

I set up the table. Lele walked in.

Me: Didn't she give you trouble?

Lele: Nelly she's stubborn just like her father.

We laughed.

Me: And her uncle too.

My children are the only reason why I'm still alive.

Me: Come sit here.

Lele: You done setting up the table?

Me: It's not important then talking some sense into my child's mind.

Lele: If it's about me and my ex sister in law, there is nothing going on, we just friends. I will be happy if you accept that.

Me: Your friendship with her needs to end today.

Lele: Why?

Me; I don't like it.

MAVIS

I decided to take a ride, I didn't know where I was driving to but I was driving. I was tired with everyone telling me that they don't recognize me anymore no body knows how I was feeling.

Just when I was still driving I saw Sonto walking on the street. My father once said that if I found a ball in my yard, I should throw it far away from my yard because it was not mine. That man was my hero. I sometimes miss him. I looked at the road and it was clear.

I hit the pedestrian who was walking on the pavement. I braked hard, I saw her body hitting the windscreen, the shock of the impact reverberating around the car, the sound of smashing glass and I heard someone screaming, I quickly realised that was me. It felt like a dream or horror movie. I turned my head to check if someone noticed me, the only car I've noticed was Victor's car.

Me: Oh my goodness, MaNcumalo focus.

I took a deep breath then drove off.

MATSHIDISO

Later on. My physch walked in at the exact time as we planned.

Me: Just here in time.

He grabbed the chair then sat down.

Psych: How are you feeling today?

I shrugged.

Psych: Have you seen the bright of the sun today?

Me: I don't know when was the last time I was outside feeling the fresh air.

Psych: Good news I'm here to take a walk.

How is that good news?

Me: I'm I allowed to do that?

He nodded.

MAVIS

When I got home the first thing I did was to scrub off her blood, what did I do? Did I allowed anger to drive me? At first I did that purposely but I then realised that was wrong. My ears was hearing strange things, as if I'd been plunged into water or something. I felt like a zombie. I killed someone, everyone was right I've changed to someone I didn't even recognise myself.

I felt completely hollowed out and destroyed. I sat there recalling what happened. It just felt like a dream, I was wailing

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unable to hide my distress. I couldn't think of anything other than the fact I had taken a life, and the unimaginable pain I had caused the little girl who just met her father, now I killed her mother.

MATSHIDISO

[Three hours later]

After taking a walk we went back to my Ward. Zweli, Thobi, Azola, Siphelele, the Radebe's, Musa, Samu and Phawu were already there.

My psychiatrist looked at Phawu he then looked at me.

Psych: I will talk to your doctor I think you are ready to be discharged.

Me: Really?

Psych: You have all the support you need, fiance, parents, three boys, in-law's and friends.

Zweli: Three boys?

He looked at Phawu then asked him questions. I was holding my breath that he doesn't spill the water.

Psych: What is your name champ?

Phawu: Phawu Khoza.

Psych: I'm Phawu Khoza too.

Phawu: You lying.

We laughed

Thobi: Boy elders don't lie they make mistakes.

Phawu: Kodwa uyaxoka. (*But he's lying*)

We laughed.

Psych: I like you already.

He asked to play board games with them. Victor walked in. His clothes were full of blood.

Me: What happened, whe...

He cut me.

Victor: Siphe I'm here to see you.

Zweli: Bro are you alright?

He looked at the kids on the corner.

Victor: Brother I'm giving you a chance to ask her to hand herself in, if not I'm the one who will go behind bars.

Siphe: I'm not following.

Victor: Nomasonto she got hit by a car, the car that hit did not stop.

Siphe: And you assume like it's sis Mav?

Victor: I'm not assuming, I saw that car. I'm the one who bought that car Siphe.

Dad: Is my baby okay Thabethe?

He shook his head.

Victor: For now I don't know.

Mom: Can you take me to her please.

Victor: Doctors are still busy with her.

Shame poor women.

Victor: I can't believe that Mavis did that.

It was unbelievable, if it was me, Thobi or Judy I was going to believe that. Mavis like peace. Violent behaviour is not her.

Thobi: She's not her self.

Dad: I need some fresh air.

The suddenly shock made the Ward to be silent. Musa walked to us, he looked at Victor.

Musa: Where is mom?

Victor: She will be here soon.

He walked back to Phawu, Samu and psych Nyathi. I felt like everything was spinning. How could that happened? Why would Mav do that, she knew that I wanted to build a relationship with my sister.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

When my uncle got home, he found me sitting on floor crying.
He looked at my car then shook his head.

Uncle: When Siphe called me, I didn't believe, but now all I'm seeing is Pat's child. I'm disappointed in you Mavis.

No words can describe how I was feeling. But whatever the trauma has robbed me is nothing compared to the pain I've put her through the pain will continue to endure. There is no easy path to peace for me, and I know there never will be.

Me: I killed her uncle.

He shook his head

Uncle: For now she's alive but in a critical condition.

He sat down and hugged me. I cried on his hands. What have I done?

Uncle: Mav you want to die just like your father.

I shook my head. My father was killed by the angry community that man had no peace at all.

VICTOR

I sat on the waiting area, waiting for the update, should anything happen to Noma I will never forgive myself. How could Mav do that? I was aware that she didn't take the divorce very well.

I can't run away from the truth, I love Noma nothing will stop me to love her. I tried to call that ex wife of mine but she was

not answering my calls. Mrs and Mr Radebe walked to me. I couldn't look at them or be in the same room as them.

Mrs Radebe: You need to go home and take a bath then rest.

Me: I'm sorry but I'm not going anywhere without Noma.

Mrs Radebe: You think Sonto will be pleased to see you like this?

I shook my head.

Mr Radebe: Victor I just found my daughter I can't lose her, I just can't.

Me: I'm sorry.

Siphe walked to us, he handed me my clothes.

Siphe: Brother you need to go change.

The doctor walked to us, just before I could get up.

Me: Any news?

He stood there, he took a deep breath.

Dr: I have sad news and good news

I shook my head.

Dr: The great news is that managed to stop the bleeding.

Me: And the sad news?

He looked at me then shook his head again.

Dr: I'm sorry.

Mrs Radebe sat down.

Dr: We couldn't save the baby.

Me: Pardon?

Dr: Due to sudden trauma sustained by the accident she had miscarriage. She was five weeks pregnant. I'm sorry Mr Thabethe we tried our best.

Despite everything, I was hurt multiple times. Mavis robbed me the opportunity of being a father again.

Mrs Radebe: Oh my God.

She cried.

MAVIS

He looked at me

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I could tell that my uncle was disappointed indeed. I wish I could undo the damage but I couldn't, it was already too late.

Uncle: Mav I'm sorry my baby but police are here to take you.

I thought he was joking but no he was not. Two officers entered, they told me my rights then took me to the police car. To be truthful I was also disappointed in myself. I let myself down, I just freely my tears. There I had no body to blame just myself and the hatred I had for Sonto.

VICTOR

I went to her ward. She was lying there only support machine were indicating that she's alive. I didn't know that she was pregnant. Looking at her lying knowing very well that my actions put her there, she begged me not to file a divorce Mav but because my pride didn't want me allow me to keep her with me. But because I'm selfish I put my needs first and the women I love got in danger, I lost the child, I was devastated, it was very hard to accept. Noma had the tendency of hiding things for me, but with that pregnancy I don't think she knew.

Me: Babe I'm sorry. I know that you were going to be a great mother to our child but Satan decided to take away that opportunity. I'm sorry that I couldn't save you.

Maybe if I didn't over worked none of these should've happen.

MAVIS

When the cell closed behind me. I entered into another world. That was hard for me, that was going to be the place I will call home, it is a home to numerous female prisoners, convicted of crimes ranging from drug smuggling to robbery and murder. I will never recover from what I did. In life we sometimes win or loss. Sacrifices are made at some point. We need to expect the unexpected. When making a decision that wasn't well thought out and have lost something because of it those decisions, well that taught me to think twice next time, to be more vigilant.

Life is like a game of chess. Every move and decision we make can either bring us the advantage or the disadvantage. The brightest flame casts the darkest shadow.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

[MONTH LATER]

I wasn't coping mentally. I've lost myself along the way . The accident took part of me. I had the trauma, my spine suffered

during the accident and left me immobile. I had difficulties of walking, not that I couldn't walk is just that it was hard to take few steps without a support. That accident changed my life, it took away something that was special to the man I love, I didn't know that I was pregnant but it felt like my life was a roller coaster I had countless emotions such as numbness, disbelief, anger, guilt, sadness, depression, and difficulty concentrating. The pregnancy ended very early, I didn't have the connection with my baby. Vee walked in with the his princess.

Nelly: Mommy.

I faked a smile, hospital was the last thing I wanted Musa and Nelly to see me on, but they I was lying there feeling helplessly.

Victor: Baby.

He kissed me.

Victor: How are you feeling today?

Me: I'm excruciating pain, massive headache.

Victor: Noma you are one of the strongest woman I ever met, you will get through this.

I smiled

Me: How are you guys?

Nelly: I just miss you.

Me: Really?

She nodded

Me: But you chose your grandparents over me.

Nelly: That doesn't mean that I don't love you, mom I love you.

Me: Speaking of loving me, when was the last time you went to my match box that I called home?

She laughed, if was fifteen years or older I was going to say she's ungrateful but she's just a child who needs guidelines of life.

Nelly: I never went there.

Can anyone just remind me that life is a journey where one need to make room for both happiness and sadness room in our heart.

MAVIS

I was given a bail with condition, I wasn't allowed to go anywhere near the hospital, I wasn't allowed to go to another province. I was stucked in one place. My lawyer played his card very well, she stated that I wasn't myself when the accident took place. I wasn't or was I? I mean I was grieving for my ended marriage, my emotions were everywhere. My life seems to be something else, I was not adjusting to my new life at all, and that made me to feel lonely sometimes I could isolate myself and sleep for days without going out. Sometimes I would avoid food for days as a result of anxiety I would cry very often. Anger is never a good emotion

but sometimes it's necessary to understand the root cause of something. The irony of betrayal is that when I was betrayed, I ended up betraying myself too. Anger felt like I was lacking strength.

After all that, I thought Siphe was going to avoid me but no he's been a good friend, not to mention the kindness he's doing. He became the best male friend, a brother and life councillor. He's been all supportive if it wasn't for him, I should've lost myself.

He was always there. I stopped going to church because people no longer looked at me like they used to. are being too judgemental. The pain of betrayal is nothing compared to the pain I was going through. Yes I got bail but my life was on hold, my licence has been suspended. I received a call from pastor Thabethe.

Me: Father.

Pastor T: How are you my child?

Me: It's hard father.

Pastor T: We have a family meeting.

That was none of my business, I was no longer Thabethe, plus the was nothing that was linking me to them.

Me: I'm no longer part of the family.

Pastor T: Your mother will join us.

He didn't give me a chance to speak, he just hanged up.
Honestly love hurt like hell. Whether the aftermath of break up
leave a huge wound that might take years to heal

NOMASONTO

My parents walked in with Musa followed by my Amos and his
wife.

Disebo: Hello girlfriend.

Me: Hey partner.

Disebo: When are you getting out of here? I miss you already.

Me: Come on I've been there for two seconds and you missed me already?

We laughed then exchanged greetings.

Victor: And I miss her too.

Me: Dude where did you learn that?

Musa: I miss you mom.

Me: Boyza I will get out of here, all I want you to do is to focus on your school work, do you remember that house you promised me?

Musa: Ten room big house, just the three of us no fiance or so whatever you call him.

Me: Fiance did you hear that?

Vee shook his head.

Me: Just the three of us, I don't know where does that leave you.

We laughed, I was trying by all means to be myself around Amos, him visiting me was to see who is that man who took me out of brothel and made me the person I was.

Amos: So partner has two children?

Disebo: This is her younger brother.

He looked at Vee, my mother tabbed me. I looked at her.

Mom: Baby when will the doctors release you?

I might have known them for the shortest time but she picked up something fishy hence why she came with another topic.

MATSHIDISO

The rebuilding of our house proceeding and it was getting there. We walked around and inspecting if they working according to the plan. It won't be the same home but yeah, it had those memories. Recovering from all the truth it will have to be in our own time and on our own terms.

Zweli: Come on baby your father he's waiting for us.

I nodded. Basically I met Mr Mabuza two weeks ago, I remind him of his late wife. He still can't believe that he accused his late my mother of cheating. Well I took after my father, I accused Zwe for cheating multiple times. And for that I'm ashamed and I hope that one day he will forgive me.

Oh I'm connected with my mother and my step siblings spiritually. I still have the long way to go even Zweli he still have to, I was shown a huge storm that was coming to my relationship with Zweli. And that would put my relationship in jeopardy. I know I'm not that strong but with that storm I was needed to be, I was required to pray for my relationship with Zweli.

Oh again, my psychiatrist haven't get back to me about the DNA test. I know I shouldn't be doing that but I had to make sure, Thobi and Zwe will have to forgive me for going behind them, not that I didn't have a choice, but I didn't want to them to think that I'm not taking my medication.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

MARIA MABUZA

I thought coming to South Africa would be a short trip for me. In my mind I was accompanying my sick husband. But it seems like I love the country more than Tanzania. I watched him

endure terrible pain back in Tanzania but when we got here the darkness become lighter. He could sit for hours unlike he used to back then.

We sat there silently, just me and my husband. We have a supportive neighbor she's so kind but my husband doesn't like her, I wish I could tell him how much her friendship mean to me and how she impacted my life.

Sometimes I miss those days where everything seems possible and how I hope to find a way to make it through without him, standing on my way, but he wasn't making easy for me. Many people would do anything to have conversation with a loved ones. But I was failing to with Enock you need to be careful with what you are saying, because he's not one of the kind man who might just laughed at any joke, his the only friend of mine, I was not allowed to have any friends beside him.

Enock: Have you heard anything from Musa or Sonto?

Finally he spoke.

Me: I and MamFez we are going to the hospital in an hour from now.

He banged the table.

Enock: And you are telling me this now? (*Shouted*)

Me: I was planning to tell you but it slipped my mind.

Enock: No Maria you were not planning anything.

I placed my hand on his he let go of his hand.

MAVIS

If it was easier to buy happiness I was going to buy happiness like everything else. I would set a certain amount of money aside every month on my monthly needs list to guarantee my happiness, without having to give up any time or effort. Unfortunately, that's not how it works. I can't buy happiness. I can't cheat my way into happiness. There's no specific way to get happiness. My mother she's to be blamed for all of that. When I got to the Thabethe premises my mother's car was already there which made me to question myself, what kind of a mother is she? She failed to come to her only daughter when she needed a mother to cry to.

I entered without knocking.

Pastor T: There she is.

My mother got up.

Mrs T: We no longer knock in this house?

Pastor T: She did knock.

Mrs T: I don't have the whole day Thabethe.

Pastor T: Just call your son that's all I want from you.

My mother gave hugged me. I know that mommy's hug are meant to bring light into the broken soul. But with my mom it felt so cold. I pushed her.

Mom: Baby what is it Mav?

I giggled aggressive then clapped my hands.

Me: Wow, now you want know what is it Mav, you deserve mother of the year award Millicent.

She shook her head in disbelief. I took a seat.

Me: Mom I called you the night before I hit Sonto with the car, the only thing you said was I'm strong I will pull through, mama I needed you to be there for me, not Thobile, aunt Azola and Lele, I needed a mother, the person who carried me inside her for months. A mother to guide me to figure out my goals and values of life. A mother to discipline me, to give me skills that will benefit me throughout my life as well to love myself not to be distance.

She just cried, my cruel ex mother in-law got up.

Mrs T: Excuse me.

Pastor T: Excuse yourself whilst calling your son.

Mrs T: He has things to take care of.

She walked away from us.

MATSHIDISO

We got to the Mabuza's, it was pretty tough they were disagreeing about something.

Rre Mabuza: We didn't come all the way from Tanzania to make friends here.

Maria: What do you want from me Enock? I'm not neglecting my duties as married women, I asked the women to take me to Sonto.

I looked at Zweli, he shrugged.

Rre Mabuza: My daughter was also admitted month ago did you go to her?

She shook her head.

Rre Mabuza: Thought as much Maria.

Maria: I can't do this with you now.

She got up. That's when we knocked.

Rre Mabuza: Hey baby.

I faked a smile and we walked in. It was alarming the day we went to KZN Sonto said with the Mabuza's except nothing but rudeness.

Me: Hey dad.

He smiled. That man definitely needed a skin moisturizer, I've never seen a human skin dry like his.

Me: We are here to take you guys to Sonto.

I didn't plan that with my fiancé but he wouldn't mind to put a smile on my face. I looked at him he just smiled.

Rre Mabuza: Really?

That man he's something else, hopefully my son and brother don't take after him.

Zweli: Yeah she would be happy to see you guys.

He looked at his wife she just smiled. Keep in mind, though, that this can take time and a lot of patience. It's not always easy.

NOMASONTO

Dr Handric looked me then my parents.

Me: What is it.

Dr: I'm sure that you will be happy to hear that tomorrow you are going home.

Me: Really.

Recovery is a small word. At some point the physical level is where I had the maximum support from Radebe's

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Vee, physiotherapy and brother Zweli.

Dr: She's not fully recovered yet but I will refer her to physiotherapy for the period of lasted 3 months in order for her to be will be able to walk by herself again. She will be given exercises from a walker to walking with a crutch and then walking unaided. After that, once she will start walking putting weight on the injured foot.

I never imagined myself using crutches but with life except the unexpected events.

Dr: She might even start with yoga which will help her to heal a bit more gradually with deep breathing and slow movement exercises to revitalize and ensure flexibility and flow in my muscles.

Healing is the mind and body at a holistic level, I was looking forward to get out of that place. Vee's phone rang. He looked at it.

Victor: This is kind of a joke.

Me: What is it?

He answered his phone.

Victor: Father!

He looked at me.

Victor: Family meeting as in now?

He held his jaw and then his teeth clenched.

ZWELAKHE

We headed the road, we were joined by their neighbor. Sometimes Tshidi can be angry when she's at the stack of somethings she can't control her anger, but I'm glad that she was getting help and continuing with her medication. And I liked her new appearance. I was observing some pain. I was feeling powerless and guilty about something but I didn't know what was that. Personally I was feeling, like I was at the wrong place I was only finding peace at church.

Have you ever find yourself in floods and you find it to hard to get out that was me, I kept on seeing myself inside the water even though I wasn't sleeping I could see strange things,

sometimes I could hear someone calling my name, or sounds of water.

Tshidi: Rre Samu.

I looked at her.

Me: Mme.

Tshidi: Let me drive.

I liked the woman she has become lately, my hands were shivering. As we swiped seat.

NOMASONTO

Victor: Sorry baby I have to go.

Me: Where to?

Victor: Nelly's grandfather decided to call up a family meeting in such short notice.

Me: Okay I hope you fix things with your father.

He nodded then lift up his daughter.

Me: You are taking her with?

Victor: You had the whole ten years with her my love now it's my time now.

Disebo just laughed.

Mom: Ouch Mr Thabethe.

He took few steps away from us then turn and looked at us.

Victor: Ngiyaxolisa mamezala. *(I'm sorry mother in law)*

He then walked away.

Vivtor: Mamezalawe

We could hear him singing that. We laughed.

Disebo: Let me and hubby join the force.

Before they could say their goodbyes, Tshidi, Zweli, MamFez and the Mabuza's entered.

Me: Uhm... Dad, aunt and makhelwane. (***Neighbor***)

MamFez: We decided to come see you.

She's the only person I could reach out to when I got stuck with the kids or I had demanding clients that that would keep me on their hotel suites for hours, she would look after the kids. She's a mother of the girls that introduce me to the job description that I was doing.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI (TSHIDI'S PSYCHOLOGY)

They brought him. Visiting my twin brother that was not an habit to me. I won't say that I hated him, but seeing him was making me sick, it was bringing back the pain he had coursed me.

Anyway, I was not avoiding Tshidi I just didn't have the courage to face her, more especially with the paternity test, the paternity test confirmed that my brother he's Phawu's father. My brother has hurt so many soul, including myself, he raped my daughter she decided to take escape the pain. How could I forget that and forgive so easy? His name is Dumisani and I'm Dumezweni Nyathi.

Dumisani: Duma you didn't left your beautiful wife to come and sit here without saying anything.

I looked at that arrogant man, who happened to be my identical twin brother.

Me: Sani what happened to you?

He got up

Dumisani: You came all the way to ask me that?

I took out the results and the picture I took with Phawu the day I was playing with him. He sat down.

Me: Thank you.

Dumisani: Who's child is this?

Me: You raped a seventeen years girl years ago.

He kept quiet.

Me: Sani what hurts is that the boy needs his father, and you are in here, brother you had dreams what changed?

Dumisani: I'm sorry Duma.

Me: I'm not the right person to say that, Phawu needs his father.

He was terrible shaking.

Dumisani: Duma help me out, I'm losing my mind inside here.

Me: You are paying for your sins brother. You planted the seed on your own now implant it Sani.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

My mother looked at me. She displayed the disappointment look. She should be disappointed about her own life not me.

Ma: Who are you what have you done to my daughter.

Me: Now you care?

Ma: Pat must be disappointed and turning on his grave.

I nodded repeatedly, honestly she was challenging me to let everything that was buried inside me.

