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-I knew that it wasn't my time to die. A spare key from the mortuary saved my life and not only saved my life but opened doors of life I never thought I'd have outside of Pretoria. I didn't take Melokuhle because I wanted to hurt Ivan but because Melokuhle was the only best thing that ever happened to me. 3 years after I left from Pretoria I found myself going in and out of the hospitals, you see during the fire accident in the mortuary I managed to escape but I inhaled a lot of smoke and I refused to go to the hospital, unfortunately I didn't know that I was badly damaged inside, my lungs were affected. Ivan thought he was smart but I was always a step ahead of him, I didn't think that the reason he stole that key was because he was planning to kill me one day, I thought he did it because he was trying to prevent me from going back to the mortuary. Life has changed for the past 22 years. I found love again, I got married to the nurse that I met at the hospital and her name is Silumko Ndamase. A very beautiful Xhosa woman, who caught my attention while I was sleeping in my bed of death. I said to her ``I'm not dying here before I get your number``. Her smile healed me and the next thing we were married and she gave me 2 boys, Linile and Vunani. With Linile sometimes I wonder if he was some sort of a demon that was sent to torture me because my boy knew how to fuck up my life. Linile was living in his own world, he had tattoos all over his body and just when

we thought we had seen it all he came home with rings all over his face. He loves expensive things from his clothes to his shoes but if you would come across him you'd actually think he is a hobo. He loves ripped jeans, torn t-shirts and dirty sneakers. He knew how to damage his clothes and his sneakers the first day he got them. Every time I look at him I get a terrible headache

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oh and his name is no longer Linile, everyone calls him City, don't ask me why because I also have no idea. -

-We walked out of the police station and got inside the car. He looked calm and relaxed as usual. He is always calm and collected no matter what the situation and sometimes I'm glad that he doesn't speak much the way he is so slow, I always want to finish sentences for him-

Me : You got arrested again

Linile : I know tayma

Me : I'm not going to ask you why you got arrested because I know the answer is always the same but what I want to know is how long am I going to keep bailing you out with my money?

Linile : As long as I'm still not the favorite boy on the streets I really cannot say. Do you feel me?

Me : When are you going to actually man up for your actions? When are you going to ever stop blaming everyone for your own shit?

-He put on his seat belt and ignored me-

Me : Vunani is always cleaning up your shit but he is younger than you!.... Dammit!

-I felt my chest burning-

Linile : I don't mind staying in jail. Jail is better than being at home but I guess because you are so worried about your reputation then you are still going to keep bailing me out

-I couldn't speak anymore. The pain I was feeling in my chest didn't allow me to speak -

Linile : We all know that I'm not your favorite son. I know that I'm not Melokuhle, your favorite son but Tayma, you need to understand that no one forced you to give birth to me. You understand?

Me : Shut up

Linile : Every time I'm trying to make a conversation with you, you tell me to shut up. When I ask you about your family you tell me to shut up. I told you that I know that the surname we are using is wrong and you told me to shut up, when I told you that I saw Melokuhle on Khumbul'ekhaya you told me to shut up

-Yeah he also believed that he saw Melokuhle on some show called Khumbul'ekhaya. I took out my pills and swallowed them
"

Me : Melokuhle is my son, he is your brother. And Linile you need to stop asking me questions about Melokuhle

Linile : He is just different from all of us but ku grand. Are you sick?

Me : I'm not sick. And okunye the surname issue ends today. Your surname is Nkwanyana and if you keep going to these sangomas who are feeding you lies then I'm telling you this one last time, you will pack your bags and go live with those sangomas

Linile : I just want to know the truth.

Me : What truth?