Me: Maybe papa he's disappointed with his wife not being there for his only daughter, if he was still alive none of this could've happened. Mama you made me believe that getting married at the young age I was going to be happy, you made me believe that Victor and I were a the perfect match.

I stopped talking when I realised that hatred got me there.

Ma: You said enough now Mavis.

Her disappointed face and fascinated face, her deepest wrinkling of her clenched lips. She got up she got up too. We looked at each other.

Pastor T: Ladies calm down.

I missed my mother who was supportive before I was married with Vic Pastor's son.

Me: I needed you mama, I wanted you to soothe me as I was facing my own tantrums and demons, I expected you to be more supportived. You know the feeling betrayed, hurt, and heartbroken. I grieved for my ended marriage as if I had lost a loved one. But you were not there, it was difficult to take everything in, I messed up mama, I wanted to see her on the coffin, forgetting that she didn't aproch Victor she was approached by him. My hatred for her led me to believe that she deserves nothing but painful dead, maybe if you were there to guide me as a mother none of that should've happened. Victor now hate me than before, the is nothing that you can do to make him love me. Sonto lost her baby because of me, how fair is that mama?

Victor walked in with his daughter. We both looked at them.

Victor: What kind of jokes is this dad?

Pastor T: Just come in and sit down.

Victor: Princess go to your room.

She walked away. He sat down. I looked at that women called Millicent.

Me: Millicent you don't deserve to be called a mother.

Pastor T: Mav that's enough.

I looked at him then I apologizye. My mother smiled, I don't think she is capable of apologising without excuses or justification her actions.

NOMASONTO

Disebo and her husband walked out. I looked at hands before I could looked my Musa, I survived many things, waves, bruises and cuts, so what is walking without any support was going to be a problem?

Me: Musa I didn't abandon you brother.

He held my hand.

Musa: Mom you don't have to worry, Mr and Mrs Radebe are taking care of me.

Me: I promise when everything that is happening is temporarily.

Musa: I can stay there for the rest of my life, it's quietly I'm able to do my school work.

I smiled. Tshidi laughed.

Me: And then?

Tshidi: Nelly she's taken away now..

She laughed. Then looked at Zweli.

Zweli: Sonto won't allow that to happen...

He stopped talking

Me: My mother would rise from the dead.

Zweli: Standwa sam deal with her. (My love)

We laughed. I looked at him, it seems like he was just talking with us just to please his Fiancée.

Tshidi: Next time don't use "My" Use "our"

Ma: Zweli you I will show you the door.

We laughed

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how wonderful it was seeing everyone laughing including Mr Mabuza. Looking at him I immediately dwelled on things that happen years ago, I don't know why the suddenly alarming that was really upsetting me. Call me selfish if you can, but that man

rejected me not only me he left my mother to die, rejection hurts sure. The pain I felt after being rejected by the man who was naturally supposed to accept me like the Radebe's did to his daughter and they are still playing that role. Being rejected by a parent hurts. Pretending like it doesn't hurt me was only delaying my recovery. I had to allow myself to feel those feelings however they come. I don't hate him though but I had to allow those memories to come back.

VICTOR

I sat there and listened to that old man telling me how should I leave my life.

Pastor T: Son you are the one who should apologize to Mav. You wronged her.

Me: I wronged her?

He nodded I looked Mav she shook her head.

Pastor T: Mavis was hurt, shattered, ashamed, lost and confused about her future, the only thing you can do as her husband you need to be there for her, support her as your wife not a stranger. Many emotions showed up after your so called divorce.

Me: My ex wife father.

Pastor T: Victor you rushed for separation, without taking further steps. We don't believe in that, you too are still married.

Me: Dad if you love this woman here marry her, I won't mind to call her my step mother.

Mav got up

Mavis: I believe we done here, Vic I'm sorry again for everything I've put you and Sonto through.

I nodded.

Mav: If I wasn't warned about my behaviour and hatred I was going to blame you, but I was warned multiple times and I choose to ignore those people who were helping me. I know my sorry will not make her pregnant again, I am ready to face my sentence, Pastor T and Mr Thabethe.

Pastor T: Spilled water can not be undone MaNcumalo.

Mav: If you reminded me that few months ago maybe I was going to be a free woman.

She said that walking away from us. After all she's a great person.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI (TSHIDI'S PSYCHOLOGIST)

The whole situation with my brother made me to dig deeper on his case, I know he was denied parole for some reason. My wife walked to me, her name is Nyembezi.

Mbezi: How is he?

Me: He's fine.

Mbezi: Are you alright.

I nodded, the only thing was focused to was to get to know Phawu but I needed a ticket to get to him, he's part of my family despite on how he was conceived. I was needed to build a friendship with his mother, on the line of my career and her line of her career being friends will be easier. Tshidi told me that Phawu's mother beside being a lawyer she's a community builder, and she attends monthly therapist workshops where they learn about different people's minds and emotions and how to handle those cases, I spent days trying to locate where they will be meeting this month. To my surprised she was the one who is hosting this month's event. I booked my seat hours ago, I didn't choose Live Webinar training I chose face to face training.

Me: I will be away for a week.

Mbezi: Work related?

Me: Something like that.

Mbezi: You not sure if is work related?

Me: Baby it's similar to, I'm going for a training.

She exhaled.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

[WEEK LATER]

I was discharged a week ago and I was attending psychotherapist it was one of the hardest journey I ever experienced. Who said life is to be perfect? Sometimes we solve problem for the sake of forgiveness of our sins, but it seems that we continue creating more atrocities we don't think of the consequences of the wrongs we do choice. I don't blame Mav for hitting me with the car. I took something that was dear to her I deserved to be punished.

I had to face my punishment like everyone else. Especially with the countless abortions, I wasn't going to carry the pregnancy full term, I was getting punished for that and I had to face the music, God emphasizes the value of life in the womb. However, our compassion must look different than that of the world. The world's compassion will encourage women to have an abortion so they can follow their dreams and be successful. The compassion of Christ links arms with women and helps them believe that they will be great mothers. Most importantly, it equips them with the resources to continue following their dreams even after having their baby.

ZWELAKHE

I took nap my desk, when my grandfather appeared. He stood there he looked so sad.

Me: Please talk to me.

He looked around, he took his son's picture

Him: Ngiyaziqhenya ngaye, kungani ungenzi nami ngiziqhenye ngawe. (*I'm proud of him, why don't you make me proud of you too*)

Everything he was saying was not making sense.

Me: What have I done.

Him: Awulaleli. (*You don't listen*)

I was confused.

I was waken in a tail pin, sweating, scared and screaming. I did not understand what he was trying to say.

MAVIS

My mother asked to stay with us for a while. We don't have a friendly relationship. Like we had before. So we barely talk. She started singing as sleepwalked to me.

"Ten kilometers barefooted in the bush, Started raining on the way to fetch some water, Poor woman had a baby on her back, Was struck by lightning on her way, To fetch some water, She tried hiding under a tree to save her child, Poor woman had no place to go, Lightning caught her with her baby on her back, Friends, relatives ran for her, It was too late, It was too late, Too late for mama."

She always sang that song each time she coughed my eyes. Or she would say little positive things about me

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only very often hurls abuse. Oh I and Siphe we are in a relationship and taking things slowly, I know he's three years younger than me but he values me and makes me happy. Though I was facing jail time he didn't care about that. And love has no age.

Whilst I was enjoying my coffee I felt the hot slap on my cheek.

Me: What the hell?

Mom: I'm sick and tired of your behavior.

Really?

Me: Millicent ungaphinde ulokothe ubeke isandla sakho esingcolile kimi. (*Never ever put your dirty hand on me*)

I was stunned. I had a big problem after getting our horrible meeting. I was tired of fighting with her. And then to have her to slap me was so heartbreaking. It wasn't a big deal, but nothing I would expect from a mother.

Me: Millicent I think you should leave my uncles house.

She looked at then let out the devil laughter. I felt very lonely when I was with her unlike my uncle and his girlfriend.

Mom: You don't have a word to say inside this house, you are a failure, you failed to keep a man. Hence why he left you with nothing.

How rich that was coming from my own mother.

Mom: Ten kilometers barefooted in the bush, Started raining on the way to fetch some water, Poor woman had a baby on her back, Was struck by lightning on her way, To fetch some water, She tried hiding under a tree to save her child, Poor woman had no place to go, Lightning caught her with her baby on her back, Friends, relatives ran for her, It was too late, It was too late, Too late for mama, Oh no, too late...

My uncle and his girlfriend they're so supportive and encouraging with passion. I wish my mom was like them.

Mom: My brother in-law must demand the rent money from you.

Me: In that case I want my shares for Papa's house that you sold before I got married.

She sold our house claiming that my father owed many people. Lucky Victor was the one who was paying my varsity fees and for that I appreciate him.

Mom: You should be applying for jobs before you go to another world.

Mrs T she wasn't that toxic like my mother was.

Mom: You are in this mess because of your stupidity just like your father. You irritate me.

I got up.

Me: I hate you mom.

She smiled then continued with her boring song as I walked out.

MATSHIDISO

I've been watching cooking skills on YouTube. I've tried to cook pap and stew I was crossing my fingers that he likes my food. Zweli walked in he looked so exhausted. I got up and went to hug him.

Me: Love are you okay?

We broke the hug.

Zweli: Tshidi order something, I won't be able to cook today.

Me: I cooked.

He looked at me.

Me: Come with me.

He followed me to the kitchen.

Zweli: Is that a stew?

Me: Yes sir.

Zweli: Who was here while I was away?

Me; Student Chef was here.

NOMASONTO

Vee walked in.

Me: You are welcome my love.

Victor: Baby I was thinking.

Victor: Mavis's case.

Me: All ears.

Victor: I think she deserves a second chance.

I nodded.

Victor: What do you think?

Me: I'm glad you came to your senses.

I've been asking him to drop the case, but no he was just Victor Thabethe.

Victor: You won't drop the case, we will ask the persecutor to give her a shot sentence.

Harmful people are like Vee who managed to pay the persecutor to set strict conditions.

Me: How?

Victor: She need to understand that each and every bad decision we make have a good price to pay.

Me: She's not that bad.

He nodded

Victor: Hence why she must serve at least a year.

Me: Let's drop the case.

Victor: That won't happen.

ZWELAKHE

I wasn't hungry but because of she cooked I had to put the smile on her face. Her fond of cooking, however, she's not a good cooker. Her cooking was terribly.

She wiped her tears. I could tell that she wanted so badly to cook for me.

Me: Look tomorrow I'm not going anywhere, we will watch the kitchen program together and see what went wrong. And thank you for trying.

She nodded. I wanted to see where did she went wrong so that I can try to make corrections with her.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

I was utterly devastated, I didn't expect the kind of behavior from a mother, I was expecting it from an outsider not a mother. I was broken, defective, unfixable and hopeless. I

needed someone to talk to, an elder, a mother to guide me and that person was Mrs Radebe, I know that I've cost them too much pain but I needed a mother. My mother's behavior raised my level of shame. That put me deeper into hardship than I was before. Zola was going to help me but on that stage I needed an elder. I stood at the door debating whether I should knock or what, my bail condition included that I should stay away from the Radebe's. But I needed help. I felt the heaviness in my chest. I swallowed my fear and knocked.

MATSHIDISO

I looked at him as we were lying on the bed, were not sleeping just drifting away the bad day. I was so disappointed with my

cooking, I don't know what went wrong. I gave it all to make it.
What kind of a woman I am?

Me: Rre Samu I'm sorry.

He looked at me then brought my head on his chest.

Zweli: Baby you tried, I'm not mad at you, I'm impressed that you tried.

Me: I really wanted to make it.

Zweli: We all learn from getting it wrong, the only thing you can do is to keep on trying surely one day you will make it.

My phone vibrated from my pocket. I ignored it.

Me: I love you.

He kissed me on the forehead. I hoped that would last. But the incidents made me feel like he was pretending.

Zweli: Let's take a trips to the supermarket.

As for trip?

Me: Okay.

MAVIS

Mrs Radebe welcomed me besides Mr Radebe and both Tshidi's cousins. She gave me a cup of coffee.

Mr Radebe: What happen to your face? My heart was thudding so hard I think the caffeine was adding to my anxiety.

Me: Ma I'm sorry for troubling you.

She nodded and said "*it's okay my daughter*" I wish my mother was the one telling me that.

That women had been to much pain. And I added to her pain. I almost killed her long lost daughter.

Me: I had nowhere to go, I needed someone, I need a mother to share my pain with.

She put her hand on my hand.

Mrs Radebe: I'm glad you came here. What happened to your face?

I couldn't hold it I just cried. She's so sweet.

Me: Mama slapped me. (*Crying*)

Mrs Radebe: Why?

Me: My uncle's house has turned into a depression place. My mom she's trying by all means to tear me apart. She's always telling me that I'm a failure, I couldn't keep my marriage.

I explained everything that is going on with my life.

Mrs Radebe: She's should be supportive as a mother.

I nodded. She was right that's what a mother should do. She hugged me.

Mrs Radebe: I'm sorry that you are going through this, it must be difficult.

I was expecting her to be strange or throwing me out. But there she was nice to me.

Mrs Radebe: God will not give you more trouble than you can handle because God is not the giver of trouble. God is the giver of life and the source of love and blessing. However, life will dish out horrendous things where we find ourselves in despair crying out "*I can't handle this*" or "*I give up*" She wiped out my tears.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI (Tshidi's psychologist)

I was late I was supposed to be there an hour ago. When I got there mama Phawu was the one who was talking and it seems like she did her homework. I stood at the door and listen to her as she was talking.

Thobile: Being an emotional person and leading with the heart can both be great qualities. Leaning into your feelings allows you to be more self aware and can also help you to connect with others. But if you allow your emotions to dictate how you live your life, it can lead to anxiety, depression, and even have a negative impact on your health and relationships.

We applauded.

Thobile: Now I'm taking question and answers, there is no wrong answer here okay?

Audience nodded. I must say

I've attended many workshops but I never attended one that had to much audience. Her eyes landed to me, she smiled.

Thobile: I didn't notice that this workshop have a special guest, honestly I wasn't aware. Sir you welcome, please come sit here.

I walked to seat on the table she showed me. I was supposed to be an trainees seat.

She took all the questions than answer them, if she got stuck she would ask for help. A girl who I think she's less than 18 raised her hand.

Thobile: I hope you'll taking notes.

We nodded, she gave her the platform.

Girl: You mentioned something about validating our emotions. How do I validate my emotions first?

She looked at the VIP table, her aunt shook her head.

Aunt: We can't take over your workshop Thobi, we can help you when you get stuck.

Thobile: When you find yourself riding the wave of emotion

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it's important not to dismiss those feelings. Emotions can be a lot like unruly children in need of attention. Once we validate them, we allow them to be seen and have a voice.

We applauded, why didn't she take the therapist career than law? I lifted my hand up. She gave me the platform.

Me: I will add on Ms Khoza's answer. When we validate our emotions, we become more aware and accepting of them, and we begin to understand where they come from. It's only in this place of awareness that we can see what power they may hold over us.

She nodded then smiled.

Thobile: Next question or answer.

ZWELAKHE

We walked to the supermarket, holding hands. Dreaming about my late grandfather was a warning that I was losing my balance of life.

Tshidi: Are we good?

I nodded. That was the time to spend with her, to show my love for her especially that I decided to respond to my calling. It wasn't easy for me to come to that but I had to, or else my life was going to be up and down. It was going to be the hardest journey of my life. I needed to hire a CEO of my father's company.

Me: Baby no matter what happen remember that I love you and I will always love you.

She nodded. My only goal to reach this week was to be there for her especially to facilitate her with the cooking skills.

Tshidi: Are you alright?

I nodded.

MAVIS

The only woman who was supposed to throw up unnecessary speech on my face was the one who gave me the ear to listen.

Mrs Radebe: I think you should ask your mother what is it that she was going to benefit from your marriage? Her anger towards you has to do with divorce. Her anger has more message.

Me: I can't talk to her, she's shutting me out of her life. Whenever we are in the same room she sing this old song of Mabree "*to late for mama.*"

I saw tears streaming from her eyes.

Mrs Radebe: I don't know what to say.

Me: Sometimes I think taking the death is the only way out...

She cut me.

Mrs Radebe: I know she's your mother but don't let her control you like that.

AZOLA

When they say there's always hope they aren't lying. After what Thobi been through she was still standing strong and shining.

Giving others hope again. From being raped, pregnant, losing one child, her mother being arrested for murder and losing her best friend who happened to be my late fiancé.

Thobile: I didn't get the chance to introduce our special guest.

She asked Tshidi's psychologist to introduced himself. He got up and walked to her.

Thobile: You welcome sir.

She gave him the platform to introduce himself. She sat next to me she took a seat.

Me: I didn't know that you know this guy. (***Whispering***)

Thobile: I don't know him besides of being Tshidi's psychologist.
(***Whispering***)

Psych: I didn't know that I'm a special guest.

People went crazy especially young ladies. PK has the best way to welcome people, it's a small community but have a lot of people.

Psych: Well I'm psychologist Dumezweni Nyathi, I'm basically from Gauteng based in Pretoria. A friend of mine told me about this workshop I decided to claim my seat. At first I was nervous but when I walked in this door I was welcomed by love and smiles.

Wow Tshidi she's becoming a mother now.

Duma: I always tell my patients this when it comes to controlling their emotions. When you're strongly connecting with a negative reactive emotion, it's important to take time away from the person or situation you are reacting to. Never act strong to emotion. Wait until you are feeling calm and have given yourself time to rationalize and think. Only then should you act.

Thobile: This is the energy I've been looming for. (*Whispering*)

Duma: Even if the emotion is a positive one, it can still lead you down a destructive path. Think about this how many times have you done something you later regret in the name of love? I know I've there myself, emotions can be the trigger of happiness. Sometimes people's words and actions affect us, but we also need to take responsibility for the emotions we feel in response to those words and actions. No one can make you feel anything, it's always your choice. So often the reactive emotions you feel are based on your own perception of the truth, and on the things that matter to you. Being late may be one of your triggers for anger, but for someone else it may be their norm and no big deal. Consider also that people act a certain way based on many influences that differ from your own, such as culture, upbringing, beliefs, and life experiences. This is small region is so lucky to have people who cares about it. I like how united is this community is.

One of the VIPs psychiatrist whispered to me. "*He's amazing*" I nodded then smiled.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MARIA MABUZA

[NEXT DAY]

I checked the bucket it was almost full. It was earlier in the morning. If I had the money I was going to take a trip back to my country where things seems possible. My husband was treating me like a child, like I was the one who asked Sonto to take his son to her family. She had her own reason for that. I felt someone tapping my shoulder bringing me to reality. I turned and looked at her.

Fezile: Sis your bucket is full.

She closed the tap. We decided to meet at there. Because my husband doesn't like it when I make friends, he's my only friend.

Fez: My boss he's looking for a housekeeper.

Me: I don't think my husband will allow that.

She shook her head.

Fez: Your husband he's unemployed you unemployed too. You don't accept his daughters to take care of you forever.

She was telling me the truth but Mabuza wasn't going to allow me to work, he never allowed me to. The only person who can talk to him for me is Sonto.

MATSHIDISO

He was patiently watching me as I placed everything that I needed on the counter for pancakes.

Zweli: Are you sure is that all you will need?

I nodded.

Zweli: Watch the video again.

I watched the video again. I couldn't believe that, I laughed at myself.

Me: Please get me the baking powder.

He got up.

Zweli: The is no rush.

He suggested that we should start with the easiest.

NOMASONTO

I received a call from aunt Maria.

Maria: Sonto you are the only person who can speak with Enock.

Me: I'm not promising you anything.

Maria: I really need this job.

I understand where she comes from, you know how painful and stressful it can be when the sun comes up when you have no money in your wallet and it goes down without money.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI (Tshidi's psychologist)

Day two for the workshop, was more better than yesterday, we were focused on **PTSD** I really enjoyed that workshop, honestly meeting with people on the same field sharing different views it was overwhelming. I was also picking up things that I was not aware of. Things like *"If we can change your mindset we can change your entire world."* *"You need to fix you first"* So with everything we go through and our brains doesn't see the way

out we need to need to focus all own energy on our healing,
and that will heal our brains.

We had a break Thobi walked up to me.

Thobi: How do you find the place.

I looked around she tapped my shoulder then laughed.

Thobile: Don't do that.

She's a great person, my brother ruined her life, I just don't
understand how can a person rape a child, what does that
person feel about to on a child?

Thobile: World to Duma ka Nyathi.

She waved her hand on my face.

Me: I'm sorry.

I wore a long-sleeved shirt to cover my wristwatch. I didn't want to scare her.

Me: How is the boy?

Thobile: I haven't called to check on him today.

Me: So you call him everyday?

She nodded.

Thobile: I don't want him to feel abandoned.

Me: Your son he's so determined and confidence, about the ability of doing many things if he works hard.

She laughed

Thobi: He's so opposed on building false hope he's smart and he can do anything. What kind of child is that?

Me: He's a smart kid. He reminds me of myself when I was at age.

She looked at me

Thobi: He's a mini you.

My knee jerk in reaction of that statement

Thobi: Have you had of two look alike?

I nodded

Thobi: They call it doppelgänger. According to study, the likelihood of two people sharing the exact facial features is less than 1 in 1 trillion. But there is only a one in 135 chance that a

single pair of doppelgängers exists on our planet of more than 7 billion people. My heart almost stopped.

Me: So it's true that lawyers do lot of research?

Thobi: Yes we do especially if the case is totally new for us, we have the duty to do a lot of research in order to be prepared to represent our clients in court.

NOMASONTO

Later on, Vee helped me out of the car. Honestly I missed myself hope seems to be far away

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stretched, I felt very small. It was quite a frightening sensation. I felt distant from my inner self.

We got in. We settled down. Mr Mabuza was sitting there alone.

Me: Hi dad.

He looked at me without saying anything.

Vee: I think I should excuse myself.

Me: That won't happen Vee you stay with me here.

Mabuza: Where is my son? I checked the time.

I checked the time.

Me: He's at school.

Mabuza: Sonto your parents can't keep my son from me.

I find myself giving the man around off applaud he's still that man who rejected me, I mean us.

Me: All these years you never thought about your son?

He looked at me then Vee.

Mabuza: Sonto I apologized what more do you want from me?

Me: Now you are talking, you will continue seeing Musa during weekends.

He banged the table.

Me: Oh before I forgot something, there is a friend of MamFez who's looking for a house keeper and your wife she's the right candidate for the job.

He got up.

Mabuza: Out of my house Sonto.

His house? The audacity of that man.

Me: Your what?

Mabuza: Please leave Sonto.

I looked around. Did he deserve the second chance?
Absolutely no I should've let him be homeless.

Me: You don't understand the repercussions of your actions?

He pointed the door. Where did he get the audacity to show me the door? He hasn't learned anything from his mistakes at all and sadly he doesn't have the voice inside that shack.

Mabuza: Close the door behind you.

Me: No you will close the door behind you bab Mabuza. (*Mr Mabuza*)

My tone was too loud. 30 minutes later things got out of control we were exchanging words.

Victor: Noma let's go.

Me: This is my home Vee I'm not going anywhere. actually this is my place until Musa reach 21.

Mabuza: Your home?

He laughed aggressively.

Me: I wish you were the one who was six feet under.

He slapped me.

Me: I don't know what did mom saw in you-

Victor gentle grabbed me outside.

AZOLA

The last time I saw Thobi smiling was few months ago. After the workshop session she invited the man for lunch. Gave him the glass of water.

Duma: Thank you.

Thobi: You welcome.

She sat down

Thobi: My grandmother use to say ukudla kwiwudoti yamazinyo. (*food is tooth trash*)

Duma: Meaning I should never appreciate the food.

Thobi: Did I say that?

We laughed.

VICTOR

I never thought I will see Noma that angry.

Sonto: Next time you stay out of my business.

Me: I understand that you are angry but you need to understand that he's not himself.

Sonto: He's himself, he's Enock Mabuza the same man who rejected me, now he thinks that he has the right to tell me what to do.

Me: Calm down.

Sonto: Calm down?

She giggled.

Sonto: I'm not going to allow the very same man to steal my happiness never.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

Mrs Radebe didn't allow me to go home. Basically I spent the night at the Radebe's. I was waiting for Lele, he promised to come take when he knocks off.

He's working for his brother, I hope my relationship with him doesn't affect his relationship with his brother.

ZWELAKHE

I was sitting on the couch and she was lying on the couch her head on my lap. Goodbye has the etiology of meaning, 'God be with you' so saying goodbye is bestowing a blessing. And for a

person whose faith tradition anticipates seeing one another again see you later. But still it was difficult to tell her that I will be gone for a while. Accepting my fate by answering my calling. I have nothing to lose right?

Me: Baby!

Tshidi: Mmm.

Me: I love you.

Tshidi: le 'na kea u rata. (*Love you too*)

Goodbyes are hard right?

Me: Baby you know that I love and I will do anything to prove my love for you.

She rose.

Tshidi: Rre Samu what is going on?

I lean to kiss her she got up.

Me: This is the toughest decision I have ever made.

She cut me

Tshidi: Are you breaking up with me?

Me: Mme please hear me out.

She started walking.

Me: I didn't say that.

She left me talking to myself.

NOMASONTO

Vee drove me straight to my parents house. The room was full of worries and stress.

Me: Uphi uMa? (*Where is mom*)

Mr Radebe: She will join us.

My cousins looked each other.

Me: Should I be worried?

Mr Radebe: Che. *(No)*

I got up. There was something they were not telling me.

Me: I will find out what is going on here.

I walked away without any support, I had to train myself to be independent again. I don't see a need of using a crutch. I was calling her whilst I was checking each and every room.

Rre Radebe: Stop being dramatic, you will hurt yourself.

I even forgotten that I'm injured. But the unrealistic tension, got me worried my father, niece and his sister were hiding something for me. She got out from Tshidi's room.

Mom: Uhm..... Rato..... Sonto, baby what is going on.

She was shaking like she was caught up stealing something.

Me: Are you okay?

She looked at her husband.

Mom: I have a migraine headaches.

Me: Oh I'm sorry for troubling you.

She smiled then took a deep breath.

Mom: It's okay, I'm just happy to see you.

Dad: That was close.

I looked at him.

Me: What are you hiding from me, Is Musa okay, mom is the terrible headache or you are fooling me?

They both shook their heads.

Dad: Ke o joetsitse rato hore ho mo dumella ho robala mona ke mohopolo o mobe. Now explain what is going on and leave me out of this (*I told you dearly that letting her sleep here is a bad idea*)

Me: What is going on?

I was tired of standing. She opened the door Mav was sitting on the bed.

Me: Mom what is going on?

Mom: She had a misunderstanding with her mother.

Me: Oh I see.

I felt pain in my legs. We only destroy our chances of recovery and victory in life. We think we can easily deal with external challenges and distractions. We can only adapt to the nature of our difficult situation, embrace size and learn in a way that is not one of the methods we use to sort out our differences, fighting one another we only creating enemies not friends.

I dragged myself in that room. Mav looked at me.

Me: You don't have to hide.

I sat next to her.

Me: Mav I know that I've hurt you.

She nodded. I looked at my parents.

Me: Please give us some space.

They looked at each other then nodded.

We watched them walking away.

Me: Mav when I met Vee I was only 15 years, I didn't know anything about sex or love.

She opened her eyes wider.

Mav: You met him when you were 15?

I nodded

Me: The only thing that I had to do was to sell him my service to him to get money.

Mav: Service.

Me: Sometimes we make horrible choices because this life it's a journey it has many rooms some are hidden. I introduced myself to prostitution I'm not proud of that but I had to do something to get something to eat for me and Musa. My first day in the prostitution industry, I had a client and that client was Vee.

She just nodded. I explained to her about that evening.

Mav: So you are telling me you waited to give birth then you went back there?

I nodded

Me: Life need us to stay strong, I didn't wanna go there again, but I had to make sure that we have food. I have the forbidden fruit in claiming I'm ashamed before God.

MARIA

Emotions play a major role in our life. Emotions are a part of our happiness. Fear is an unpleasant emotion. Mabuza was fighting his own demon.

Enock: Maria if you want to make friends not in my house.

Me: I don't understand why you so angry.

Enock: You and Sonto you make me angry.

I started developing depression. He was earning nothing and I was not earning anything too. Sonto was helping here and

there. I needed something to occupy my time. He was against me working. In his world I was not allowed to talk to anyone besides him.

Enock: I'm the only husband in this marriage

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my word is finally.

My confidence was at rock bottom. A little penny was going to help us but I was not going to win with my husband on my way.

Me: We still have the long road to go Mabuza, we need to bring our children's spirits to their ancestors.

Enock: Shut up Maria.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

It was getting late those two they kept on delaying me from leaving, but I was enjoying their company.

Azola: You are heading back to Gauteng?

Me: Are you kidding me.

We laughed. I booked the B&B for a week.

Thobile: Let me call mom so that you can talk with mini you.

Mini me? She indeed called her and suggested to make a video call with her son. She spoke to him they were having a mother and son conversation.

Thobi: Someone want to talk to you.

Phawu: Ngubani lowo mntu? (*Whose that*)

She gave me the phone.

Me: Little champion!

Phawu: Samu yiza uzojonge. (*Samu come and see*)

Me: Hello to you too champ. **(Smiling)**

He apologized then greeted me. This boy he's amazing.

Phawu: Samu doesn't want to talk to you.

Me: Why?

Phawu: I don't know.

Me: It's okay you talk to me, how is school?

Phawu: Fine when will you come here?

Me: I don't know, you want me to come there?

He nodded.

Phawu: Yes.

Me: Why?

Phawu: I want to play that game again.

Me: You want me to beat you again.

He made a fun face. I laughed he laugh too.

Phawu: The last time I checked I'm the one who won.

We laughed. We talked like we old friends.

Me: Champ I have to go.

Phawu: Call again tomorrow.

I nodded, giving the child false hopes, but I was going to find a way out. He ended video call.

Thobi: Wow you guys sounds like old friends.

Me: Someone seems jealous.

Azola: I thought my mind was playing games with me.

Thobi: I hope you are joining our Zoom workshop.

Me: Send me the details.

Azola: Well the workshop start in five minutes.

Me: No ways, why do I feel like you girls don't want me to leave?

They looked at each other.

Thobi: You are our guests not the B&B guest.

MAVIS

Wow Sonto made me realized that indeed Vic never loved me, yes I was aware that Nelly was born two years before we got married. We decided to put our differences aside. But still I wanted to face my imprisonment for crashing her.

After two hours and half we joined everyone, Lele was already there.

Siphe: I hope you too didn't kill each other.

I and Sonto looked at each other.

Sonto: Well baba mncane ka Nelly that was between me and Mrs Thabethe. *(Nelly's Uncle)*

Really now?

Me: Wee golden women, you are getting it wrong, Ms Ncumalo.

She laughed

Lele: The last time I checked on your ID you are not Ncumalo.

We laughed.

Me: Well Babu Thabethe I will revisit the home affairs tomorrow. *(Mr Thabethe)*

Siphe: Sadly those offices are closed for the next few months.

We laughed.

Mrs Radebe: I'm glad that you too managed to sort out your differences.

Me: We did.

Lele gave me a back bag.

Sonto: Musa are you okay?

He nodded. I went to change to a dress that Lele bought for me, then join the Radebe's for super. After fourth minutes. We had to say our goodbyes even though I wasn't ready to go home.

Mrs Radebe: Mavis I will talk to Millicent you don't need to worry.

I looked at her then nodded.

Sonto: Sand my regards to *Mrs too late*.

Mrs Radebe: Sonto you are being you are forward now.

Me: You do the same.

We laughed then existed and headed the road.

Lele: I'm happy that you and Sonto managed to talk.

I nodded.

Me: I wish we talked before everything that has happened, talking to her was an eye opener.

Siphe: How?

Me: She didn't tell your brother about Nelly because she didn't want to break my marriage.

Siphe: Yeah.

Silent

Me: Are you aware that Nelly was born the day your little sister passed on?

He shook his head.

Siphe: I haven't checked her date of birth.

He drove to my uncle's house.

Siphe: I'm a call away okay.

Me: I love you too.

We kissed.

Me: Goodbye and good night.

He kissed me again. I got off the car and walked to that toxic house. Lucky my uncle was there.

Uncle: At least you find your way home.

I looked at my mother she was disgusted.

Me: I'm sorry baba mncane. (*Uncle*)

Uncle: It's okay.

He got up and left me with that woman. I attempted to leave her there but she roughly grabbed my hand.

Mill: I'm ashamed to be your mother.

Me: I'm ashamed to be called your daughter too.

She slapped me. Then walked away.

I called Mrs Radebe and tell her what happened.

Mrs Radebe: I'm sorry baby, please do me a favor, avoid her for tonight, we will meet tomorrow morning.

Me: Thanks ma.

I went to my room, I was welcomed by my cut clothes. That one got my attention. Did I disappoint her in a way she lost her sanity? I was losing my mother. I sat on my bed and cried myself to sleep. My own mother doing strange things to me. That was not my mother.

ZWELAKHE

During my sleep I heard someone waking me up. I woke up from my sleep. I walked out of the house. I followed the voice that was calling me.

Voice: This way.

I was following the voice.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

ZWELAKHE

I was bitten by unexpected life events. In some events, we find solutions quickly, but others take us by surprise. I thought accepting my journey was going to be easy, I thought I was going to say goodbye to my fiancée, son, mother, sisters, aunt, colleagues and both my father and step father. But there I was, I didn't get that chance to do so.

I walked to the the hidden house that was near the mountain. The spirits led me there. They were dancing *intlombe*, the dance that traditional healers dance for their ancestors, the beat of drums, got into my heart, I felt like the drums were beating inside of me. I could hear my heart racing, and I started dancing *intlombe*. Sometimes we human seek wellness and healing in different ways. We sometimes choose services and products based on what we believe, how we understand our ailments and what is available around us. Many people seek both biomedical and traditional health services, and our roots has a strong evidence especially in Africa.

The woman walked to me.

Woman: Kade ngikulindile, usesekhaya manje. (*I've been waiting for you, you're home now*)

She looked familiar, she's the women I used to dream about. I felt the drums were beating inside of me. Other traditional healers walked to us they welcomed one of the healers covered me with a blanket.

After a while they took into a hut house, together with the apprentices. They were using different herbs.

Old healer: You need to be cleansed all the bad spirits and to have a clean road as a sangoma.

She called upon my clan names. Surprisingly I didn't tell them who I was. She asked for my gift to be awakened. They covered my face with white powder and we danced all night, that was going to be a long road for me.

MATSHIDISO

I was dreaming of Zweli he was dressing like a sangoma in the middle of cows and goats.

Zweli: My love.

I looked at him with tears on my eyes.

Zweli: Failing to accept my gift would result in me being a lunatic, mad person, even to the point to lose my faith, bad luck would pour upon me like heavy rain. The is nothing that, I will set would come to fruition, I need to answered my ancestral call, Tshidi don't cry just be strong for our son I know you are and I know that you will, I believe in you baby.

He's the first person who believed in me, no lie.

Tshidi: Zwe you never cared about this why now?

Zweli: As I said failing to accept my calling would results of bad lucks.

Me: Will we ever get married?

He nodded.

Zweli: When I come back everything will be fine, all you have to do is to ask Mr Mabuza to bring your siblings home.

He rubbed his chest.

Zweli: You will always be here.

I smiled and walk to him. He placed his hand on my chest.

Zweli: I will be inside here. One more thing don't move back to our house until I come back.

I looked his hand then lift up my head he was no longer in the middle of cows and goats.

He was sitting next to a lion. I looked at it the lion opened it mouth

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it didn't roar. I immediately rose up, that was a terrifying dream. I noticed that he wasn't sleeping next to me, but his phone and car keys were right there. I dose of again.

ZWELAKHE

The following morning, they explained how I ended up there, I was given beads that was blessed, that was my new status as a sangoma, and for the ancestors to see and communicate with me easily. They asked for my ancestors to reunite with my trainer. I was given sangoma cloth, and a new name as a symbol that I was being born again. My new name is *Mnqobi*, meaning I am a conqueror, I conquered the battles between my bad orcs and my success. In general, I have won the war that my family failed to.

MAVIS

The first thing I did after taking the morning shower, was to take a taxi to the Radebe's. I explained what happened.

Mrs Radebe: This is getting too much, give me your uncle's contact.

I wrote them down.

Me: I'm losing her, she's losing herself Ma please help me.

Mrs Radebe: The only person who used to deal with your mother during our Stokvel meeting was Anna.

Me: As in Mrs Thabethe?

She nodded.

Me: She hate me.

Mrs Radebe: I will see what can I do.

Mr Radebe: She can stay with us until here issue is resolved
Rato.

Mrs Radebe: Thank you Rre. (*Dad*)

MATSHIDISO

I kept myself busy by preparing a simple meal watching the kitchen program on YouTube. Seconds, minutes and hours passed. There was no sign of Zweli. I looked at his food, I really wanted to surprise him. I went to bath, sleep, got up again, checked the time, checked my phone there was no call coming through or SMS. There my anxiety was slowly coming back. I took the car keys and headed to his office.

NOMASONTO

The is this one thing I'm proud of myself with is I'm so good on keeping my emotions. I myself I have difficulties of recognizing and communicating with my own emotions, and I also struggle to recognize and respond to emotions in others.

I was in a situation where I didn't know that I was getting in or out, when MaNkosi passed on, she left me with Musa and that shack which I called home for years. Me giving it away will be selfish of me. If it wasn't for Musa Enock Mabuza was going to find himself in the street or walking to KZN. But Musa needs his father. My fiancé was telling me that I'm being selfish with myself.

He was dressing up.

Victor: You know that hiding your emotions, that selfish because you are preventing clear communication with the people in your life. This lack of communication makes it tough to navigate conflict. When you can't work through problems, they'll probably keep happening.

Me: I'm sorry you feel that way.

He chuckled

Victor: I'm being serious here Noma.

Me: Okay Mr serious get ready to work.

He smiled then laughed again.

Victor: You have too much drama.

Me: Okay.

Victor: So tell me here what you were going to do if you find your mother with a man in that room?

Me: Between you and me we know that I am not Rre's princess.

Victor: I'm going to tell Tshidi I swear.

We laughed

Victor: Thanks for having a chat with her, I hope you too become friends one day.

Me: She's always welcome, you can even withdraw the divorce and renew your marriage vows.

Victor: I'm happy if you are happy, renewing my vows with her that is your dream and it won't come true, and besides I'm good with my only Noma.

Me: Okay then.

He fastened his belt

Me: Are you sure that Sipehelele and Mavis are just friends?

Victor: Yeah why?

Me: They looked cozy.

Victor: Is there any problem with that?

He can be mean at times.

Victor: They both adults and know what they doing.

Silent

Victor: Before I forget, Disebo will be here, she will come with the wedding planner, don't worry about the cost.

Even if I wanted to worry about the cost, where was I going to get the money?

Victor: And one more thing, next week you starting your classes. You need to prepare yourself and stop seeing cozy people.

Oh really, I nodded he took his car keys, laptop, he kissed me than exited.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MATSHIDISO

[DAYS LATER]

To say I was broken would be an understatement, I was hurt, broken and lonely. Have you ever dealt with a broken heart? Not so long ago my life was starting to pick up , what happened ,who pressed that pause button? Honestly I was born to suffer.

I felt like there was a dark cloud over my head. I thought I've dodged the heavy storm that nearly killed me there I was again lonely, even though Mav was there to give me moral support, but I felt so lonely. I had my norm stressful desire to vanish just like he did.

I was sitting on my bed, sobbing, but not visibly. I could feel the sobs in my chest, the tightening and heaving. I searched for my mind and every pained pore on my body but I couldn't find it. I was desperately looking for a clearer understanding of my life. Police were failing dismally to help me.

Mav: Friend you need to eat.

Eat? Broken heart, broken dreams, and broke me.

Mav: I think you should go to the Radebe's, if brother Zweli comes back he will find you there.

Zweli left me here, on this bed with his phone, car keys, wallet and his father's house.

Mav: Okay then go take a bath.

In her eyes I was okay but what I had in my bucket is more about grief, longing and sadness.

MAVIS

I was in a place and situation that I was not familiar with that triggers my fight system to respond. That's life, it can flesh right before our eyes, when will Tshidi have peace? She just got what she has been praying for and that happened. She refused to go to the Radebe's since I had no place to call home, I volunteered to be next to her, but hey I got myself into situation where I couldn't exit. She's my friend and I want to be there for her but it felt like I was staying with a statue. She wasn't talking to anyone, she was just glued to the entrance of her room.

Police are doing their investigation. By how I see things he's not kidnapped as she claims, because their door wasn't broken. I was convinced that man are the same. I called Thobi to check how far she was, I couldn't just sit there and watch my friend like that.

She was sitting on the bed her eyes were glued at the entrance of her room. Thobi answered her phone after few rings.

Thobi: Mav I will be there soon.

She hanged up. I find it rude because I was the one who was called I was supposed to be the one who hanged up on her. My phone rang , I looked at it , my uncle was calling, I answered.

Me: Ncane. (*Uncle*)

Uncle: How are you doing today?

Me: I'm fantastic and yourself?

Uncle: Good, can you please come home, I need to talk to you.

Me: Should I be worried?

Him: Just come tomorrow morning.

NOMASONTO

I sat in front of the mirror, I applied the lotion on my body. Vee promised that he will take me to Tshidi's place. Zweli's disappearance doesn't make sense at all, how can a person leave without taking a pair of shoe or sock? Surely it was not a house breaking as Tshidi claim, she could've heard.

"Na-na, keep moving

Na-na, keep moving

Love is strange

I can't sleep without you

Maybe in the grave

I can do it without you

Everybody lies, But I'd never doubt you

Don't wanna die

But I can't live without you"

Want to see a happy man meet you should see who just walked in singing out loud.

Me: Ubang' umsindo. (

255); text-decoration-thickness: initial; text-decoration-style: initial; text-decoration-color: initial;">You make noise)

I laughed as he walked in, He put his laptop bag on the bed.

Victor: Ithi ndoda yami ubanga umsindo. *(Say my husband you are making noise)*

Me: Whatever.

He walked up to me we shared a kiss.

Me: Ummm.

I pulled out.

Victor: I can't resist you looking all this sexy.

He kissed me again then leaned over my shoulder and looked at the mirror.

Victor: Let's do a quick and dirty job. (***Whispering***)

Me: That can wait for today, Tshidi needs...

He cut me

Victor: I count myself extremely fortunate that I have the privilege of looking at you.

As he picked me up and walked to the bed.