-I changed my surname to Nkwanyana. My children and my wife didn't know anything about Dlamini and they didn't know that Melokuhle was not my biological son, I was going to keep it that way until I die but Linile kept taking me back to the life I left behind

1

SILUMKO

-After years of trying, praying and hoping for love but nothing worked out. All my relationships failed and I finally gave up. 8 December, I will never forget this day, this is the day I saw Osama Nkwanyana for the first time. I couldn't stay away from his private ward. It was very selfish of me because I never wanted him to leave the hospital. I prayed that he doesn't get better and stay in that hospital so that I could see him every day. I was happy to go to work and sad to leave work because it meant leaving Osama behind. Osama never said anything to me, whenever I walked into his ward I would greet him and he would just keep quiet but I was still so attracted to him. I was obsessed with him, when he touched something I wished that I was that certain thing, I wished to be the bed he was sleeping in, I wished to live in his head and see what he was thinking about. When he asked for my number I thought I was dreaming. Osama is everything that every woman ever dreamed of, even at 52 he is still turning heads. There is something about him that draws women closer to him and it's more than just his looks. The day he asked for my number I didn't give that very same day so the next day I was working the night shift and when I got to work I started at Osama's private

ward as usual but I found his bed clean, there was no sign of Osama, nothing showed that he was ever there. I was going crazy, I thought I was never going to see him again but I knew he wasn't dead, in my mind I thought he moved to another hospital. I cried and walked all around the hospital asking every nurse, every doctor about what happened to Osama and they all looked at me like I was crazy but that was nothing new, I was new in that hospital and no one really liked me. I went to the bathroom and cried, I was no longer in the mood and I heard Dr Matwa and Dr Jacobs talking about Osama's operation being a success, that's when I realized that Osama was in the operating room all this time. I ran back to his ward, I pushed the door and I smiled. That night Linile was conceived right in Osama's hospital bed

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please don't judge me, I don't know why I was so weak but at least he didn't see me as a cheap girl because the man proposed to me a week before he got out of the hospital. I don't know how he organized the whole thing but that night we had dinner in his ward, he gave me flowers and I walked out with a big diamond ring on my finger. When I told him that I wasn't allowed to do all the things he made me do at work he said "You don't need this job anyway so let them fire you".

Osama was my new beginning to a new and the most amazing life I never thought existed -

-Osama walked in alone -

Me : Mntu wami

Osama : Hey sweetheart, your son is coming.

Me : Ithini ke into?

-Osama threw his car keys on the table and kissed me -

Osama : Public drinking... I just want to lie down.

Me : Are you ok?

Osama : Yes my love. I'm just tired

-My husband seemed so defeated. The homeless hobo God blessed us with as our first born walked in. -

Me : Linile yiza apha.

-He walked closer to me and I slapped him. -

Me : Do you have any idea how much you are hurting your father? Did you see your father?

-I was angry and Linile seemed so relaxed even after I slapped him-

Linile : What did I do? I told him I wasn't drinking but because the cops found me with people who were drinking they took all of us.

Me : That is exactly the same thing that you said when you were arrested for selling Marijuana.

Linile : I'm trying to understand what you want me to say.

Me : Nothing. I can't wait to see your matric results

-I walked back to the kitchen. A few minutes later I heard
Vunani's voice-

Me : Nani?

-I called out for him -

Vunani : I'm coming Mah

-My son was probably hungry, he was at school almost the
whole day -

Vunani : Hi Mah, where is Bah? I want to show him my results. I
got straight A's so he knows the deal

Me : That's my baby! Come give mommy a hug

-I hugged him -

Me : I'm so proud of you Nani ka mama. I can't believe you are going to matric

Vunani : Let me go and show Bah.

Me : He is sleeping Vunani

Vunani : No

--He ran to our bedroom. His brother was sitting on the couch watching TV like nobody's business -

Me : Aren't you going to congratulate your brother Nile? He got straight As

Linile : Ungikhombisile. Nice

Me : Nice? Is that all you can say?

Linile : Let's be straight now, it's not like me jumping up and down for Vunani is going to change anything. Vunani knows that you guys are going to go all out to show him how much you are proud of him so I'm not going to waste my energy. Do you feel me?

Me : Feel you ikaka? jonga, you need to go and take a shower.

-Melokuhle walked in coming from work-

Melokuhle : Sanibona

-He looked at Linile and back at me, I rolled my eyes. I took Melokuhle's bag and he kissed my cheek -

Me : Hello Kuhle. How was your day, my boy?

Melokuhle : Good I just....

Me : Take off your jacket

-I helped him take off his jacket-

Melokuhle : I had back to back meetings. Where is Nani? I fired his driver

Me : Good, he only brought him home now. He is with Babah upstairs

Melokuhle : Cabanga he called me at 13h00 engitshela ukuthi ulambile.