AZOLA

Instead of going to Jo 'burg with Thobi, I decided to go home. Duma was the one who driving me there, he's such a great

friend. I had pains on my back. I didn't want to stress him, he volunteered to take me there.

VICTOR

They say behind every successful man, there's a woman. Indeed there I was happy with the woman I love.

Noma is my forever, ever since she was injured we never made love, she was on a process of healing, but looking at her then made me want to get into to her, Love isn't about sex, money

and material things. Love is about commitment and communication.

My tongue was driving her crazy making her moan.

Sonto: Vee, baby you tickling me.

Her leg flexed against my back, urging me to continue licking her vagina, her hands on my head holding me still as I was enjoying juices coming from her.

She knows how to satisfy a man.

Sonto: Aha....ahhhh.... Vee... Mmmm.

Her moan and gasp drove me crazy. I stopped and looked at her then look at her vagina which was ready for daddy Vee, I smiled and rubbed her clit, she made the most sexiest sounds raw,

intense, absolutely crazy noises of pleasure as I insert two of my fingers.

Sonto: Ahhh!!! baby stop playing.

I kissed her thighs moving up to her breasts.

Sonto: Ahh!!! Right there.

I thrust one finger inside her, crooking it and hitting her in the spot that turned her moans into one long, high pitched orgasm.

Sonto: Ahhh yes huhh yeah.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

The Mazibukos welcomed me with warm hands. They thank me for bringing their daughter home. No body trust a stranger with their daughter, niece or sister. I don't trust a stranger either. I volunteered to take her there just to see the boy who happened to me my nephew. I looked at Azola I could see that she wasn't fine but she was keeping it together. Her brother tried to crack some jokes but she didn't show any interest. The woman who was happy and laughing days ago was gone.

Brother: You this big sis?

Azola: Yeah.

She wasn't interested in any of his jokes.

Me: Are you alright?

Azola: Yeah I'm just tired.

Understandably, it was a long journey, more especially for a pregnant women. Phawu and a girl walked to us he was carrying a ball, as soon as his eyes landed to me he jumped for me.

Phawu: Uncle Duma.

Me: Hey champ.

Phawu: You came with our game?

I shook my head.

Phawu: Ungumalume onjani kanti? *(What kind of an uncle are you?)*

We laughed.

Azola: We didn't plan to come here Phawu.

Phawu: But since he's here he can play the ball with me.

Me: Maybe next time I will boy.

Phawu: Don't refer to me as a boy. I'm your champ remember?

Me: Okay champ.

We had a conversation here and there, you could swear we knew each other for years.

Azola: Do you mind taking me to the hospital? (*Whispered*)

I shook my head and looked at her. She was sweating. I looked at her brother and his wife.

Me: Where is your bag?

Azola: Duma stop asking me too many questions. (*Squalled*)

Me: Okay Zola.

She got everyone surprised. I asked her sister in law to get me everything that she was going to need.

VICTOR

She took full control of our foreplay session, she stroked my rock. The tips of her fingers were pleasuring me.

Me: Fuck.... Noma.

Her fingers had reached the center now. I had to think fast.

Me: ahhh!!! you are mine.

I grunted out.

Me: Mine alone. (*Whispered*)

Then a strange thing began to happen. As she was taking it to far she was performing a blow job. My own sensations grew exquisite, stronger. I got up she stopped

Sonto: Why?

I laid her down and looked down there.

Me: Aren't you ready for daddy Vee.

She smiled.

Sonto: I'm ready for daddy Vee.

She closed her eyes, I gave her a strained look.

Me: Are you alright?

She looked at me with a heavy lidded desire that made me more horny. I closed my eyes. And entered the paradise, I pumped in and out she moved with the rotating of my movement .

MARIA MABUZA

With my husband no women or child has a voice, as long as you are a child or woman you don't have a freedom of speech, that's Mabuza.

Me: I want to go back home.

Enock: Nenda Mariamum. (*Go Maria*)

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

With all the energy I had, I made sure that I keep that man happy. I closed my eyes, feeling his lips on my neck, I felt his fingers tracing the length of my spine. There came the pressure of a warm hand clasping my sex, fingers slipping inside me, lips

against my lips. His fingers pinched my nipples hurtfully and deliciously.

Me: Ouch, baby.

I rose up, my legs were no longer touching the floor, the darkness swirling around me.

Victor: Baby, Mama.

His strong hand pressed me down, and stroked all over me.

Victor: I love you.

There was no way I was going to stop loving that man. Besides him being my husband to be and my daughter's father he was my hero. He became my hero the day he decided to help me to change my life. At some point I knew that I was going to be his sex slave. But in the long run I became his Fiancée. His strength increased he poured his sweat into my body. I floated in the air.

Me: Ahh!! Ma!!! Vee!!!

I moan his name.

MARIA

That man had no idea that I already planned to leave. I packed my belongings. I don't know because he's not fully recovered who was going to take care of him. He had that mind I don't have money and I have no where to go. To be truthful I accepted that housekeeping job without his approval. I was fully aware that marriage is like partnership. But my husband

never wanted me to voice out against him. I mean I was in another country, where I had no family. He held that as a privilege that I had only him. My only worries was who will take care of him.

AZOLA

I had a severe pains which made me to be scared, I evaluated my fears. I was experiencing real pains, I couldn't tolerate that pain anymore. I couldn't take it. Labor pain hasn't been understood and discovered, yet the man who was supposed to be there for me and my baby was no no more. The painful part is that he died without knowing that I was pregnant. I started hitting the transition phase of labor the horrifically painful part

where I find myself switching from dilating to being ready to push.

Me: Ouch!!!

Then I puked on floor. I started yelling at random passerby to deliver my baby

Woman: You are making me dizzy.

She was sitting on the waiting room.

Me: Ndu!!!

I was losing my mind, how could I call his name? I mean he's late.

Me: Where's Duma?

Poor Duma being hijacked by me.

Finally the midwife decided to take me up to labor and delivery Ward.

I was promptly put in a hospital gown and on a bed. I was crying. The midwife checked me.

Midwife: You ready?

I nodded

Midwife: You push when I say.

It was clearly too late for that. I wanted to meet my first born. I pushed she slapped me on my thighs.

Midwife: Push when I say push.

I screamed in pain.

Me: I need to push!!!

The someone commanded everyone out of the way just in time.

Him: 3....2....1 Push

With the small amount of energy I pushed.

NOMASONTO

After our intimacy session we took a shower then headed to Tshidi's house.

Victor: Thank you.

Me: For?

Victor: Being part of me.

I nodded.

MARIA

He didn't fight with me, he just looked at me.

Me: Goodbye.

He just looked at me.

Me: I love you.

I love that man, but the open opportunities need one to grab them with both hands. Missed opportunities hardly come back.

MAVIS

Thobi came with homebased care lady. She looked at Tshidi.

Lady: When was last she had a proper sleep.

Me: She doesn't sleep well. She doesn't eat nor bath.

She looked at Thobi they both nodded.

Thobi: For how long she's been like this?

Me: Three days.

Thobi: Diazepam will do.

She shook her head.

Lady: Midazolam injection will produce her sleepiness and relieve anxiety

Thobi: What are we waiting for?

The lady opened her Sterilized Kits. She filled the needle with medication from a vial.

Thobi looked at Tshidi.

Thobile: Hey sis you need to sleep out your anxiety

Surprisingly Tshidi nodded. The lady gave Thobi the injection.

Thobi: Relax I won't hurt you.

Tshidi got up.

Thobi: Puu!!! I thought you can't move.

Tshidi: What are you going to do with that?

Thobi looked at it and got up too.

Thobile: I'm going to inoculate you with it so that you will get some rest. Come on now let's have a seat.

She sat on the bed without any hesitation. Thobi injected her.

Lady: That was easy mouthpiece.

She nodded and sang "*thula mntanami umama uzobuya ekuseni*" meaning Stop crying baby mom will be back in the morning.

She kept on singing that until Tshidi passed out. What a drama. Thobi was calm about her brother's disappearance.

MARIA

Fezile and I took a taxi to the place where I will be staying and working. The lady who happened to be my boss. She showed me a cottage room.

She gave me the keys.

Lady: This is your room whatever happens in this room will only bother you.

Me: Thank you mam.

She nodded then looked at Fez.

Lady: I'd appreciate it if you refer me as Valencia.

I nodded. Let me leave you too
you can start working on Monday.

I nodded again and thank mam Fez. She left us there. It wasn't a big room but it had everything that I was going to need, I mean the furniture. There I was watching the freedom to accomplish whatever I've wanted to without the fear of my husband.

NOMASONTO

When we got to Tshidi's place. We find Thobi, Mav and the other lady. We exchanged greetings then settled down.

Mav: Can I get you anything to drink?

Vee looked at me waiting for approval , people would think that I am one of those women who control their man.

Me: No thanks.

Thobi: So you want to watch us enjoying our tea?

Victor: Tea will be fine.

Mav: Sonto.

Me: I will have whatever you are having.

Mav: I'm having a wine and unfortunately hubby won't allow that.

Me: Coffee will do.

She walked away from us.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

We waited for the update on how Azola was . I was sitting with her sister in-law on the waiting area.

Mrs M: How well do you know Zola and Thobi?

Me: I don't know much about them.

She nodded.

Her: But they trust you, what is your relationship with them?

I didn't know what I was supposed to say.

Her: I'm sorry, I just feel like you are more than who you think you are to those girls.

I nodded then let out a huge sigh.

Her: Unganginaki, kwesinye isikhathi ngithola imizwa engingayiqondi nam. *(Ignore me, sometimes I get feelings that I don't understand)*

I nodded, she looked at me, before could explain, the doctor walked to us.

Doc: Mrs Mazibuko I have great news for you.

We got up.

Doc: Unksz Mazibuko ubelethe ingane yomfana engumqemane. *(Ms Mazibuko gave birth to a healthy baby boy)*

There are people who get goose bumps, when they get great news. I was one of them, I didn't know Zola very well but I was so happy for her, like I was somehow related to her.

NOMASONTO

A knock came through Mav attend the door she came back with my mother. She smiled as she saw me.

Mom: I was definitely going to drag you here Sonto.

According to her I should visit her everyday. I got up we shared a hug. She tapped Vee on his shoulder.

Ma: Victor how much do you want so that I can see my granddaughter?

Thobi: Your daughter had enough time with her.

Victor: Thanks Thobi.

I shook my head.

Me: Really now?

There I was ignored, like I didn't ask him a question.

We exchanged greetings with her, another knock followed.

Thobi was the one who got it. I received an sms from MamFez.

"Your aunt moved out. Your father just let her go without saying anything"

Me: I would've done the same.

Vee took my phone from me. I just let him be. He gave me my phone.

Me: Did you get what you were looking for?

He nodded, just avoiding my question. Thobi walked in with Tshidi's friends and Siphe. They greeted us than sat down.

Siphe: Where is Tshidi?

Thobi: I Jabbed her.

Siphe: Just to sleep her mind what about tomorrow? And Next or next month?

She can not depend on medication, she need to let go.

Thobi: Brother trust me she needed to rest, 3 days without getting enough sleep is not healthy at all.

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ONLY HOPE LE

NOMASON

[THREE MONTHS LATER]

Vee managed to get us the apartment, it was bit expensive. R9800 per month. It has four bedrooms, kitchen, living room, two bathrooms including one shower. And a swimming pool

Not everyone is academically gifted, I've started with my *SMME* classes three months ago. It was hard especially with the difficult general knowledge assessments. The question that I was struggling with was. "*What are our priorities?*" I paged the learners guide. I was being lazy. Vee walked in. We had our own fight. His parents decided to take my baby to Kwa-nyamazani. He sat next to me then he aggressively closed my learner guide.

Victor: As much as she's your daughter she's my daughter too.

Me: I don't see my baby here.

Victor: I promise she will be back by next Friday.

Me: I just don't understand why would you allow them to take her there, without consulting me.

Victor: Noma denied me to raise my daughter, let's give my parents a fair chance to be in their grandchild's life.

He was so selfish what about my parents?

Me: I'm Nelly's mother I have the right to make decision.

He nodded

Victor: I have the similar danm rights Noma. You had a chance with her nama now it's my time let me be.

That card again, I had my chance wow. It felt like I was been purnished for keeping Nelly from Victor. I got up and took my books. He grabbed my hand.

Victor: Wee Noma ungakulinge uhambe uma ngikhuluma nawe.
(Noma do not walk away when I talk to you)

Me: I want my daughter now. **(Squalled)**

He looked at me straight in the eyes. He was angry the one thing I knew he was not going to hurt me.

Victor: Nelly has the right to know the rest of her family.

Me: I'm her family Vee.

Victor: I mean from the my side.

I hated it everything was about him what about me, what about my family? I looked at his hand on mine. He let go of it. I walked away from him.

MATSHIDI

I looked at the new founded friends, my psychiatrist and Thobile they were sitting on the couch, having their conversation. Whilst I was given puzzles to complete.

Well Thobi came with the kids last evening

since they were in school holidays. I didn't want Samu next to me. My boy seeks mother attention but I was dealing with my own demons that needed my own attention too. Beside my son doesn't like me as he likes his father.

It has been three months since Zweli disappeared, his mother said he will be back when time comes, when was that time coming? She wasn't stressed about her son's disappearance, nor worried. Thobile laughed disturbing me from my thought.

Thobi: Stop it Duma.

They were having fun while throwing popcorn at each other.

Thobi: Stop being childish. ***(Laughing)***

Indeed they were being childish.

Psych: Xolisa Mbezi. *(Apologies Mbezi)*

Mbezi?

Thobi: And there you are referring me as your wife again.

They stopped playing.

Psych: I'm sorry.

Thobi: It's okay don't be let's clean our mess.

He squeezed her cheeks.

Psych: You such a great friend.

They laughed. The plan was for him to help Phawu not to be that close with Thobi...

VICTOR

I walked to our room she was lying on her stomach while browsing the dictionary.

Me: We need to talk.

She kept quiet. My father might not approve my relationship but one thing for sure he loves his only granddaughter. He is a great grandfather and can do anything if I try to take Nelly away from them. Nelly she's a resemblance of my late little sister. Hence why my parents want her to stay with them.

Me: Noma avoiding me won't resolve this issue.

She remained quiet. I took those books and put them on the counter.

Sonto: I'm trying to work here.

Me: And trying here.

She got up and took her bag and books.

Me: Nelly has to know the rest of the family while my father and I we still alive.

Noma: I need a peaceful place.

She walked out.

Me: Noma!!!

MAVIS

I never thought that my relationship with Lele was was going to be great, I was enjoying each and every moment I spent with him. He took me to football field. The was no match that was playing, just the two of us. Most of the time through that date or mountain diving and sky diving or to the park. But today he decided other way round. I was still living with Tshidi since Thobi only come to check on her and the business twice a week. I don't know how she was managing her current job, their community centre since Zola was still on maternity leave plus the Khoza company. It is to much work for one.

Siphe: How about you spend a night with me.

Me: You want Mrs T to kill me?

He chuckled.

Siphe: They went to Kwa-nyamazane.

Me: And that gives you the right to make your parents house a hotel.

Siphe: Is that a yes

I shuffled away from him.

Siphe: What is it babe?

Me: Nothing. (*Stammered*)

He understood that I was not charmed by that we we in a relationship but that didn't give us the rights to disrespect his parents.

Siphe: Let's get going.

I got up and he got up too. Suddenly our conversation brok

We both were holding each other's hands. As a matter of fact , I was just lost in thoughts.

NOMASONTO

I was walking to the library when a car pulled next to me. I stopped walking and looked at it. The tall man walked out of the car.

The was no way I could run he looked at me straight to my eyes. No words was spoken. I let the books fall, I took two steps back. I wanted to run for safety, but my feet would not allow me to do so, he grabbed my hand. He picked me up and forceful put me on that car

He drove with me. To a big beautiful house. My heart was sinking and beating so fast. Fast enough to feel it through my fingers. When we arrived, he led me upstairs to some five girls whom I suspected were also kidnapped. They were badly shacking. I sat on the floor and dig deeper into my thought. I didn't understand what fate had in store for me. I heard a someone calling me. I looked at him. It was one of my clients who later recruited me to work for him. He was a drug lord and and a brothel keeper.

Me: Madla..

Madla: Follow me

I got up

Mandla: Noma I won't keep you here.

I slowly walked to him. And looked at him straight into his eyes.

Me: Why are you doing this?

Mandla: You will get your passport tomorrow morning.

Oh my God have mercy on me and those girls. What came to my mind was to seduce him. I unfastened my shirt.

Me: Let's negotiate business Mandla.

He bit his lower lip.

Mandla: Follow me.

Those girls screamed. He asked his worker to search me.

Girl: She's clean.

Mandla: Destroy her clothes and ring.

My teeth chattered in fear

ANNA THABETHE

Nelly was playing with the other kids, she seemed so happy.

Pastor T: She seems happy.

I nodded

Pastor T: Come on Anna I'm trying.

Me: Ake ngijoyine umalokazana wakini. (*Let me join your sister-in-law*)

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

The first thing he did when we got to his room, he asked me to take a shower. My clothes and ring were destroyed. I had hoped that Vee will notice that I was missing.

After taking a shower I wrapped myself with the towel, I walked to him. He was lying there waiting for Noma to fill his desire.

Me: Don't you want to take this off me?

He got up and stood there.

Me: Are we going to stand here the whole day?

He opened his arms. I went for a hug. I had to be nice so that he doesn't suspect anything. From there onwards I believe that to maintain my consistency I needed some motivation, because it was really hard to change my bad habits, I don't know where did I get the walk away habit each time I and Vee when we had our fight I walk away from him. Sometimes agreeing to be motivated, it was going to prevent me from getting into trouble. Yet I was into my old patterns of bad behavior instead of sticking with the new patterns what I was trying to build.

Me: I'm all you gonna to eat today.

He brushed my back. He then broke the hug then removed the towel.

Madla: Should I?

I answered by shaking my hips. I had to pretend that I was happy with that. He knelt down and started to suck my breasts whilst he drew his fingers into my coochie. If I had another choice I was going to use that. But because I didn't any I had to do that. Debt has the power to take over our entire life from what you buy to where you live. I was born to suffer. My body was created to pay my debit.

MATSHIDISO

I was busy with my boring activities. Psycho Duma, passed me crayons. I steal a glance at him, he was looking at Thobi, he was undressing her with his eyes. Her eyes were glued on her laptop.

Me: Why am I doing this again.

Psycho Duma: It's profoundly that art is part of recovery. Your mind needs to create a colourful picture.

His eyes were still focused on Thobi. She looked at him and winked at him. What did I do? I'm the one who asked for help from him regarding Phawu. Yet he was flirting with my sister in law. Maybe I was reading too much on them, Thobi she was not into dating game she loved her job than being in love. On the other side psych Nyathi he's married and loves his family. I decided to focus on my colouring book. It can feel like my life was on hold. My dreams of getting married, to Zwe seem impossible to pursue with my loneliness life disorder.

NOMASONTO

He kissed my breasts. I couldn't wait for the nightmare to be over, I prayed that Vee notice that I was missing and try to trace my phone or something. He inserted his thing. He began to pump up and down, not too hard, in a controlled efficient rhythm. His face softened his eyes. Have you ever been encounter and felt like it's nothing but a waist of time? that was me. Gradually, almost experimentally, he increased the speed of his hand, the rhythm became less smooth. He crouched over, his smile opened out and drew the lips back from his teeth. His breathing became loud and shaky, he worked furiously with his hand.

Madla: Let's remove the condom.

The was no way I was going to allow that to happen. I faked to moan.

Me: We can't do that.

He was heavy on-top of me. His face thrust out at me, from his crouch, was blind and wobbling like a mask on a stick, and those sounds coming out of his mouth, involuntarily, last ditch human noises, were at the same time theatrical, unlikely.

Madla: Come on baby, let's do this.

He moved in circle movement

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I followed his pace. In fact the whole performance, was dead, cold, no emotions from my side ad and no pleasure to just faking everything. I never been in that kind of the nightmare.

My body was supposed to be pleased by him, but there, my expressions did not seem equal with him. The terrible benighted effort, deliberate frenzy, of "*what is happening here?*"

He let out a new kind of moan, the most desperate and the loudest yet it was quavered as if somebody was hitting him on the voice box. As soon as he was satisfied he straightened up, shaky, out of breath, he rolled the condom with the tissue and tucked himself quickly back into his trousers. I felt like crying, I clenched my teeth. I didn't know what to do, I didn't want to burst into tears, my only goal was to get his phone and call for help.

Madla: I have the business to take care of, for now feel at home, we will proceed with this later.

I was hurt, It felt like I stood outside of life, held back but no one was holding me. I prayed that Vee forgives me. It's my irresponsibility. And It's unforgivable Vee won't forgive me for sleeping with another man.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

The plan was to be a close friend with Thobi, yet I was falling deeply in love with her and she wasn't making it easy for me she was confusing my feelings, with the rush of electricity with falling in love. Each time our eyes met she would wink at me then smiled. Phawu walked to me. I never told her about how I feel about her. Because I didn't want ruin our friendship, right now I was her close friend, since her aunt was away.

Me: Champ what is it.

Phawu: You promised me something.

Me: What did I promise you champ?

Phawu: You promised to take me and Samu to the soccer match.

Oh yes I promised them that.

Me: Tshidi we will continue with this tomorrow.

She just looked at me.

Me: I'm sorry.

Tshidi: If we started with this ages ago you were not going to feel bad about it.

Phawu: Aunt please.

Tshidi: It's okay.

I got up and walked to Thobi she looked at me.

Thobi: You can go with them, I won't be able to join you, I have a lot of work to do, the fact that Zweli and Azola are not here is taking much of my time.

Fair enough.

Me: What should we get you then.

She looked at me

Thobi: Just make sure that my son and nephew are safe.

Me: Later on I will take them to Nyembezi.

I accepted her to be jelouse or something.

Thobi: So long they are safe.

VICTOR

It was getting late, there was no sign of Noma. I tried to call her. She left her phone. I called her mother she answered.

Mrs Radebe: Son talk to me.

Me: Mamazala ukhona uSonto? (*Mother-in-law is Sonto there*)

Mr Radebe: Che she's not here. (*No*)

I hung up and called MamFez. She promised to go check her. Five minutes later she got back to me with the same message as Mrs Radebe.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

ZWELAKHE

We were woken up earlier in the morning, we were given different tasks, my task was to dig herbs. It was 3 am, I stared

down, at the hole that I dug, I saw blood. I became aware of my body, thoughts, emotions and momentary autonomy. Pangs of hunger from fasting over the last few days, feeling cold, as well as mounting insecurities about how I had '*performed*' floated around my fuzzy being. Don't get me wrong, I even began to think about going home where I will find peace.

Seeing blood was a sign for me to keep on digging deeper. I dug deeper and deeper, until I got osteology. One strange thing about ukuthwasa, (*training to be a traditional healer*) is that fear must not be part of you. And we are led by the holy spirit and the ancestors.

NOMASONTO

Life was meant to be lived freely not with full of unrealistic expectations. If you desire/expect something, make sure that you work hard enough to turn that into a reality sooner or later all by yourself. Never expect anything anything from anyone. I was told that I will be shipped to another country.

The following morning. There I was praying begging the man above everything to save me. The world can often seem like a dangerous place, and we often want to lift up a prayer of protection to the Lord.

I needed his protection under the shadow of his wings. However, I didn't know where to start asking for safety and protection from the Lord. Although the Holy Spirit intercedes for us in terms of prayers, yet I needed Lord's protection.

Me: Father I know that I hardly pray. But I need you to perform your miracles.

Seriously I didn't know what to say or even where to begin and proceed, the heavy storm was upon me.

Me: Please forgive me for failing to do your will and for violating your command to honor my body just like your temple and to keep it holy. Please quicken my heart to believe in you every way and every day. I promise I will praise you and glorify you. Lift me up and protect me. Give me the strength. Let me know your love and peace, please protect me.

Voice: Amen.

I said my Amen and looked at him.

Me: Mandla you can't do this to me.

Mandla: Noma this is business.

He gave me the fake passport and those girl's passport.

Mandla: I'm giving you two days to get to know those five girls whom you will be going with.

I just looked at him.

Mandla: As soon as you cross Vioolsdrift border you will be freed from the container.

Me: Where is Vioolsdrift border?

Mandla: It's between South Africa and Namibia.

I shook my head.

Me: No! You can't do that. ***(Squalled)***

He giggled in aggressively way.

Mandla: I have all the powers. To force you, you should be thankful that you will be in charge.

In charge my foot. I walked to him. I ran his hand to my naked body.

Me: Would you like to share this with another man not any man unknown man.

He looked at me.

Mandla: You mean that, baby?

I nodded repeatedly, I was doing everything to win and be freed from that man. In order to win the battle, I had to utilize strategy, tactics, and propaganda. I had to be prepared for what my fate has in store for me. I had to win that man's heart. Energy and enthusiasm high was the only thing I had.

MaNkosi once said. *"Do not be discouraged by the momentary discomforts of difficulties or fold your arms and do not let life's*

obstacles seem insurmountable to you, just take full responsibility of your life"

He unzipped his pants. I shuffle my eyes from him. I felt my bowels loosen as my bladder reacted freely to the all engulfing fear, he kissed me. How long was I going to pretend with that nightmare.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

Feelings are based on physiological changes we detect when close to someone you feel attracted to. I walked to Nyembezi she was setting the table. I wrapped my arms around her waist then kissed her neck.

Me: Someone left me alone in a cold blanket.

She turned and looked at me, we shared a kiss. I didn't understand my feelings at all, I loved her yet I was falling in with another person. Love, on the other hand, involves much of the logical part of the brain. However the distinction between feelings and love is that feelings just continue to be feelings that may be relied upon, but wholly for the sensations of each other's body.

Mbezi: The last time I checked you are going to work.

I don't remember working on Saturday, but since I promised Tshidi that we will continue with the session. It was wrong and it didn't help me to cut our session. That was unprofessionalism, personal matters should be personal matters, work should be work.

Mbezi: Nyathi let go of me, you will be late.

Me: I'm sorry mama.

I let go of her.

Mbezi: When will you go check on your brother?

Me: I'm not going to do that.

Mbezi: We are only his family, we should make time for him, as you do for his son. It is important reminder him that he is more than a prisoner. Him receiving visits from you will be massively important for Dumisani.

Me: And he's the remainder of what he did to my daughter.

(Rumbled)

I realized that I raised my voice at her. He's my twin brother yes but it doesn't fix the damage he has cost me. I know that I always tell people to let go. How do I let it go whilst I know that he took my princess's innocence, how do I forgive the man that cost my first born child's life?

Mbezi: I'm sorry Nyathi, I was just saying.

I nodded

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that was wrong of me. Something apologizing is not an admission of guilt, it's an admission of responsibility.

Me: You didn't do anything wrong baby I'm sorry.

She nodded then continued with setting the table.

Me: Let me help you.

When I'm available we do things together.

Mbezi: You will be late.

It's no fun to apologize when you done nothing wrong.
Responding to the language of words often increases our sense of hearing and makes it less likely to relate to the situation. She valued our relationship more than righteousness, means that she's willing to lose a small battle to win a big battle, or need to take one of a team. I have that side which I love about my wife.

MATSHIDISO

I looked at our pictures on his phone.

Me: Rre what went wrong, where the hell are you, you promised to be on my side.

I wished he could respond me.

Me: I miss you, Samu needs you.

I went to his videos, that. Busted captured a video of me, making pancakes. He labeled that video *as go getter*.

Me: I will do whatever it takes to get you back. Remember I'm your goal getter.

VICTOR

The first thing I did when I woke up, was to brush my tooth, then headed to the Mabuza's. I didn't find her there. I went to the Radebe's she wasn't there either. I shouldn't have said what I said to her, she kept our child for reason. But me being selfish I kept on telling her that she had a chance with Nelly now it was my turn. Mr Radebe called my name I don't know how many times.

Mr Radebe: Victor Thabethe!

That's when I responded.

Mr Radebe: Have you fought?

I nodded. And tell them what happened. He looked at his wife.

Mr Radebe: Rato this is your fault, you need to sit down and talk to those two girls. Especially Sonto.

Why do we always blame women for children's behaviour?

Lerato: My fault, I can't believe this, especially Sonto? Wow Rre, my daughter is missing and you are telling me diya lebadimo, Sonto is more productive as a daughter, mother and sister than Tshidi. *(Nonsense)*

She's kind like Noma but she stands no nonsense.

Mr Radebe: Rato what I'm trying to say is that, as a mothers you need to be a teacher to our daughters, especially Noma she needs to be taught about relationships, problem resolution, and how to behave.

She got up and took the car keys.

Mr Radebe: U ea kae? *(Where are you going)*

Lerato: To search for my daughter, and you, Victor make sure that Nelly is here by tomorrow morning.

Me: But...

She cut me.

Lerato: She's not a Thabethe yet in that case, you will do me a huge favour go get my grandchild, your parents have to communicate with us regarding our grandchild.

I missed something, there was only one place I didn't go to, that was the boutique store.

MATSHIDISO

I put his phone in the phone ring holder to capture a video of myself doing pancakes. Thobi and Mav made their way as I was busy.

Thobi: Makoti does just that every morning.

I laughed.

Thobi: And she's taking a video with my brother's phone.

Me: My fiance's phone.

We laughed.

Me: I miss those days where we used to hang out together.

Thobi: Yeah those days.

Mav: With two bullies.

We laughed.

Thobi: We can hang out before I leave.

Mav: And the kids?

Thobi: I can take them to the Radebe's or to my uncle.

I thought she was going to suggest my psychiatrist, I was going to tell her not with my child.

Twenty minutes later, we had our breakfast. We were having those salt pancakes, they were not bad is just that I applied too much salt.

Thobi: I'm impressed Tshidi, now I agree that my uncles should unlock my father's kraal to get our Makoti.

Mav: Does your father even have that kraal?

We laughed, she gulped her orange juice.

Thobi: Let me tell you something, with my father expect the unexpected. He might have a kraal of goat and horse, somewhere in Pride Kingdom.

We laughed.

NOMASONTO

Happiness and anger are temporary. Suffering from sadness, can mistakenly make us think that emotions are permanent. To think the big, dark cloud over our heads will never leave, but that's not true. It felt like the world was flat. I felt like I was standing still, even though I was spinning lightning fast into space. I experienced traumatic desire I never thought that could happen to me.

Mandla: I will make you feel good. When we get married then. We will start our lives elsewhere.

In my head I was like "*in your dreams*" He kissed me briefly on my lips then went down, kissing every part of my body. He got to my thighs, kissed and bit them a little. I laid there with the hope that the nightmare should end. My body was supposed to be the temple. Yet it was paying for my debts that I don't know of. If I knew where to go and perform cleansing I would go there.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

ZWELAKHE

After the indicate of osteology cops were informed. Probably they were bodies that were buried there long time ago.

I knelt down before the Gobela

Her: You did good Mqobi.

Honestly I was scared, I thought I was going to be punished since I didn't complete my task.

Me: Thokoza, Baba.

We refer her as baba since she's our trainer we keep the strict norms a thwasa communicates with our trainer.

Baba: Now it's time to let your family know where you are.

Me: Thokoza Baba.

My eyes were respectfully averted.

Baba: Woza, my child. *(Come)*

She looked the majestic in her ancestral robes. I got up and followed her. As we made our way to the front of the house, we rustled in our heavily-beaded skirts and skin-tight ankle rattles, Baba's made of pop can tops and mine of seedpods. We crossed through the small gate to the front yard where a crowd had gathered. Particles of dust and coal danced.

Baba: Wanna join the them?

I nodded.

Baba: Promise me that you will stay away from Nomadlozi.

I looked at Nomadlozi then smiled a little. Nomadlozi she's my friend her family is failing to pay for her inauguration.

Me: I promise baba.

She laughed then turned.

Baba: I'm watching you.

She walked away with her hands cupped on her back.

NOMASONTO

Life is so unfair. Suffering was created for me. If I knew the person cursed me I was going to go straight to that person and humble myself. If I knew who did I murder I'd go to that person's family and ask for forgiveness. When things are going smoothly, everything seems fair. I never ride a high on the clouds, soaking in all the wonderful things life has nothing to offer for me. I always hitted turbulence and rough storms, it felt like everything was against me. It all just felt very unfair for me.

I was lying on that man's chest. If that house was not secured, I was going to strangled him to dead.

Mandla: I can't believe that you are mine. You are every man's dream.

Me: You better believe it.

I had mixed emotions, shock, numbness, anxiety, guilt, anger, and a sense of helplessness.

VICTOR

The honest truth is that life operates on its own terms, not ours. And while we might not like those terms, that's the way things are. Rather than refusing to accept our existence, it's better to acknowledge them and keep moving on. Her colleague looked me. I told her about Noma gone missing.

Disebo: Mr Thabethe we can not work like this.

Me: I'm sorry, I promise she will be back soon.

Disebo: She's not suitable to be a business owner. She's unrealable. I'm starting to believe my husband, Sonto will make my business vanish.

Me: You talk like you never faced problems before or you will never come across problems in your life. Come on women, we all human we need each other. Noma owe 40% of this store, I owe five percent which gives me the rights to have a say in this store. With my small shares.

She nodded. I had my own reason to keep the that five percent with me.

Disebo: I'm sorry.

Me: It's okay

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if it happen she come here please ask her to call me.

She nodded.

ANNA THABETHE

Nelly ran to me.

Me: Baby what is it?

Nelly: A stranger called me.

We all looked at her. She was badly shaking.

Me: It's okay baby he won't get you.

Someone knocked on the door.

Aunt: Come in.

My brother in law walked in, he looked at Nelly then laughed.

Me: Sawubona nawe Frank. (**Greetings**)

He took a seat.

Frank: This girl.

He laughed again. He left us without no choice we joined him.

Pastor T: Don't do that to my grandchild.

Frank: Who's child is this?

I looked at the man of the house.

Pastor T: She's Victor's first born.

He looked at him then me.

Frank: Brother sis Anna, I was never told about this.

Pastor T: Victor cheated on Mavis with Nelly's mother.

Frank: I knew this was going to happen. Uphi yena uVictor nomkakhe? (*Where is Victor and his wife*)

Pastor T: He's divorced.

He whistled. We explained to him.

Frank: So we need to pay the damage to Nelly's mother's family?

We nodded.

Frank: Nelly come, I'm your father's uncle.

She looked at me I gave her the go ahead. She walked to him

Frank: You are afraid of people?

Me: She's not. She was told she should never trust a stranger.

He nodded. I explained why she ran away from him. She was told to never talk to stranger

MATSHIDISO

I looked at the wall to get a clear understanding of where the paint and brushes were next to me, My psychiatrist asked if I

was ready I nodded, he then put on the blindfold and begin, to paint.

Psych: I'm giving you thirty minutes to complete the activity.

Me: I hope I won't be charged for Saturday.

Psych: Relax.

Allow the brush to move. He was all moody.

Psych: Paint on that surface allow your imagination to lead you. Forget about everything create your own art.

In thirty minutes I was done. I discovered something so interesting, that challenged me to look at the world on creating artwork without vision.

Psych: Ok Ms Radebe, let's have a seat.

We sat.

Psych: How do you about your work?

I smiled. I looked at the picture again, it wasn't perfect, I painted a circle.

Me: It's not perfect.

Psych: Is life perfect?

Me: Life isn't perfect nor fair. It was created to be livid with passion.

He smiled

Psych: Tsidi life is perfect. You just can't see it because you are seeing life from the filter of your thoughts, judgments,

prejudices and beliefs. That is why you think everything is against you. Life is not as you were told as little and when you were growing up. Because life isn't according to your beliefs you just don't understand it and think it isn't perfect.

Me: You say my art is perfect?

He nodded.

Psych: It's perfect, it has the bright colours and bit dark colours which shows the both sides of life, because it shows you your ignorance and incapacity to love. What is your ignorance, your ignorance is your ego Ms Radebe. But you are not your ego because you didn't come to the world with an ego. Remember when you were a child, you were in a state of innocence, and accepted the world as it was but that innocence got contaminated with what adults told and taught your life is. This is very important because we are not seeing the world, the universe and things how they really are. We are seeing it as we were told it is and you are feeling according to what you were told you must feel. Now to see life as it is you must get cleaned all of what you have learned, because your ego. Get rid of it, so that you can see again with the eyes of the child. Everything in

life is designed so that you can look inside yourself, remove your ego and learn to love. Everytime you feel suffering inside, everytime something confronts you is the moment to start to work with yourself. We can't change the world. Trying to change the world and people will only get us negative results, both inside and outside of us. It will make us suffer because the world is not what we think it must be. Getting rid of the world is not perfect. That it must stop so that you can be at peace. Change yourself so that you can see again perfection as you were when you were a child.

He got up.

Psych: I will see you in two days time.

I nodded.

Me: You are going without telling Thobi.

He frowned.

Psych: I will see her tomorrow before she leaves.

I looked at my artwork again. He took few steps then came
come back to me.

Psych: I think I should tell her about Phawu's identity.

Me: It's for the best.

Psych: My fear is that she will relapse.

Me: You care about her?

He nodded.

Psych: And I'm afraid that the truth will ruin our friendship.

Voice: Between you and I truth doesn't ruin Duma it builds.

We looked at her. I think my sister in law choose the wrong career.

Thobile: True friends won't hide the truth. They won't lie to you just to make you feel better. They will tell you the harsh reality of any situation you find yourself in. Because they know you better than you know yourself.

He looked at me.

Psych: Hey Mouthpiece.

Thobile: Hi Therapist.

He frowned.

Psych: Ouch.

Thobile: You labled me first.

Psych: My apologies mommy.

She nodded then sat on the chair. Surprisingly he did the same. They looked at each other. Oh my goodness they nearly kissed each other but Thobi shuffled her face.

Thobi: I'm sorry Duma.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

[LATER ON]

We had our hang out. As Thobi promised. We went to the club we used to hang on when we were in high school.

They were having alcohol and I was having a juice. I used to drink alcohol but after getting married, I had to follow church protocols. I became a church girl. Thobile was already drunk, she started drinking before everyone.

Thobi: It looks so different.

Tshidi: Yeah but with the boring teast.

We laughed.

Thobi: I missed this guys.

Banele: We missed you too.

She nodded. Silent fall upon our table. This two needs to sort out their issues.

Tshidi: Thobi call him.

She looked at her.

Thobi: Call who Tshidi?

Tshidi: Psych Nyathi.

Thobi: Why should I call him?

Tshidi: About what happened earlier.

She looked around.

Thobi: We both adults, Tshidi we know what we are doing.

Tshidi: You are about to be involve with a man who is married, you are about to poke the hornet's nest. Thobile sighn out immediately.

That's our old Tshidi, she was our voice.

Thobi: I'm not sure what you are talking about, and beside me and dating don't get along.

Me: What happened to princess Khoza.

She gulped her wine.

Thobile: That one, died the evening she was shown the door by her mother.

She was bit drunk.

Thobile: My mother died, Tshidi she died before she died.

Nobody knows what happened to her mother. She doesn't want to talk about her. Romours says she was arrested for murderer, which is unlike MaKhoza.

Me: Okay you had enough for the day Thobi.

Tshidi: She's in jail remember, we can visit her?

Thobi laughed then drank her wine.

Thobile: Jail? To me she's dead my friend, she's the cause of my pain, she killed me inside and out. Now my son wants to know his father, where will I find his father?

Tshidi: When was the last time you went to your daughter's grave?

She smiled.

Thobi: Nosiphawu is the answer. She's my ancestor right?

Tshidi nodded.

Me: Guys what is going on here?

Tshidi: Phawu had a twin.

Me: Sorry princess.

She got up and went to the bathroom.

Me: She had enough for the day, we need to go we don't want her father and brother to blame us.

Banele: She's different from our Thobi.

Tshidi: Psych Nyathi must stay away from her, she doesn't need all the stress. **(Snapped)**

Thobi walked to back to us. She sat on the chair.

Thobi: Let's have fun skeem, it's funny because my sister she's there mothering my best friends child. **(Friends)**

Thobile's grandmother joined us she looked at her grandchild.

Grandma: Thobile are you sleeping around?

She didn't even say a simple hello.

Thobi: Hello to you too Grace.

Me: Respect Thobi.

Thobi: Respect is earned.

Grandma: You protect people to get away with Rape, murder, Robbery, why can't you help my daughter?

She looked at her then looked at her phone.

Grandma: You need to protect her reputation because her name is all she has to be identified.

She didn't even care about her grandma.

Thobi: I'm not going to do that Grace, your daughter belongs there, I'm glad that I was blessed with a mother who loved me unconditionally, daddy failed to choose, Mrs Mazibuko she's everything a man needs, everything the world needs, she's her own person.

Grandma: You also need to stay away from boys.

Thobile giggled, more like she wanted nothing to do with her mother and grandmother.

Thobi: I'm grown woman because I'm matured due to my life experiences and the picture of myself. I know what is wrong and what is right.

Her grandmother cried. Thobi smiled.

Grandma: Uyangilimaza ngane yaka Khethokuhle. (*You are hurting me Khethokuhle's child*)

She let out a horrified shriek as if Thobi was choking her, she followed by a cascade of words for which no one understood, it needed a translator.

Thobi burst into tears, and just cried. She had an uncontrollable, sneezing, trembling lip and cried as she shook her head.

Thobi: My brother was right about you, wena mthakathi. (*You witch*)

She cried.

Grandma: I'm coming for you. No man will ever love you

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you belong to that broken bottle.

Oh my goodness, Thobi was not accusing her.

Thobi: I'm delivered, you and your satanic demons cannot touch me. I'm your granddaughter for heaven's sake all you have to do is to love me.

The old woman shook her head, and looked around like a crazy woman.

Thobi: Cheers.

She got up and looked at Thobi.

Grandma: What did you do to me?

She ran like she was being chased by someone. Thobi gulped the small amount of wine that was left on the glass.

Tshidi: What was that?

Thobi: Don't worry, she will only hurt the flesh not my soul. I followed all the orders that I was given by my brother and my step mother.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

I couldn't get it together, everything was running out of control, I was deeply falling in love with Phawu's mother. That wasn't my plan. Despite my feelings for her. I had to be there for my family. I had to remind myself that I'm a father and a husband. Sometimes I have to practice what I always tell people.

Mbezi: Durban will do Nyathi.

I was giving her a foot massage to make it up to her.

Me: What about we visit the place we never went to like Nahoon beach?

Mbezi: As in East London?