Me : Oh my poor baby. Why didn't he call me? I was home all day

Linile : Because Bhuti Kuhle is his favorite brother.

-Melokuhle shook his head-

Me : Don't mind this jailbird. I'm cooking your favorite food

Melokuhle : I love you Mah

-We laughed. Melokuhle cleared his throat -

Melokuhle : City, what happened last night?

Linile : I got arrested. I called you but you didn't pick up my calls

Melokuhle : How did you end up drinking in public because you told us you were.....

Linile : Bhuti I know what I said. Why do you guys want me to repeat the same thing again and again?

-Melokuhle sighed -

Melokuhle : I need to talk to Baba

Me : Aren't you going to eat first? There is pizza

Melokuhle : I'll wait for dinner

-OK. I kissed his cheek and went back to the kitchen -

OSAMA

-Melokuhle walked in the bedroom and he laughed-

Melokuhle : Baba usulele? The old age is kicking in

-I laughed -

Me : Forget it son

Melokuhle : Are you alright?

-Melokuhle was the only one who saw pain in my laughter -

Me : Yeah

Melokuhle : Are you sure?

Me : Yeah. I'm getting back to business tomorrow

Melokuhle : That's good. Where is the genius? He told me he got straight As

Me : He did and he wants a car

Melokuhle : You promised him. He is turning 17 soon baba

Me : I know. He needs to get his license

Melokuhle : City is getting out of hand Baba

Me : He is lost and I don't have the energy to deal with him

Melokuhle : He is getting worse. Udabula izingubo ethele amateku ngo pende, it's all crazy. I don't think he will pass his matric

Me : He will or I'll kill him

-Melo sighed-

Melokuhle : You don't mean that.....Anyway we have bigger problems,The Nkwanyana account is empty.

Me : Empty?

Melokuhle : Yes, all the money's gone. I tried to trace it but it was a dead end

Me : You must be kidding me.

Melokuhle : I wish.

Me : I'll sort it out

Melokuhle : Baba asikhulumi ngemadlana nje la. We are talking about R800 000

Me : I know but don't worry about it. Melokuhle I don't want you to get distracted, you are running a multi million business and I trust you with that business. Don't lose focus

Melokuhle : I know but we can't let this slide.

Me : We won't. I'll get to the bottom of this. Okay?

Melokuhle : Ok

Me : I'm proud of you.

Melokuhle : I know baba but I think City would also love to hear you say that to HIM.

Me : No

Melokuhle : There is tension between him and I. Uze wathi wena awungizali.

Me : That's nonsense. I'm your father, your biological father.

Melokuhle : I know. City just love messing up with my head, Uthi wangibona ku Khumbul'ekhaya.

Me : Udla insangu u Linile. Don't listen to him

-He laughed -

Melokuhle : Ngiyabonga baba for believing in me.

Me : I know that I can count on you and Vunani.

Melokuhle : And City baba

Me : I need to make a phone call.

-He shook his head and walked out. I looked at me and I remembered that there was a time where I was so scared thinking that I would lose him. Ivan was looking for him but he was looking in all the wrong places. I knew that everyone was going to think that I'll move overseas and none of them thought of Eastern Cape.-

2

SILUMKO

AT THE HOSPITAL

Me : I actually can't believe this is my last week in this hell.

Zizo : How I wish I could also find a rich husband who would tell me to retire at 39, you are so lucky Silumko.

-I laughed. Zizo was my only friend at work and it saddened me that I was leaving her. Osama couldn't wait for me to stop working and I told him to wait until I turned 39 at least. -

Me : I'm blessed Zizo and I pray that one day you find yourself a man like my husband.

Zizo : Thank you mngani wami. Tell me how is Linile? he must be nervous about the matric results

Me : He doesn't even care.

Zizo : Suxoka

Me : I'm telling you, he wants to take a gap year.

Zizo : You can't allow that mtakabawo

Me : Ndiyayazi qha i worry yami iyi one, what if I push him to varsity and he fails?

Zizo : What if he takes that gap year and he becomes worse?

Me : I don't know. I'm just tired Zizo

Zizo : I know this is hard for you and Osama but you are his parents, sit down and talk to him, find out what is really wrong with him?