I nodded. Cheating can be physical or emotional, in my opinion. As a psychologist I always tell my clients that If their feelings for their partner are fading, or they're developing feelings for someone else, I tell them to do activities with their partner. If

things have changed so much for them, there's a chance that their partner has already sensed it, or is experiencing something similar.

When life gets busy due to pressures from work, children, and other activities, time for fun activities as a couple can be taken away. Nyembezi and I, we like to participate in fun activities together with our kids. So since I've been distance, I suggested traveling somewhere we like or have always dreamed of visiting, will help us to regain the missing puzzle.

Mbezi: Let's visit Miranda's place.

Me: And the twins?

Mbezi: Their nanny won't mind to look after them for few hours.

Our twins are only three years old.

NOMASONTO

Troubles suffocates me. Worry entangles me. It hard, I couldn't take it anymore, I couldn't rest, my body couldn't take it anymore. The burden of suffering was intolerable. Where I got myself questioning whether God sees me? Does He know, or are my prayers heard only by the wall? Is He near, or somewhere distant, only watching me suffer? I had nothing to offer life, I was empty, alone, betrayed, no happiness whatsoever.

Mandla: I wish I could see through your eyes and see what you are thinking about.

If he knew that I was thinking of escaping the hell.

Me: I'm thinking about us.

Mandla: Future together or hell together?

If he knew that there was no future between us.

Me: Uhm... Future my love.

My love my foot.

MATSHIDISO

I don't know what did Thobi do for her grandmother to confess.

Thobi: Guys let's enjoy ourselves drinks on me.

We looked at each other.

Thobi: The reason why I hate this City is because it has lots of pretenders.

Thobi's phone rang. She looked at it.

Thobi: Umama ufuna abazukulu bakhe Tshidi. (*Mom wants her grandchildren*)

She laughed then got up and went to answer her phone.

Mav: How did she do that?

I shrugged my shoulders. She made her way to us again.

VICTOR

A person can't simply vanish in to thin air. I normally come across News of, people going missing all of the time.

People vanish from cruise ships, seemingly without a trace. I never thought it would happen to someone I love. When someone in your clouser disappears, it doesn't feel real. All I

was thinking was get a call from her, or walk through the door, to meet her eyes. It felt like I had unresolved issues. My brother gave me a cup of coffee.

Me: Thanks Siphe.

He sat on the chair.

Siphe: You need report a missing person.

I nodded.

Me: What if she's dead as we speak, what will I tell Nelly?

Siphe: Let's not go there.

I didn't know what to think anymore.

Me: Brother people get murdered each and every second.

Siphe: Let's not jump concussion

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

[WEEK LATER]

It was Sunday, I suddenly fell sick. I wasn't allowed to get out of that house. That place was hell itself. My life flashed before my eyes. My teeth chattered in frustration, as he walked to me. I brought my knees up to my chest, trying to get myself together. The burden that I was carrying they were heavy for one person.

But what did I accept I was born alone I had to carry that burden all by myself. All I was getting in that house was a horrible sex three to four times a day. Even though I had flu.

He was looking forward to make me his wedded wife. Those girls I got there they were already taken to another country.

Mandla: Siponono you look weaker than yesterday.

As he sat next to me.

Me: I'm fine it's just headache.

Lies, some of my senses were leaving me, my sense of smell was gone, followed by my taste. I had no idea what was going on with me.

Mandla: I will call my doctor.

I was ready to give up and I was ready to die. That was not life. Imagine being accompanied to the bathroom, being watched, not being allowed to get out. What kind of life was that? I think I was approaching the end of my journey and no body was going to rescue me.

Night after night, I was awakened by the deep hurt and pain in my heart, tears after tears. I prayed, I cried, I longed just to sleep again. But often, the only thing I found that could bring peace and comfort to my spirit was God's Word.

I tried to escape but I got caught and he told me that in his heart "There is only one door to enter, no way to exit" There was no way I could leave him. From that, I was leaving with a guilty conscience if I didn't try to seduce him maybe I was going to be freed from him and all the abuse. Sometimes I miss Vee and his insecurities.

MAVIS

Thobi left after our hangout. She said that she will come check on us when she gets time. Tshidi was dragging her feet, she seems like she wasn't ready to go to church, like I was.

I wasn't ready at all. Not after I almost killed someone, I was scared they won't look at me like they used to, for someone who had been leading the youth.

Me: Are you coming with me or what?

Tshidi: I can't believe that I'm going to church again without Zweli.

Me: God will show him the way.

She nodded, lately people varnish, it was brother Zweli then Sonto who will be next?

Tshidi: Thank you for being a supportive friend.

Me: That's what friends do.

Yet among my friends they know what friendship means only when they need something? Only Thobi and her aunt they always checked on me when I was going through hardships of life. They still do.

Tshidi: Let's get going.

Me: Do you think they will look at me like they used to?

Tshidi: Church is where we shouldn't be judged.

Me: You seem to forget that we have church members who think they are perfect than everyone.

She chuckled.

Tshidi: I know I'm the last person who has to say this, but no one is perfect. Everyone makes mistakes Yes, you made a

mistake Sonto forgave you and you are waiting for your sentence to pay what you did to her. People need to remember that you were dealing with your broken marriage. We are different and we handle our pain differently.

She was starting to say things that build, and I think brother Zweli's disappearance was the eye opener. That she needed to grow. She was starting to be a woman not a little girl. She even volunteered to work at his company and she was doing online kitchen tutorial. She said she doing that for brother Zweli infact she can do anything to be with him.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

Is there life without challenge, is there life without hardship, or life without purpose? If yes that seems pale and pointless. Why do we say it takes two to make a child? It's same as life it has a friend called hardships.

My wife handed me the small bag. I was taking a trip to Pride Kingdom, since Thobi was avoiding me for some reasons. I must say I was still communicating with my nephew. I was just praying that she doesn't stop me from keeping in contact with him.

Nymbezi: So you will tell her about Phawu's father?

I nodded, honestly I wasn't going to do that yet my plan was to found out why is she avoiding me. And what have I done to her.

Me: That's the plan.

She nodded.

Mbezi: Good luck.

I leaned over for a kiss we shared a kiss.

NOMASONTO

[LATER ON]

The doctor did showed up. She ran some tests, whilst Mandla was sitting next to me questioning the doctor.

Doctor: You are saying that you can't smell and taste?

I nodded.

Mandla: What makes her unable to smell or taste?

Doctor: When our sense of smell goes south, taste usually follows. That's because the olfactory area in our nose controls both. When we chew food, odor molecules enter the back of our noses. Her taste buds tells her if the food is sweet, sour, bitter, or salty. Our nose figures out the specifics, like if that sweet taste is a grape or an apple. Because she plugs up her nose, food doesn't taste the same because she can't smell those food. It might be flu runny nose, itchy, or drippy. That can affect both her senses of smell and taste. This might also include the common cold, sinus infections, allergies, sneezing,

congestion. In most cases, her senses will return to normal when she gets better.

She was disturbed by Mandla's phone, he excuse himself to answer his phone, she looked at him until he disappeared.

Doctor: How often do you get out of this house?

I shrugged.

Doctor: If you don't talk to me I can't help you.

Me: Help me as a doctor or...

Doctor: If you can't get enough air through your nose, your sense of smell suffers. And smell affects taste. Blockages happen if you have nasal polyps. These are noncancerous tumors that grow in the lining of your nose and sinuses. Or you could have a deviated septum that makes one of your nasal passages smaller than the other.

Me: Please borrow me your phone.

She looked around. I was just trying my lucky.

Doctor: The didn't allow it in. But I have a plan.

I looked at her. She came closer to me.

Doctor: What will I get if I help you?

If I was a millionaire I was going to say name the price. But because I was just Nomasonto I had nothing to offer to bail me out.

Doctor: Here is what is going to happen, I will give you the medication that will make you sleep and Beta blockers which will slow your heart rate he will assume that you are dead. If you win I want one million.

Mandla walked in. She pretended like she was checking me. One million where the hell I was going to get that kind of money?

AZOLA

I placed the baby on bed. He looked so cute on his sleep, each time I looked at him, my heart leaps for joy, and I wish Ndu was alive. To see his child. I named my child Siphosethu Sikhakhane,

he is using his father's surname. His grandfather promised to come.

"Thank you"

I jumped from the bed and looked at where the voice was coming from mind you it was from the mirror. It was Ndu.

Me: Baby is that you?

He smiled.

Ndu: It's now time to accept that I'm gone, Sethu need a strong mother.

Me: Why did you leave me?

Ndu: It was my time.

I walked closer to the mirror.

Ndu: Get rid off my belongings mama, I can't rest while you keeping me as if I'm there.

I shook my head.

Ndu: I'm sorry that I didn't get a chance to say goodbye, because I wasn't ready to say goodbye to you my love. But I'm at peace now.

I placed my hand on the mirror, he did the same.

Ndu: Let me rest. Live your life my love I'm giving you all my blessings to move on.

Sethu cried. I turned and looked at him.

Me: Mommy will be with you now.

I looked at the mirror again, Ndu was gone, without saying his goodbye again. The baby kept on crying.

Brother: Azola umntwana uyalila. (*The baby is crying*)

ONLY HOPE LEFT

ZWELAKHE (MQOBI)

During my training I was taught how to communicate with my ancestors. I was also taught about feeling of difficulties and

wellness. I had the unsettled feeling and I was hearing a baby's cry. I knelt down on floor, kissed it, and humbly prayed

Me: Thokozani Zitunywa Zam, niyabonga. (Thank you my ancestors)

That baby cry was torturing me. I begged my ancestors to talk to me and guide me.

Me: Please have mercy on me. I'm so grateful for how you have blessed me. Thank you for trusting me. I'm greatfull. I put my trust, faith and control in your hands. You are the great guiders. You know all that has come before and what tomorrow holds. Please reveal the crying baby so that I can help.

I saw myself in a dark room full of serrows and pain. The a lady was sitting on the chair. Her hands were tied up on that chair, her face was buried down she was crying like a baby.

Lady: Help, please help.

I crewel to her.

Me: Who are you?

She looked me.

Me: Mama Nelly?

Her lips were trembling. I called upon my ancestors and hers to show me the way.

NOMASONTO

He walked out to get me a glass of water. She looked at me.
The world is turning away from me

Me: I'm in.

She smiled. I wanted to be out of that horrible place. Putting my life at risk has been always part of me. I needed help. The question was will my parents be able to pay that kind of money? I've betrayed Vee he was the last person who would bail me out.

Doc: We have no time, the sooner we delay the more he will get you another doctor. And hold you against your will.

She asked me to write someone's contact details. Which I did. The only contact I knew was Vee's contact. I was just hoping that he help me.

Mistakes has the tendency to stay with us in some way and unless we address them and forgive ourselves for them they can sabotage our future progress. So many of us go through life without realizing that we are making the same mistakes repeatedly.

Mandla walked in with a glass of water.

Doc: You have to get better I want see you walking down the aisle.

Oh my world, that women knew how to play her game.

Mandla: Who said you are invited?

They laughed.

Doc: Oh I'm not invited.

Mandla: We won't invite people, we will go sign our marriage Home affairs.

Doc: I'm sure they will need a witness.

He nodded.

Doc: Okay my job is done for today, Sonto you need to rest.

Mandla: Please come with the medication tomorrow.

She nodded.

MATSHIDISO

Pastor T's sermon was getting to me. He looked at Nelly he asked her to read the Bible chapter. He said he's training her because she's the one who will be our next Pastor.

Nelly: Acts 3:19 Times of refreshing shall come from the Lord.

Pastor T: God brings progress, initiating refreshing times. Advancement comes by sudden leaps, not at walking pace. The first major step forward came through Moses, years before Christ, the world received

the knowledge of the living God, a divine self-revelation of primary importance. Kwakungekhona nje

imininingwane, kepha igcina ulwazi. The next notable advance did not come for another years, the upsurge in thought among the Greeks. (It just wasn't details, but retains information)

The choir sang umoya wam uyavuma. (my soul agrees) they asked Mav to do the announcement. I began to believe that people disappear or vanish. I held on my mother In-laws words that his son will be in touch with us when time goes. That women trusted her son, and she would do anything to protect him.

The more I was doing things that he used to do it was the more I was feeling like I was closer to him. Zweli never missed a church service. Hope was the one that was keeping me stronger.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

After a long trip I was tired. I thought about booking a B&B I remembered the last time I went there I paid the B&B for five days I only spent a night. Because, Thobi and her aunt didn't allow me to sleep at a B&B.

Upon my arrival Thobi wasn't at her house. I ended up going to Mother to all center. When I got there the receptionist asked me to wait for her. I sat on the chair and wait for her. I kinda took a quick nap.

I was woken up with a slap, not a hard a though. I opened my eyes and looked at her.

Thobi: This is not a hotel.

Me: Uhm...

She stood there, no smile no nothing.

Me: Ngikhathele. (I'm tired)

Thobi: Okay Mr Nyathi how can I help you?

That was cold.

Me: Why do I feel like I'm not welcome here?

She looked at the receptionist.

Thobi: Dear any massage for me, beside this gentleman?

She nodded.

Me: Massages on Sunday?

Thobile: This is a organization, runs 24/7 Duma.

I nodded

Thobi: You haven't answered my question.

Me: If you were not avoiding my calls, you should've known that I'm coming.

Receptionist: Sis I have your delivery.

She handed her flowers.

Thobi: Daisy flowers, thanks.

Those flowers replacement innocence

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purity, and happiness.

Thobi: I will see you tomorrow, if you need me you know where to find me.

She nodded.

Thobile: Goodbye.

She looked at me.

Thobi: Asambe. (Let's go)

VICTOR

It was clear that Noma was kidnapped, even though I didn't want to believe that, I ended up believing that she was kidnapped. She would never leave the kids. My mother she's too judgemental but on that case, she believed that Noma was kidnapped. Mrs Radebe walked to me she sat on the chair next to me.

Mrs Radebe: How do you feel about Nelly being trained to take what was meant to be yours.

Everyone was happy about that. She was only reading where she was told to read and stop where she was told to. nothing amazing about that. Everyone can do that.

Me: I never wanted to be a Pastor and I don't think I will let my father use my child like that.

Mrs Radebe: She's doing great you should be happy for her.

Me: I should be happy yes, but we are talking about Moses Thabethe here, he's planning something.

Mrs Radebe: Something like?

Me: Maybe there is a Pastor somewhere who has a child five years older than Nelly who is promised a bride...

She cut me

Mrs Radebe: Don't say things like that.

Me: There is no daughter of mine who can be used by my father. Not when I'm still alive.

She nodded then asked me about Nomasonto's search.

Me: It's hard Ma beside her books we found lying on the pavement.

She let out a sigh

Mrs Radebe: I can relate on what you are going through.

Mav raised the walk for Noma awareness. Church members supported the idea. Hopefully it will help us to find her.

Mrs Radebe: I just found my daughter, she can't disappear like this, I can't lose her Thabethe, we have to find her.

I nodded. She can be nice to everyone but she doesn't want to be pissed.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

She said she's going to the cemetery to honor Phawu's twin sister. I drove behind her car. In my culture she's not supposed to go there since Phawu is alive. Only elders supposed to visit do that.

The only thing she can do is to go to the river and speak her mind there then throw the rose on the river. As soon as we got there she got out of the car and waited for me to do the same. I was tired but I needed to find out where did I go wrong, Thobi she was really angry with me. She didn't hide that from me.

Me: Kungani uthukuthele? (*Why are you angry*)

Thobi: I want nothing to do with you. But your bond with my son it's very important, especially that his grades has picked up again.

We walked to where her little girl was buried it was few miles down the road from her home. She glanced down, then knelt down next to the grave.

Thobi: Hi there, It's hard to explain how I feel.

She looked at me, with tears prickling from her eyes. Heartbroken mother who never touched her,hear the sound of her cry or play with her, she never had a bond with her baby.

Thobi: I came with your brother's friend. Because your uncle isn't here today.

She put flowers on the grave.

Thobi: Baby I need your help, Phawu has been asking me about your father, I don't know him and I don't want to know him. I need you to make him forget about him, he's still young to understand.

As she spoke the white dove descended on the grave. She looked at it then looked at me.

Thobi: What is going on?

Me: I don't know.

Thobi: I don't know either, this has never happened before, it's weird because it is not afraid of people.

I knelt down next and held her hand.

Thobi: Baby If you trying to say something or if you are trying show me the sign where should I get help, please make it easy for me to understand.

Surprisingly the dove came to me.

Thobi: Duma you need to talk to Phawu, this means you are the only one who can help me.

NOMASONTO

Everything has a price to pay. Everything comes with a price,
Nothing is free. The of theory of Karma, is to get results based
on our actions.

Mandla: You will be fine my love.

My love my foot.

Me: I need some fresh air.

Mandla: It's still early for that. And the doctor said you need to rest.

I nodded. I was only lucky that he didn't get mad.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

ZWELAKHE (MQOBI)

[THE FOLLOWING DAY]

I took the snuff and incense and went under the tree and prayed for Nomasonto, that women needed to be rescued. Helping someone who is far from me was a challenge. The only thing I could do was to pray and begged her ancestors to protect their daughter.

I went back into the indumba where it was clear that I had to keep on praying. There is nothing that upset me then a person who want to help but they need to benefit from, the situation. People die because we choose to be greedy sometimes.

Baba: Don't be sad, she will be home soon.

I bowed

Me: Thokoza Baba.

Baba: Not everything requires, traditional medicine Mqobi also prayer can heal.

I sat down in the mat then glanced down.

Baba: Most people, are connected to the earth below their feet, the sky above the heads, and the sun or moon, this intuitive interaction became encompassed in our culture, traditions, and society. There was never a early. This ability was innate. It was as common as eating, sleeping and so on.

Me: I don't follow.

Baba: What I'm trying to say is that you can pray and throw bone's.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

Thobi did allow me to sleepover at her house. I think my brother did more damage to her. She doesn't trust anyone. After taking a bath I joined her for breakfast. I sat across her. I didn't know where to begin to tell her that I'm her son's uncle

Me: Thanks for your hospitality.

Thobi: Thanks for being my guest.

That made me to lift up the fork and ate the scramble eggs.

Me: Why are you angry?

Thobi: I'm not angry.

Me: So why are you avoiding me?

It's not fun thinking that someone you falling in love with is intentionally avoiding you. As much as it was hurting me not to see her, I scheduled my plans to see her.

Thobi: Have you ever loved a someone, with all your heart but you know very well, that you cannot have that person?

That's the signal I was wondering for. Feelings can play emotions with a person.

Me: I can relate.

Thobi: I tried to hide my feelings by pretending not to be interested at all. I have those feelings when I'm around you.

She kept quiet.

Me: You love me?

She nodded.

Thobi: Ngiyakuthanda kodwa ngiyazi ngeke ngikhone ukuba nawe. (*I love you but i know I won't be with you*)

Me: Feelings are born out of our imagination and those that are real and verifiable. Love is eternal Thobi, it is the only thing that is Permanent at any circumstances. Love is something so deep. Few people can comprehend it. People sometimes think addiction, attachment, attraction, affection, lust, infatuation are love but they are not.

She nodded then shook her head. She looked so confused.

Thobi: Feelings could be horrible about an imagined negative outcome. Then we can walk around for days thinking that you are in trouble. People like to say they can't control their feelings. I know people who got hurt by feelings.

Me: Thobi you need to follow your heart.

She cut me

Thobi: Duma, let's not confuse ourselves. Let's be friends, just for my son. This are just feelings they will fade.

I nodded.

NOMASONTO

God works in different ways. Police raided Mandla's house. They got a tip that he was selling drugs from someone.

Cop 1: He's been keeping you here with the hope of marrying him?

I nodded.

Cop 2: Why didn't you call the police.

Me: I was watched twenty four seven.

Cop 1: Would you like to give your statement tomorrow morning?

I nodded. The only thing I wanted was to go home and be with people that I love.

MATSHIDISO

Musa and I got off the car, we walked to Mr Mabuza's place. He was sitting alone.

The door wasn't closed, we stood there. I was trying to work my relationship with Musa, he was also trying but he needed Sonto.

Me: Daddy.

He smiled.

Mabuza; My baby.

We entered.

Mabuza: My children.

Me: How are you doing today?

Mabuza: My wife left me.

Me: I know.

Mabuza: Have they found Sonto?

Me; Not yet.

NOMASONTO

They drove me to my parents house like I asked. He knocked, my father opened the door. He looked at me like he was dreaming.

Cop: Are you sure we are in the right place mam?

I nodded

Dad: Nomasonto!

That came out as an whisper. He welcomed me in. Mrs Radebe was so happy to see me.

Mom: My baby.

She hugged me. I cried in her arms

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that forced me to explained what happened.

Me: I should've let him take me to another country.

They shook their heads.

Me: It was going to be better Ma.

Rre Radebe: Sonto you did what you did to protect yourself.

That was not true

Me: I need a bath.

She led me to the bathroom. I was experiencing hardships, God came through for me. I felt dirty, I was dirty. I scrubbed my body, but was still dirty.

I took my own time trying to wash away Mandla's sweat in my body.

Keke: Cuz are you still in there?

I closed my eyes, and let tears streamed down.

Me: Y... Yes.

I couldn't get over what happened to me. When they say God provides indeed he provides, I'm the witness of that, I just discovered that God truly provides even in the midst of extraordinarily difficult circumstances. And he generally does so in ways that I never would have expected. Many times He has taken me through a path of being captivity to bring me into pasture of abundance. He keeps on suprising me. The bathroom door opened. My nightmares has come to hunt me again. My body started shaking in fear. I was scared, the first thing that came into my mind was Mandla's people.

I didn't open my eyes, I thought Mandla's people came to get me again.

Me: Please don't hurt my family, I... I will do anything you want me to do.

Victor: Shhh, it's me baby, you safe we fine, I'm not going to hurt you.

I opened my eyes, after hearing his voice. When did he get here?

He sat on the edge of the bath tub.

Me: If you're here to ask for your ring, I'm sorry they took it, they took everything that belongs to you. I understand if you don't like me.

Victor: My love, the is one thing you should know about me, I'm not God, I might be Pastor T's son but I'm not God, I chose you

knowing very well who you are. Mrs Radebe explained to me what happened to you.

Couldn't she just wait for me to tell him.

Helplessness is such a rotten feeling. There was nothing I could do about it being helpless. Being helpless is like being paralyzed. It's sickened me, hurt me. If I get over that I would be the happiest woman alive. I kept on scrubbing myself.

Victor: You clean Noma, you've been here for an hour now.

Me: When did you get here?

Victor: I slept over.

Make sense, because Victor Thabethe, was going to want me to his place. I have several more decades of life under my belt. Life has a way of creating anxious moments. I wronged Vee. I should've stood up to against Mandla and say, I don't know

why God let that happen to me, but He gives me strength to cope.

Victor: Your mother didn't tell me anything, I overheard you telling your parents what happened.

I wasn't ready to face Vee. I kept on seeing the same man over and over again. I don't think I will ever return to that peace of mind of being safe. He will seek for revenge.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

ZWELAKHE (MQOBI)

[THREE MONTHS LATER]

I was approaching the end of life-threatening final initiation before I would no longer be a trainer or should I say *thwasa*, I will be initiated as Isangoma, a healer, diviner, counsellor, herbalist, health practitioner, confidante, upholder of traditional knowledge, and vehicle for the ancestors and spirits. My parents were summoned to witness that, I was really ready to work as a healer. Unfortunately my biological father didn't make it, he was caught up with something.

I was about to take Bab Mqobi's journey. Zweli's life was about to change. The past ten days were hard no lie. The thread between the mundane and spirit world had blurred. In what some define as trance or spirit possession, I had to drink goat's blood. With *amadlozi* (*ancestors*) working through me, I was able to discover the hidden gall, beads, rolled up animal hide, and another crucial regalia pertinent to being healer. It was hectic no lie.

I couldn't wait to go home. It has been approved that I was going to perform my ceremony in my house. Nomadlozi walked to me.

Dlozi: Mqobi!

Me: Dlozi!

She sat down

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and gave me a sugar cane.

Me: Did baba let you to take this?

She laughed, our teacher she's very strict, she doesn't just approve because, you requested, she follows protocols. Dlozi she was sad that I was leaving her, behind. She's been so supportive through the journey.

Dlozi: I wish I had the family that has money. I miss my family.

Me: Don't worry you will go home soon.

Dlozi: When Mqobi, I welcome students every month and say goodbye after six months to eight months.

It was said that we will be leaving tomorrow morning.

MATSHIDISO

We were preparing for his ceremony. I couldn't wait to see him again. Everyone one up and down. Preparing for his big day. Sadly Mav was sentenced for the period of 18 months.

Azola: I can't believe that he's finally coming home.

.

Thobi: Finally.

The have their aunt and niece relationship. With Zweli everyone in his life has a special room.

Azola: If it wasn't traditionally, I was going to throw a big party for my nephew.

Thobi: I so wish to to be your nephew now.

Azola: Don't start with me, where is Phawu?

She swallowed.

Thobi: Duma's wife invited him

Me: So you trust her with your child?

Samu was on his grandfather's back. I don't wish to be a grandma, I swear. My mother in law dances to Samu's tune.

Thobi: I trust Duma.

Me: This is unlike you. You trust a person you just met few months ago?

She nodded.

Thobi: Nyembezi and Duma like Phawu, and Phawu like them too.

I know I don't pay too much attention to things that I don't know. But I think Thobi she lost her mind. More especially after she went to honor her daughter. She trust psych Nyathi with all her heart.

NOMASONTO

I gave the customer his item.

Me: Thank you sir please call again.

I was extremely angry at the world and I was very bitter and I wanted to die.

Customer: I hope my wife will like this.

Me: If I love it, truly she will love it too.

Customer: If she doesn't love it, I will bring it back.

I nodded then faked a smile. He walked away. Pain was growing inside me. I had the underlying unresolved and seemingly unresolvable problems they were gradually decreasing my ability to be my own usual self, anger and frustration was building up inside me.

Victor: I'm sure that Tshidi is waiting for you.

That's when I was brought back to reality.

Me: Hi!

He smirked. Therapy was therapeutic, cleansing, even great self care. It was making me feel worse. I wasn't simply just feeling sad after each session, I would leave room emotionally fatigued and melancholic. If I had a choice I'd go for another option. It wasn't helping me.

Victor: Now I'm concerned Noma.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

Phawu was playing with his cousins.

Mbezi: He's a good boy.

I nodded. His mother rejected me, which I understand, she's a self-respected woman, who would do anything to save her dignity.

Me: Let's hope he doesn't take after his father.

Nyembezi: Don't do that.

I shrugged my shoulders

Mbezi: You are his uncle, it's your responsibility to make sure that doesn't happen.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

MAVIS

My sentence was short but it felt like, time was dragging. I was in for three months, but life was showing me flames. In prison, violence occurs almost every day, sometimes inmates get raped by guards, sometimes we fight against each other, as inmates. Inside that world we sleep with one eye open. I've ever gone through in my entire life, prison was the worst thing ever happened.

Guards were taking advantage of inmates. People that are here for a long time, they are human beings and they get lonely too, and they want that intimacy and that feeling from another person. I've seen it, most inmates have sexual romantic as women. And it starts out very small, with a look or a smile, if you walk by them and touch them, which I never did. I wouldn't even ask them for toilet paper. But I have seen it happen. And guards take advantage because inmates are in survival mode.

Thobi needs to get me out of here. We are starved for affection and attention, and it's a very tough situation on both sides. It's a crime and guards keep on doing that, this is essentially rape. How you feel and your opinion on this don't really matter. Cause this is going on every single day.

NOMASONTO

He drove me to Tshidi's place.

Me: Vee you still with me because you love me or its because of Nelly?

Victor: Where does that coming from?

Me: The is no need to be with me, I'm broken, lost and lonely.

I couldn't understand why it was hard for me to find myself. I've gone through much and still find myself.

Victor: Noma you are the only woman for me, you didn't ask what happened to you. You did what you did to get out of the situation, yes sometimes, I can imagine you with in another man's arms.

Me: Vee, I don't love that man, I love you, it was stupid of me to think that my body was my only way out.

He cut me.

Victor: I know baby, let's move on, and forget about the past.

I nodded

Victor: When is your next appointment with the therapist?

Me: Tuesday.

Victor: I will join you.

Me: You will?

He nodded.

MAVIS

I went to take a shower, after taking a shower, I discovered that I ran out of sanitary pads, that was another struggle inside there. I walked to one of the female prison warden.

Me: Warden I need something.

Warden: What do you want prisoner?

This is embarrassing. They do distribute with cheap pads, good ones we have to buy them. Where can we get the money

Me: I'm on my circle and I don't have.

She cut me.

Warden: This is not your mother's house girlie.

Me: Are you going to help me or?

Warden: I have a used one

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do you want it?

I just don't understand why a woman is so cruel to another woman, she should be understanding. I walked away from her.

MATSHIDISO

My mother in law asked to talk to me. I sat on the bed next to her.

Emily: Baby I'm sorry that I didn't tell you where is Zweli.

I nodded.

Emily: Thank you for waiting for my son, I know it was difficult, but you pulled through, and you became stronger than before.

Me: It was meant to be Mme.

This women respects everyone, just like her son.

Me: Thank you Ma, for being patient with me, I know that I'm not perfect, and I was not a good daughter in law. Or a mother to my son. But you still let me to be in your son's life.

Ma, in-law: Baby no one is perfect, not even me.

I nodded.

Emily: And Zweli loves you, I spoke to Mrs and Mr Radebe, they agreed that the Khoza's must sat a date.

Me: Date for?

Emily: Lobala negotiation to take place, you only need to talk to Mr Mabuza. Because Mr Radebe made it clear that he won't talk to that man.

Mr Radebe can be difficult sometimes.

Me: I will talk to him.

She nodded.

Emily: This is what you've been waiting for, your father will go to take your sister and brother's sprit after.

That was the only thing that was left, Mr Mabuza has to bring, Makhosazane and Makhosonke to their ancestors.

Me: Thanks Ma.

MAVIS

I ended up using my t-shirt. I didn't have a plan. If I knew, I was going to allow Vic and Sonto to drop the case, but I wanted to pay for my sin's. Sometimes we make choices thinking that they will benefit us, we live in an unprecedented age of options. And that can make choice difficult with out doing our research.

Sometimes we make bad decisions that leave us unhappy and full of regret. One of my cell mate walked to me. She never liked me.

Inmate: It's lunch mamfundisi.

Me: I'm not hungry.

Inmate: Why are you crying?

Making good decisions requires us to balance the seemingly antithetical forces of emotion and rationality. We must be able to predict the future, accurately perceive the present situation, have insight into the minds of others and deal with uncertainty.

Me: I need to talk to my boyfriend, I need some toiletries.

She handed me the cell phone.

Me: Where did you get this?

Inmate: Just make that call, I ran out of my pads you will help me too.

This was a win win situation.

NOMASONTO

Tshidi hugged me.

Thobi: Sisters

We broke the hug and looked at her.

Tshidi: I need your help.

Me: Anything for you.

Tshidi: You know Mr Mabuza better than I do.

Me: I won't lie to you and say yes, the only thing I know about that man is that he has an empty Pride.

Tshidi: And the Nkosi's?

Me: I think they are better than before.

Tshidi: I need them, you are the only one who can talk to them.

I nodded even though I didn't know what was all about. There is an underlying deseeded situation that lead to the yes man. Sometimes agreeing just to let the situation blink away, can be harmful, either going to be friend these individuals or going to be with in part of the problem instead of a huge part of the solution. They say don't judge someone ever it's not our place. Instead take time to give them a hand up rather than a hand out never to be bothered again. I think I judge that women before I could get to know her. I still feel bad that Mav was sentences because of me, she lost her license, I don't understand, why she didn't allow me to cancel the case.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

[NEXT DAY]

No woman was ever weak in men's eyes, hence why they keep on hurting us continuously, Because we never weak in their eyes. Tshidi ended up telling me that he needs her father and the uncles to be represent on her lobola negotiations. Which is a good thing to build a relationship with family members.

Thobi: Please pass me the knife.

I gave her. Sometimes doubting yourself is normal and you don't have to let it stop you from pushing ahead. Our brain will doubt our competence but don't believe everything you think. If we could get rid of women are not seen as equals to men, believe me the world was going to be in a better place with out women living in fear. Somewhere along the line, feeling guilty, fearful, and unhappy has become the norm. We as woman we live in fear, we sometimes ask often ourselves what will happened to us to take away our feeling of not being safe on the street.

Thobi: Sonto.

I looked at her.

Thobi: What's wrong?

Me: Nothing.

Thobi: Musa has been talking to you and you don't respond.

I turned and looked at him.

Me: Boyzer!

Musa: We missed mama's birthday.

I was going through hardship, no date was saved on my memory, besides of being held captive, in Mandla's house, it

was difficult to forget about that, yes I've been though then that but it never kicked me so hard like this case.

Me: Why didn't you remind me?

Musa: You were busy.

There I was neglecting my brother, I was the only person he could talk to.

Me: I'm sorry Musa, For you and Nelly I'm not busy okay.

Each year on her birthday I cook her favorite dish and we go to her grave to celebrate her, just me, him and Nelly, this year things will be different, we will be more than three.

Me: Can I make it up to you after this?

He nodded.

Tshidi: Can I join you guys.

Me: There is no need to ask, you always welcome.

Tshidi: And my father?

Me: I'm not angry at him, he's our father, it is our duty to take care of him even though he still hate me, I understand his anger towards me, I'm the reason why he divorced MaNkosi.

Tshidi: Stop saying such things

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God has the reason why he let that happen

Thobi: Please slice this for me.

She handed me onions.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

Nyembezi: Will you take Phawu to her mother?

Me: Obvious.

Mbezi: Good I'm coming with.

I sat up straight.

Me: Why?

Mbezi: Phawu is family, there is a ceremony for his uncle. One of us needs to be there, to support our nephew.

She believes that I told Thobi about Phawu's father.

Me: It's not his ceremony.

Mbezi: Yes but his uncle.

Me: Thanks for being so supportive, but there is no need for us to go there.

Mbezi: Okay, but I would like to meet his mother.

I nodded.

MAVIS

From yesterday Lele's phone was taking me straight to voicemail. I decided to call Victor. He answered after few rings. I wanted to him to give me Thobi's phone number.

Voice: Sonto Mabuza hello.

I kept quiet.

Sonto: Mr Thabethe left his phone with me.

Me: Hello it's Mav.

I swallowed.

Me: I can't find Siphe, his phone is not going through.

Sonto: Hey sis, how are you doing?

Me: I'm good.

Sonto: Vee is not here, but I can take a message.

Me: It's okay, I'm glad you are the one who answered, look, I ran out of my toiletries, please ask your brother in law to get me that.

Sonto: Okay.

Me: If you see him please ask him to bring them sanitary I'm in need.

Sonto: I will tell him or Vee.

I don't understand why they so stingy with good sanitary pads. I broke into tears as menstrual blood ran down my legs.

Sonto: Okay babes, I don't know if I will be allowed to see you.

I looked at my cell mate the one who borrowed me the phone. I put Sonto on mute.

Inmate: She can come, I will ask the warden to let you meet her.

I unmuted her.

Me: I will make a plan.

AZOLA

I was bit worried about Thobi, I tried to talk to her, she keeps on brushing me off.

I walked to them.

Me: Ladies, ladies.

Thobi: Woman.

Me: Uphi uPhawu?

She smiled, I don't understand, how could she trust Duma that much.

Me: We need to talk mouthpiece.

Thobi: What have I done now?

Me: Something you never did.

Sonto walked to us.

Sonto: Can I excuse myself for an hour.

Tshidi: Where to?

Sonto: Mav called me, she needs toiletries, especially sanitary pads.

Thobi: They won't allow you today.

Of course they wouldn't allow her, visitors are allowed Tuesday and Thursday.

Sonto: She said she will have a plan.

Thobi was avoiding me.

Me: Okay Sonto you can go.

Thobi: I will go with her.

See what I'm talking about?

Me: Thobile I need to talk to you.

Thobi: I'm sure whatever it is can wait until I'm back.

This was an attitude she had never had before, she was doing strange things.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

I showed Phawu the family album.

Phawu: Ngubani lo? (*Who's this*)

She pointed the picture of me and my late family.

Me: This is my first born. She's late.

Phawu: She's in heaven like Nosiphawu?

I nodded.

Me: They are in heaven watching over us.

Phawu: And this?

Me: This is her mother she's also late.

Phawu: Where is your twin brother?

Me: He's in jail.

Him: Did he break the law?

I nodded.

Phawu: My mother hate people who break the law.

Me: I hate them too.

He page the album.

Me: Do you hate them?

Phawu: Very much.

Me: I wanted to take you to him.

Phawu: Will they allow me?

Me: I can arrange that.

ZWELAKHE (Mqobi)

We were sitting in at the back of the bakkie. The open air did not stop the healers from singing and rocking the reeds. I couldn't wait to get home.

I missed my family and friends, especially mom and Tshidi. Yes my mother did visit me, but her visit was supervised. We didn't talk.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

Thobi managed to see her, since she's Mav's lawyer. We were heading back to Tshidi's place. Vee had the tendency of leaving his phone with me, if I didn't know better I was going to say he's trying to prove a point or something.

Me: Thank you

Thobi: For?

Me: Taking me to..

She cut me

Thobi: I'm her lawyer, I had to do something.

Me: If I was alone would've given up.

Thobi: Giving up sometime isn't the best. We should face our fears.

DUMEZWENI NYATHI

Phawu looked at himself on the mirror.

Me: Come on champ, only girls do that.

Phawu: Said who?

Me: Forget it, let's go.

Phawu: The mirror was made for everyone.

Me: Okay.

ZWELAKHE (Mqobi)

I found myself feeling uneasy in unpopulated areas. I rolled the red and white beads over my wrists and fiddled with the single mfiso around my neck, pondering that today would be My last day of wearing those. I was going to wear a double strand of beads around my ankles and wrists. I would no longer have to apply daily red oxide clay, from head to toe.

MATSHIDISO

I had to pick up my father, all I needed was peace. When I got there he was eating dry bread.

Mabuza: You can make yourself tea.

The place was dirty. His wife used to clean that place, and I'm even sure that Sonto used to keep the place clean.

Me: No thank you.

He nodded.

Mabuza: I had a dream about your siblings, they want me, to bring them home.

Me: Have you contacted Sonto?

Mabuza: I don't owe her, anything.

Me: Dad, you owe that girl and her parents, she took care of your son and my mother. The Radebe's raised me, they never turned their backs on me.

Mabuza: Maria left me because of Sonto.

Me: That's not true, auntie asked Sonto to convince you, that she got a job.

Mabuza: Child I hate people who poke their nose in my personal life.

Me: Okay I understand, get ready.

I hate people that poke their nose in my business as well.

MAVIS

They bought me enough toiletries

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and enough pads. I gave my cell mate, one pack of pads, toothpaste and toothbrush I won't lie she was greatfull.

Inmate: Mamfundisi, Thank you. You see you and I we don't have to be enemies.

Me: Yeah

DUMEZWEN

[LATER ON]

Sometimes I feel like I'm not good enough, I have everything that I need but there was something missing in my life I just don't know what it is.

I was taking Phawu to his mother.

Phawu: Can I get chocolate for mom and aunt Zola.

Me: Okay.

I drove him there. We got those chocolates and flowers then we headed to his uncle's house.

When we got there, the place was full of people. With zangomas dancing. We made our way in the house. He ran to his mother.

Thobi: Finally.

Phawu: I got you and aunt Zola some chocolates.

Thobi: Okay.

He looked at me

Me: Here.

I handed him the box of chocolates.

Thobi: Thank you Boy.

Me: Ladies I have to go.

Azola: Thank you for taking care of Phawu.

Me: I have to go.

Thobi walked to me, she took the budge of flowers, then she held my hands and looked at wrist.

Me: Uhm.

I realized that the shirt that I was wearing, wasn't covering my birth mark. She cut me

Thobi: Who are you?

I swallowed.

Me: I have to go Mam Phawu.

People keep secrets for several reasons.

Thobi: I asked you a question and you didn't answer my question.

Me: I'm... I... Thobi look, I'm sorry.

Thobi: You sorry?

Me: I'm sorry I have to go.

Azola: Thobi let him go.

Thobi: Phawu woza. (*Come*)

He did, she looked at his wrist.

Thobi: How do you explain this?

Me: I don't know what you are talking about.

Thobi: You know what, take your chocolates and flowers and stay away from my child. (*Shouting*)

Me: Thobile please, I can explain.

I always took blame for my brothers and that sucks.

Thobi: Leave Duma, don't ever contact me or my family.

(Crying)

I felt bad, broken, why was I getting punished for my brothers doings, he raped my daughter, I was the one who lost her, he raped Thobile and I'm the one who is losing a friend, who speaks the same language as I do. I took those chocolates and left.

ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

Everyone was gathering outside. I couldn't deal with the noise of drums I excused myself, I wanted to be alone , without the

noise, I walked to the house. Oops I was wrong, I wasn't alone, Thobi was sitting on the couch.

Me: Babes are you alright?

She wiped her eyes.

Thobi: My past has come to hunt me. I trusted the wrong person.

I sat next to her

Thobi: Trust is one of the heavy weight qualities in life. It's built over time, it is a bond and when it exists, it allows relationships, friendships, and loyalty to flourish. But I trusted someone who I think took my innocence, especially with my only son.

She looked at me.

Thobi: I don't understand, why didn't I pay more attention to that man. I used to say like Phawu he's a mini him, he would brush that off.

I didn't know what to say or do.

Thobi: I thought I was coping. I thought I had put everything behind me and moved on with my life. But today I discovered that my past has been hunting me, memories. I thought I had forgotten about what happened to me long time ago.

Me: I'm sorry.

Thobi: No man, I remember that night, he took me to the forest, where no body could hear, it was a very deserted place. He raped me then took my phone, he then left me lying there.

Me: I believe that karma will get him. You will see him one day and you will feel sorry for him.

Thobi: I want Duma to stay away from me and my son.

Me: It's okay to be angry.

Thobi: I hate Duma, I really hate him.

Me: That words carries a heavy weight. The were times where suicidal was the only way out, but with Nelly and Musa I realized that I'd been torturing myself with all of the painful memories from my past. I'm surprised to see that I was doing it to myself not them. I know what you are going through, I've been there, but I'm not saying that you can magically make the pain go away or the horrible memories disappear. I'm just saying that you can choose not to torture yourself and make the pain grow stronger until it swallows you like I did.

Remember that the are girls and women who are going with the same boat as you and me, they need strong people like you to remind them that life goes on. Look you are a single mother, a lawyer and a community builder people look up to you and I'm one of those people.