Me : There is nothing wrong with Linile, he is just a spoiled boy who grew up getting everything he wanted. Osama is to blame for that boy's behavior!

Zizo : He is too easy on his children.

Me : Exactly. He is not getting that princess he is busy telling me about, Imagine me being pregnant at this age.

-We laughed -

Zizo : I bet that princess will walk out of the hospital with a plane as a stroller.

-I laughed-

Me : He is really not that bad

Zizo : He spoils his children...way too bad if you ask me.

Me : I know. Ithini ke yeyakho into?

Zizo : You don't want to know. I was called by the HEAD today and apparently I haven't been a good nurse in the entire hospital

Me : Yoooh thiza wami! Will she ever give you a break?

Zizo : Soze. I'm going to quit, watch this space.

Me : But.....

-I paused when I saw doctors passing by pushing an emergency stretcher.-

Me : Oh my goodness

Zizo : Did you see that?

Me : Whoever it is, it's bad.

Zizo : No you didn't. I think that's one of your sons, that person looked exactly like Linile. I know what I saw

Me : What?

-I ran following the doctors-

Doctor : Sister Nkwanyana you can't go in

Me : No, no I want to go in! That's my son

Doctor : What? No, it can't be. It's a woman

Me : A woman?

Doctor : A young woman. She needs our full attention or we are going to lose her. She lost a lot of blood

Me : What happened?

Doctor : I can't talk, please excuse me, I need to rush to the operating room.

-I sighed in relief. At least it wasn't one of my sons-

Me : Thank you Dr James

-He walked away -

-My shift was almost over when Zizo disturbed my peace -

Zizo : Yey Silumko kunenxaki.

Me : Phi?

Zizo : That lady in the ICU looks like Vunani

Me : Zizo, we spoke about this. Please drop it

Zizo : Ay chomi yizo bona maarn

Me : Where did you get the permission to even go there?

Zizo : I work here, come.

-I followed her. I also froze when I saw that lady. She looked exactly like Osama, well Osama's children all looked like him except Melokuhle. -

Zizo : Do you see what I meant? Ay ifilimu le, jonga impumlo yakhe Silumko, Yoooh hhay! Qala ukwibona ke le.

Me : Yes, she looks Vunani but abantu bayafana.

-I laughed -

Zizo : I guess

Me : Bathi ithini into yakhe?

Zizo : She tried to commit suicide, she cut her wrist.

Me : Oh my God, please save our children.

Zizo : It's bad

Me : We can't be here, this is unacceptable. Let's go

Zizo : Ok

-My heart started racing when I saw a small scar on that lady's chin. Osama had the same scar -

Me : No no no. This is insane

Zizo : What?

Me : Never mind, what's her name?

Zizo : I don't know. I don't have that information

Me : Yeah. Ok

Zizo : Yes.

Me : But how is this possible? No no no

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let's go.

-I pushed Zizo out -

Zizo : Are you ok? You are sweating?

Me : I'm fine, I'm just confused.

Zizo : About What?

Me : What if Osama lied to me?

Zizo : About what?

Me : About his baby mama's death, Melokuhle's mother.

Zizo : No Silumko you are overdoing it now. This was supposed to be a joke enyanisweni but I see that you are....

Me : I'm just thinking qha.

Zizo : Yes she does look like Vunani but this has nothing to do with Osama. Wabhubha umama ka nyana wakhe! Yiyeke!

Me : I know. I trust my husband, I'm just being ridiculous right now.

Zizo : You said it yourself uba abantu bayafana, nami ndiyayazi and I'm being honest with you, this was supposed to be a joke. Please don't ask Osama about this ugubhe amanxeba ngezinto ezingabhadlanga

Me : No, I won't.

Zizo : Your shift is over.

Me : I'm going home, finally. My feet are killing me

Zizo : You have a husband and a bunch of children. They will sort those feet out

-I laughed -

Me : Yeah

Zizo : See you tomorrow chomi. Ndiyakuthanda va?

Me : I love you too

-She walked away and I sighed looking at the door where that lady was. -

-I was finally home. I parked my car inside the garage and grabbed a bottle of water. I drank. I was feeling drained and worried, yes I was worried but I had no reason to be worried. I walked inside the house and I smiled -

Me : Mntu wam. Wow

-There were black and red roses all around the floor, candles and all the other good things -

Osama : Sweetheart you are home

-I hugged him and kissed his chest, he was shirtless. -

Me : Where are the strangers we got from the hospital?