She nodded then smiled

Thobi: Want coffee?

Me: I can make one.

Thobi: Thanks Noma, sometimes sharing how I feel with someone who has been the same pain as mine it's easy. At least I know that I'm not alone.

I went to boil water.

DUMEZWENI

My brother was always a pain in my life, I just don't understand why do I always have to clean up after my brother. Nyembezi walked to me.

Me: I said I don't need company.

She Pulled out the chair then sat on it.

Me: Mbezi not now tuu. (*Please*)

Nyembezi: I just don't understand, my husband took his nephew to his mother and he comes back angry.

Me: Impela awuqondi. (*Truly you don't understand*)

You know how painful it can be when your friend is mad at you? Sometimes your friend has completely unrealistic expectations. I didn't know how to middle ground, walking away from that friendship wasn't a solution. I tried to call Thobi her phone rang until it went to voicemail.

Me: Mam Phawu I can explain.

I need to make the effort to keep our friendship. Sometimes all you can do is try your best to seek a resolution.

NOMASONTO

[LATER ON]

Starting to let go of our past in anything significant

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is one of the hardest things to do in life. We are comfortable with the known, and we will often choose known suffering over an uncertain future. We resist change and hold onto the past often long after it has quit serving us.

Me and Thobi, we were serving people that were gathered outside.

Thobi: Go that side we will meet in the middle.

I nodded. I started with children, then elders. Sometimes we need a push to view letting go of our past in a new light. I gave two man the food before I could give Enock the food.

Me: Baba!

Mabuza: Sonto!

Me: Sawubona baba! (*Hello father*)

Mabuza: Ngirite. (*I'm good*)

That man never hid that he hates me, I gave him the food then proceed. Indeed I met Thobi in the middle.

Me: Who will serve abogogo?

She looked at the Sangomas.

Thobi: UMa no Tshidi bazoba nakekela. (*Mom and Tshidi will take care of them*)

MATSHIDISO

Being a liar doesn't happen overnight, It happens over time in all sorts of ways. Maybe telling the truth gets us into trouble. Sometimes telling the truth could hurt someone, I was told what happened between Thobi and her new founded friend. Sometimes telling the truth is too scary, telling a few lies digs a hole that we can't get out of. Maybe it's even a bit thrilling to lie and be secretive other things. I think Psych Nyathi was trying to protect his only nephew.

Azola: Have you seen Thobi?

Me: She's somewhere outside.

Azola: Do you have any idea, who is Duma?

I nodded.

Azola: I'm listening...

Me: He's psychologist.

Her teeth chattered.

Me: Okay aunt, please promise me that you won't tell Thobi that I knew what is going on.

Azola: *Lies lies lies*, what is wrong with you and Thobi? You always hiding things. How can I help you when you two keep doing this?

Me: Before I got discharged, I noticed his birth mark was similar to Phawu, I asked Psych Duma to help me, at first he refused, then I asked him to come the following day to meet Phawu, he

didn't even check his mark he decided to take Phawu's samples and his twin brothers samples for paternity test.

Azola: You did what?

Me: I asked him to help me.

She cut me.

Azola: I heard you Tshidi, you know what makes me angry is that you put Thobi and Phawu in danger. And you can get arrested for doing do child's DNA without consulting his mother.

Me: Psych Duma won't hurt them.

Azola: I thought I knew him and I trusted him with Phawu and Thobi.

Me: Aunt his twin brother he's Phawu's father, not Psychologist Duma, he is just Phawu's uncle and a caring friend. Who's caught up in this mess. He's a great person, he wanted to tell Thobi the truth but he was scared to hurt her.

Azola: His brother deserves to be locked up.

Me: Fortunately he's in jail, he didn't just raped Thobi, he raped his niece, Psycho Duma's late daughter.

Her eyes winded

Azola: His own niece? What kind of an animal is he?

Me: I don't know, what kind of an animal he is, but what I can tell you, he's a monster.

Azola: Okay, thanks Tshidi, I will contact Duma and apologize to him.

I was feeling bad Phawu scored himself a father figure, he loves his uncle, the worst part is that psychologist was going to be hated for something he didn't do.

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

[WEEK LATER]

I was woken up by Vee wanting morning glory. He kissed me all over my body.

Victor: Good morning baby. Come take your gun.

I laughed a little, "*My gun?*" He laid on the bed, my gun or whatever he calls it it was ready for Noma to do her magical.

Me: How many bullet must I fill?

Victor: To many.

I started massaging it before I could take it in my mouth.

ZWELAKHE (MQOBI)

Things were starting to get back to normal. My uncle's did send a word to the Mabuza's. It wasn't easy because Tshidi wanted that to happen at the Radebe's. She's not a Radebe that's what she needs to know.

She walked up to me with a cup of tea.

Tshidi: Here Rre.

Me: Thokoza.

She sat down next to me.

Tshidi: Have you tried to talk to your sister?

Me: Later baby.

She told me about Thobi and her psychotherapist. There is a phrase in Isizulu that says "***Awukho umgqomo wokulahla umuntu***" meaning There is no bin to dump a person. I was more impressed with what she did. It proves that she's a grown woman who is willing to take risks.

Thobi joined us. She greeted us then sat down.

Thobi: Brother my stay here was overdue.

Tshidi: Says who?

Thobi: Me.

Me: Go throw yourself under the tree.

She laughed

Thobi: I thought you were going to say under the bus.

Me: And where was I going to find my sister then?

We laughed

Me: Sisi you are welcome here.

Thobi: I know but my people need me, the attorney need me, we already lost a hero they can't lose me too.

Tshidi: But you have five clients here.

Thobi: Advocate Xulu gave me all the four cases because I already had the case here, Ndu was the one who used to take huge cases outside our region and he's the one who made that law firm to be a success, as it is today.

Me: I understand "*Miss my people*".

We laughed

Thobi: I'm going to visit my clients before I leave.

Me: All of them?

She shook her head

Thobi: No only two males for today then I will see all females clients next week.

Me: Aren't they luck to have a caring lawyer like her?

She laughed

NOMASONTO

He pushed my head, I gagged my saliva caused moisture on his penis, that cheered my soul.

Victor: Ohhh fuck....yes baby I...Ahh fuck you Noma.

He was groaning. As I performed a hand job. I made him tense.

Victor: Baby... Noma... Mama.

I wanted him keep on calling my name over and over again. He let go of his moisture inside my mouth, and I swallowed. He managed to stop me and made me lie on the bed

Victor: This is the Noma I know not the girl who was here after the accident, Mmm.

Me: Ngempela? (*Really*)

I thought he was enjoying himself all this time, honestly he made me feel bad, but yet I was pleased that he opened up for me.

He kissed me.

Victor: Mmm I...I love you

He was now sucking my breasts, he squeezed them and sucked again. Then he went down, left a wet kisses all over my body, I felt his tongue around my stomach, it felt so good.

Me: Baby stop it.

I closed my eyes enjoying the pleasure that comes with it. I was sweating, I was breathing heavily. His tongue was on my clit, he sucked, licked and bit me down there with lovely life.

Me: Ohhh baby I..ohww this so good. So lovely ohw daddy please take me to our world.

I could feel the moisture of my juicy was about to come out. His finger was also doing wonders down there. I pulled out a disturbing orgasm.

Victor: Uhm so yummy.

As he came up to me.

Me: So lovely, so cheerful

He pushed his pecker, I'm very sure he was loading it.

MAVIS

I tidy my bed. Then helped my new inmate friend to do the same. She ate something that she allergic to.

Me: How are you feeling?

Thabang: I'm weak.

I looked at her eyes she was indeed weak. I don't understand why they discharged her.

Me: Everything is going to be well.

She nodded then asked me to get her food. We are not allowed to eat in our cell.

Me: Let's go I will stand on the queue for you.

Thabang: You will?

I nodded.

NOMASONTO

After our intimacy we took a shower then headed to the store.

Victor: Why can't we hijack Zweli and Tshidi's wedding day?

Me: Kanti uyahlanya? (*Are insane*)

Victor: I don't mind climbing a big mountain to tell the world how much I love my golden women.

Me: Speaking of golden women, when will you visit Mavis?

Victor: Why should I?

Me: She was part of your life baby, you are not innocent in this, we pushed her to do what she did.

Victor: I will go there with you?

Me: Thursday, because today I can't I have a afternoon class.

He nodded

We got to the store, he greeted my colleagues then opened the door for us, we walked in, he stopped the alarm we shared a kiss he then left.

Soni: You guys.

Me: What?

Sonia: Let's say you love each other.

Amos walked in whilst she was talking.

Sonia: Where's sister boss.

Amos: She's not feeling well, I will cover for her today Sonia.

I checked both systems and the the balance book. Everything was up to date.

Amos: Partner I'm talking to you.

Me: I'm sorry you were saying?

Amos: Can I have a word with you.

Me: Regarding?

Amos: You don't talk to your old client like that.

I looked at Sonia and asked her to change the price, she's a cashier.

Amos: So we don't talk to each other now?

I shook my head.

Amos: Noma we don't have to be enemies.

I nodded. I honestly don't trust him, I don't trust those people who were my clients. Mandla opened my eyes. There is no way I was going to be blinded again.

Me: What do you want?

He looked me from my head up to my legs.

Me: Don't even think about it Amos.

Amos: No one will know.

Me: Should I call sis Dee?

He giggled.

Amos: Oh didn't I tell you that my house doesn't have a signal. You won't reach her on the phone unless you go to my house, she's sleeping and she has forgotten that she needs to come here.

You see, when I say I don't trust him I knew what I was talking about. Probably he was telling me that he drugged her.

Me: Then go to the brothel they will gladly help you.

He gritted his teeth, his jaw becomes slack. I was not going to go to the office, I walked on the floor. Helping where I could.

DUMEZWENI

No matter how I tried to call Thobi she wasn't taking any of my calls or messages. Azola did apologies for Thobi's behavior trust me when I say she has every right to be mad at me, I didn't tell her the truth from the word go.

I decided to visit Dumisani, I wanted to look at him deep into his soul and tell him how much he disgust me. Yes he's my brother not only brother my twin brother, since we were kids I was always taking blame for him. And I kept on letting go, this time around I'm not going to do that.

When I got to the correctional services help desk I signed where I was required to sign. Before they could take me to him I felt someone tapping my shoulder. I turned the person hid behind me.

Me: Didn't your parents get you toys to play with?

I was frustrated because someone kept hitting me on the shoulder and hiding behind me.

Voice: They didn't, you can get me one.

I should've known

Thobi she's the only person who can be childish sometimes.

Me: Hey!

Thobi: Hi!

Me: Look I'm sorry for.

She cut me.

Thobi: Tshidi and sister Azola told me everything that I needed to know. You here to see him aren't you?

I nodded, there was no way I was going to lie to her again. She went to sign and talked to the ethics officer, and then she came back to me.

Thobi: How are you holding up?

Me: Uh...

What is the use of saying I'm fine knowing very well that I'm not?

Me: I'm trying.

Thobi: Why didn't you tell me about your daughter?

Really I didn't see any need to tell her, especially that I was scared to open those hidden wounds. They let us in. I sat on the

empty bench waiting for Dumi. Everyone saw their loved ones besides me. I called the Guard.

Me: I've been waiting to see my brother.

Guard: Name and surname?

Me: Dumisani Nyathi.

He checked his book.

Guard: The troublesome, he will be with you shortly.

He walked away. Thirty minutes later, Thobi joined me.

Thobi: Sorry to keep you waiting.

She looked at the guard then nodded. It was clearly that she instructed them to keep me waiting for a while.

Thobi: I listened to all your voice messages, I must say your apology was very sincere, the last time I heard a man apologizing like that was ages ago when my father was apologizing to his mad ex wife.

Me: Your step mother?

She shook her head.

Thobi: My mother, Emily she's not my biological mother, she's my guardian who happened to be my father's Ex wife too.

Me: I thought.

She cut me.

Thobi: You thought she's my mother? Yes she is but not biologically, My brother and I we only share a father not a mother, my biological mother she's a beast.

I wanted to hear more but time wasn't on our side. They brought him, he sat down before he could say. "*Brother you need to get me out of here*"

I looked at Thobi, she shook her head.

Thobi: This voice is the voice, I will never forget, trust me.

Me: I'm sorry.

She nodded

Me: Sani I'm not going to do that.

Sani: So why are you here?

I swallowed

Me: Tell me here, if I get you out of here, where are you going to stay?

Sani: Our parents bought a house for us.

Me: I don't want you anywhere near my family.

Sani: Brother I made a mistake and I'm sorry.

Me: I've lost so much because of you Sani, I lost my daughter, friend and Pha...

I stopped talking then looked at Thobi.

Thobi: Don't worry, pretend as if I'm not here.

When I say she speak the language as I do, I was referring to that. She understands therapist language.

Me: I lost Phawu too.

Sani: Who's Phawu again?

Me: The boy I told you about.

He swallowed.

Sani: The boy you claim to be my child.

That guy wanted my head on a silver platter. Thobi held my hand.

Me: Why do I keep on getting punished for your wrongs?

Sani: You left your beautiful wife to question me that?

Dumisani won't change I swear, each word he uttered was making my stomach to boil with anger.

Sani: I said this before and I'm saying this again if you come here come to get me out of this hell.

Me: That is a dream, that will never happen brother.

He got up and looked at me.

Sani: I hate you.

Me: You disgust me, brother.

Thobi: You should be ashamed of yourself Nyathi, you said you were teaching me a lesson, I will never forget Nyathi, and I learned from that, by 6pm I'm in the house, making sure that I lock the door.

He looked at her.

Me: Just sit down.

He did.

Thobi: You remember those words, "*Today I want to teach you a lesson you will never forget*"?

She was speaking with a strained voice. He kept quiet.

Thobi: I'm going to teach you a lesson that you will never forget Nyathi, your sentence is nothing compared to the sentence I'm going to get you, you raped me and left me lying on the cold forest remember?

Sani: Please don't do that.

She giggled aggressively.

Thobi: I said that too remember? But you never listened instead you showed me a knife. I'm going to meet the judge who

sentences you, I want him or her to consecutive your sentence. By the time you get out of here, you won't think of touch girls and women.

Sani: What is a consecutive sentence?

Thobi: We call it sentences back to back. It's a multiple terms that you are going to be served after this one, because you are convicted of the multiple criminals.

Sani: You won't do that.

Thobi: Mark my word Nyathi.

Sani: Duma do you agree with this madness.

I nodded, Nyembezi will have to forgive me for agreeing with Thobi. Remember I will do whatever it takes to get her to trust me again.

Sani: You son of a...

Me: Do call my mother that I will kill you Dumisani.

He got up

Thobi: This is going to be your home forever buddy, I wish my son doesn't take after you.

Sani: If I'm indeed his father, he will take something after me.

Me: Dumisani!!

Sani: You choosing me over a stranger?

Me: You planted this, now is the time to harvest your crops and eat them, brother.

He walked to the guard escorted him.

Thobi: I'm sorry Duma but I have to do this.

I nodded.

Me: It's okay.

She nodded then got up.

Me: You have another clients?

She shook her head, I got up

Thobi: No but I need to go prepare myself.

Me: Prepare yourself?

Thobi: I'm heading back to PK.

We walked out

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ONLY HOPE LEFT

NOMASONTO

[YEAR LATER]

In life we climb slowly like we are climbing the leader while we watch our back, we are aware that there is a possibility of falling. I looked at myself on wedding dress.

Instead of traditional wedding, my father in law suggested white wedding.

Me: I can't believe that I'm getting married.

Disebo was my make up artist. She looked at me through the mirror.

Dee: Soon you will be saying I do.

Me: Imagine Nomasonto Thabethe.

Dee: Let me remind you something.

Me: As long as you won't preach me of being a good wife.

She laughed

Dee: You need to hear that sweetheart, I believe your elders already lectured you.

I nodded

Dee: I understand but you need to hear this from a friend too.

We became more than business partners.

Dee: Be your husband's biggest supporter. Challenge him in the ways he needs to be challenged. And in the bedroom, when it comes to men we often think the affection they want is always sex, however, a husband needs those small acts of affection of your throughout the day just like we do as women. A warm hug and a kiss when you have to greet each other after a long day by a long kiss, a pat on the back, a stroke on the arm, and all

those other ways that we give daily assurance of your love and approval.

MATSHIDISO

I tied his tie. He squeezed my cheek.

Me: U nkutloisa bohloko. (*you hurting me*)

Zweli: Let me see.

I laughed.

Zweli: Thought as much.

Happiness is an unrealistic scale for our ideal life. We aren't born to feel constantly happy. We don't deserve or are even entitled to happiness. We shouldn't try to measure the worth of our lives by the happiness we feel every day.

Me: Thank you for loving me.

He nodded. Man like him are rare Zweli loved me when I was going through hardship. He never gave up on me, even though I kept on pushing him to give up but he never did. He loved me when I couldn't love myself. He saw a wife in me when I was still daddy's little princess.

Zweli: I love you, now, tomorrow and always.

I was finally Mrs Khoza, we were getting ready for Sonto's biggest day.

Me: I want to see her before she says I do.

Zweli: Then stop dragging your feet.

AZOLA

They brought her as Thobi was signing her release form.

Prison warden: We will miss you mamfundisi.

Mav: Don't worry I will visit you.

Prison warden: They all say that.

Mav: Trust me I will.

They shared a hug. She then went to sign were she was required to.

Ten minutes later we walked out. She got a parole, I don't know how did Thobi pulled that through. But to be honest she deserves it.

Mav: Lele failed to come.

Thobi: He's brother is getting married remember?

Me: Mouthpiece!

Mav: Oh my goodness, I forgot about that.

Thobi: Are you aware that you are Sonto's wedding gift.

Me: What?

Thobi: I couldn't get her anything, but she want you to be there so badly.

With Thobi expect the unexpected. She forgave Duma.

DUMEZWENI

Someone needs to remind me not to mess up with Thobi, she kept her word, my brother's sentence was extended to ten years.

Nyembezi: You ready.

Me: Are you a bridesmaid ?

She shook her head.

Mbezi: No why?

Me: You look like one.

She looked at herself.

Mbezi: Don't do that.

I kissed her.

NOMASONTO

I couldn't wait for the bell to ring alerting me to walk down the aisle to meet my soon to be husband.

Voice: Relax.

I turned and looked at her.

Me: Mav.

She walked up to me we shared a hug.

Me: Wow.

We broke the hug. I was so happy my prayer was answered.

Mav: Looked at yourself.

Happiness trembled inside me, my heart dared for joy.

Desebo worked her magic on her.

VICTOR

I checked the time, it was forty minutes before I could life changing decision in front of my family

Advertisement

hers, our child and the church members.

Me: Nelly let's go.

Nelly: Just a minute.

She was delaying me, our guest were waiting for me. I was about to make a life changing decision in front of the church members, family and the woman, I love and care about the most. The nerves racked in.

I was supposed to be there before Noma walks down the aisle. But our daughter here decided to feel uncontrollable with her dress. Siphe warned me about her. We walked to the car, I headed the road. We were few meters from the venue. We could walk there but time wasn't in my favor.

While I was driving, I realized that there was a car behind us. It was flashing lights. I stopped the car at the church gate. The man got out of the car and walked to me.

Man: Get out of the car.

Me: Pardon.

He pulled out a gun. I covered Nelly's eyes.

Me: The hell?

He shot Nelly first then me.

Me: You fucken up.

I felt multiple bullets on my head. That wasn't the act of random violence. On my wedding day, in my father's church, with my

daughter. Noma has been through the most, but life doesn't have break, disappointment is directly linked to one's expectations when our expectations and the outcome do not match. The occasional disappointment doesn't normally trigger anger.

Me: Little angel ten years with mommy and forever with dad.

I cough then took a deep breath. Noma's happiness was always measured. I promised to protect her and Musa I will continue protect them.

NOMASONTO

Mav: Did you hear that?

I nodded.

Me: Couldn't they choose another day?

Mav: The is nothing new about gun shot Mrs Thabethe.

Me: Not yet babes.

We laughed.

[THIRTY MINUTES LATER]

My mother walked she was crying.

Me: Mom.

Mrs Radebe: I'm sorry baby.

Me: Okay you sorry are you here to walk me down the aisle.

She shook her head.

Mrs Radebe: The wedding is off baby.

She cried.

Me: What? Why? How?

Mom: Nelly. (*Crying*)

Happiness and sadness are just temporary.

I knew what she wanted to to say.

I ran out of that room to meet Vee's mother crying.

Me: Ma!

Mrs T: Not my son, not my granddaughter. Noma tell them.

I looked at his car on the crime scene, I felt my heart on my knees. The unwillingness to accept the reality that you didn't get what you expected is what triggers anger. Just when I was about to cut the knot with Vee, everything flushed before my eyes, I ran there, I looked at those two bodies lying down on the pavement covered with a white sheet.

Me: Not my baby.... Not my happiness. Why God, why them?

I asked the paramedic lady to show me their faces, my only daughter was gone.

Me: My baby. *(Crying)*

Death is a cruel and heartless enemy. To all of us deal with. Jesus paid the price of our sin once and for all. He broke the curse of death by rising from the dead three days after sinful people nailed him to a deadly cross. Because He rose from the dead, we have hope for new life, now and forever. Pain death, happiness and disappointment are part of life, we cannot run away from them. I never smelled the sense of happiness. I was always facing troubles after another.

.....**THE END**.....

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