-When Osama has had it with them he would shout "I won't allow strangers we got from hospital to come between my wife and I"... My husband is that type of a father "

-We laughed -

Osama : I told them to go out. I want some time with my wife

Me : I needed this. Thank you Mntuwam

Osama : Life is a gift sthandwa sami

-He said while taking off my shoes -

Osama : There we go...better?

Me : Much better. Thanks baby... And where does that come from?

Osama : Sit... Lumka, I've been through hell and out, that made me realize that life is indeed an incredible gift.

Me : I know, losing Melokuhle's mother must have been hard on you.

Osama : And where does that come from now? I thought we agreed that we would never speak about Melokuhle's mother.

Me : We did but she was your wife, Umama ka nyana akho.

Osama : I don't want to talk about that.

Me : I'm sorry

Osama : It's ok. I want to update my will

Me : Osama what's going on?

Osama : Nothing. Don't be scared

Me : Okay

Osama : I'm not going to be here forever and when that day comes, I want to leave everything in order.

Me : You sound like someone who is giving up in life. What's going on? Are you sick again?

Osama : Sick? No Lumka. I'm doing something that any father and husband can do

-Osama was hiding something, I saw it in his eyes-

Me : How about I give you that princess before you update it?

Osama : Come on sweetheart we don't need another baby. U Linile uyizingane ezu 20 nje eyi one

-We laughed -

Me : But you don't have a daughter

Osama : WE don't have a daughter but that's fine. We don't need one

Me : Are you sure?

Osama : Yes sweetheart. Let's eat

Me : Ok

Osama : Are you alright? You look different

Me : No no, I'm fine. I had a long day

Osama : What happened?

-I didn't know if I should tell him about what happened in the hospital or not. -

Me : No, nothing new.

Osama : Only 2 days left ushiye wonke loya msangano

Me : I can't wait.

Osama : Me too

-He kissed my neck and I laughed -

Me : Let's eat first

-We ate. We didn't even finish eating and I was screaming Osama's name. Melokuhle walked in on us -

Melokuhle : Jeez baba!

-He covered his eyes with his hands-

Osama : What the fuck are you doing here?

Melokuhle : I live here. Aren't you guys old now to have sex like this?

-I was so embarrassed and Osama didn't even care, he was busy cleaning himself in front of our son. He threw the towel on my thighs-

Melokuhle : Ay Mah. Ay ay ay

-Melokuhle ran to his room. Osama laughed -

Me : It's not funny! You said they were out

Osama : I don't know why he came back so early

-He laughed and kissed me -

Osama : Come. I'll take you to the shower

-I giggled as he picked up from the couch -

OSAMA

-Melokuhle seems unsettled. -

Me : I thought I told you boys that I needed some time alone with my wife

Melokuhle : Allow us to move out, baba. You and Mah need your own space

Me : I want to be with all my children under one roof

Melokuhle : Sibadala manje, mina no City.

Me : I'm your father anisoze naba badala kimi

Melokuhle : Living room is not for sex

-I chuckled -

Me : Noted Mr Nkwanyana

Melokuhle : Thank you

Me : Are you ok?

Melokuhle : It's City

Me : Wenzeni u Linile?

Melokuhle : He is not on the list

Me : List?

Melokuhle : For Selbourne matric learners of the year

Me : How is that possible? Ubefunda khona nje

Melokuhle : I know but I got an email from the school inviting you to attend a prayer session for ama matric abo.

Me : Prayer? I don't do that shit

Melokuhle : I know baba but that's not the point, the point is his name was not on the list.

Me : They made a mistake, these things happen.

Melokuhle : Yes. I hope it's a mistake

Me : Yeah

Melokuhle : There is a board meeting this Friday. About that overseas investment.

Me : It's a great investment... Unfortunately I won't be part of the meeting. Your mother will be there

Melokuhle : Baba this is a serious meeting, wazini u Mah ngalezinto?

Me : She doesn't need to know anything. It will be millionaires nje lapha talking about why this investment is important to help out the government of South Africa blah blah blah. All that shit

Melokuhle : How do you know all that?

Me : Just because I sit in this house all day doesn't mean I don't understand the business world anymore. Ngiyahlala ngisebenze layikhaya

-My chest tightened. I groaned-

Melokuhle : Baba are you okay?

-I nodded -

Melokuhle : Are you sick Mlwandle?

-Whenever he started calling me by my clan, I knew he was never going to stop nagging -

Me : I'm ok son. I need to lie down

Melokuhle : Ok

-He looked worried and I couldn't look at him anymore. I went to my bedroom and swallowed my pills before Silumko walked in. -

3

SILUMKO

-I was worried about Linile and Vunani. They were not picking up their phones. -

Osama : Sweetheart sit down

Me : Sit down? Nkwanyana, did you see the time? It's 22h30, Linile and Vunani are still not here.

Osama : But for you to walk up and down won't change anything.

Me : What if something bad happened? I understand that Linile is just a homeless hobo who wears torn t-shirts and ripped jeans and comes back home when he wants to but u Vunani? This is not like him.

Osama : I'm sure they are on their way back.

Me : How do you know that?

-Melokuhle walked down the stairs -

Me : And?

Melokuhle : Nothing. The driver searched everywhere, every bar but they were nowhere.

-I felt a pain in my lower stomach -

Me : Where did you leave them, Kuhle?

Melokuhle : We went separately.

Me : Osama I will not allow this to happen again, I don't care if you wanted to spend time with me alone but this will never

happen again. You told these boys to go out and now I have to deal with this?

-Osama took his car keys -

Me : Where are you going?

Osama : To search for them

Melokuhle : I'll come with you

Me : When you do find them please don't do anything stupid Babah. I'm begging you

Osama : Ok. Let's go Melo

-Before they walked out the door swung open. Linile and Vunani walked in. Osama sat down and covered his face with his hands-

Me : Niphuma phi?

-Vunani looked scared and Linile looked calm as usual -

Linile : We were with friends

Me : At this time?

Linile : No, earlier than this time.

-My blood boiled. -

Me : Linile, are you drunk?

Vunani : He only had one drink Mah

-Linile laughed -

Linile : Vunani are you sure that you are Osama's son? Yeses!
Imagine living your life like this... Telling the truth all the time.
Don't you get tired of always telling the truth? Vunani we don't
do that, well I don't do that. Bah and I of course

-Osama looked at Linile with his hand on his chin. He shook his
head -

Melokuhle : Linile follow me

Linile : Oh oh are you going to beat me up Mike Tyson? What's
going to be today, your belt or you will finally man up and fight
with me like a man?

Osama : Are you talking to your brother like that?

-Linile looked around like he was searching for something -

Linile : Definitely not. Nobody speaks to Bhuti Kuhle like that. Come Melokuhle, come and beat me up. I want to go to bed and sleep, it was a long day.

Me : Linile how dare you?

Linile : Sorry

-He Laughed-

Me : When are the results coming out?

Linile : Results? What are you talking about?

-Osama stood up and walked away -

Me : Your matric results

Linile : I have no idea. Phela to know about the results you need to go to school, write exams and wait for results. Easy!

Melokuhle : What do you mean City?

Linile : Keep waiting Mike Tyson... Keep waiting. Goodnight fam

-He whistled and walked away. I felt tears burning in my eyes -

Me : Is that what you want now Vunani? To be useless like that brother of yours?

Vunani : He is not use....

Me : Shut up!

Vunani : I'm sorry Mah. I'm sorry, I told him to call the driver but he kept telling me to wait.

Me : You will not go out with that hobo again. Ever! Do you understand me?

Vunani : Yes Mah.

-We heard Linile screaming upstairs -

Me : Oh my God, he is beating him. Osama No!

-I wanted to go and stop him but Melokuhle stopped me -

Melokuhle : Leave him Mah. Linile needs to understand that what he did was wrong. Let baba deal with him

Me : No no I can't

Melokuhle : Sit down Mah. Please

-I covered my ears as Linile kept screaming my name to come and help him. Finally there was silence -

Me : I need to check on them

Melokuhle : I'll go

Me : No, I'll go.

-I ran up the stairs, all the way to the 3rd floor. -

Osama : Now drink, angithi you are a man? You are the head of this family! You are the only one calling shots. Drink Linile

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Finish that bottle.

-I was listening from outside. I pushed the door. Osama was sitting on top of a pool table. I walked in -

Me : Oh no Osama!

-Linile had blood coming out of his nose. There was blood in his mouth as well. He hands were trembling as he lifted up a bottle of whiskey-

Osama : Get out Lumka!!

Me : No, please don't do this.

Osama : This is between me and my son. Now get out

-I had never seen Osama that angry. I shook my head-

Osama : He is a man now, he drinks like me. Let him drink

Me : This is not how you discipline a child, Mthayi ka Nsele this is....

Osama : Don't do that. Lumka, I'm trying to have a conversation with my son and you are interrupting me.

Me : A conversation? Really Osama? Look at him, look at his face!

Osama : So you don't want to leave?

Me : That's not what I....

Osama : Fine. I'll leave

-He walked out -

OSAMA

-I drove out of my house not knowing where I was going. It was 23h23 and I was parking in front of a gas station watching the rain through my window. My phone rang, it was Silumko. I pressed the ignore button. When I lifted up my head I noticed a

woman who was standing in the rain alone talking to someone over the phone. She was moving her hands through the air dramatically like she was arguing with whomever she was speaking to. She was pointing everywhere and my eyes moved with her hands. She moved and stood in front of the garage door. She removed the hood of her jacket and everything stopped. My world stopped -

Me : What the heck? - I muttered -

-Now that was Banele Dlamini. She has grown but I was certain that it was Banele. What was she doing in Eastern Cape? Were they after me? Did they manage to track me down? Was it them who stole the money from the Nkwanyana account? Ivan was smart and I knew he was going to find me one day, I just didn't think it was going to be so soon. I didn't know what to do but I knew I wasn't going to run, I was done running. She looked around and placed her hands over her head. She was waiting for someone from what I saw. She kept bouncing her leg, she seemed unsettled and so uncomfortable. She finally sat down on the paper that was on the ground, she buried her face with her hands. My phone rang again, I disconnected the call and got out of the car -

-I stood in front of her with my hands tucked in my pockets-

Me : Banele

-She quickly removed her hands from her face and she froze when she realized who I was. She mumbled-

Me : What are you doing here?

Banele : Osama is this you?

-I laughed and she swallowed hard-

Me : I don't die easily Mrs Ndlovu

-She tried to stand up but I noticed that she couldn't. I didn't know if she was too scared or too weak. I gave her my hand-

Me : Let me help you

-She looked at my hand and up at me-

Me : Banele come on

-She stretched her hand and I helped her up. She still had the ring on her finger-

Banele : Wow I... I don't... It's been a while.

-She stuttered -

Me : 20 years. It's been 20 years

Banele : Not more than that?

-She tried to pull a smile -

Me : I'm making you uncomfortable so I'll leave. It was great to see you

Banele : It was... I mean I'm happy to see you too.

Me : Right. See you around

-I turned around to walk away -

Banele : Please don't.

Me : Excuse me?

Banele : I don't know anyone here and I don't know where to go from here.

-I turned around and looked at her-

Me : What do you mean?

Banele : It's a long story. I....

-She broke down in tears -

Me : Let's go

-She quickly wiped her tears -

Banele : I know you have other important things to do with your time.

Me : It's after 23h00 Mrs Ndlovu.

Banele : But I....

Me : Let's go

Banele : Thank you, let me take my bag.

Me : Oh?

Banele : Yes

-She walked inside the garage and she came back with a bag, it wasn't a big bag but it was big. -

Me : Let me help you with that

Banele : Thank you

-I expected her to give me her bag but she was just staring at me -

Me : The bag

Banele : The bag, yes

Me : I want to help you with your bag. That bag

-She closed her eyes and quickly opened them -

Banele : My bag, yes of course. I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

-She handed me her bag. She looked confused -

Me : Are you carrying guns in here?

Banele : Guns?

Me : Yeah. To kill me?

-I opened the boot and placed her bag -

Banele : Osama that is....

Me : It's a joke. Get in the car Mrs Ndlovu

-I opened the door for her and she got inside. I got in the driver's seat -

Banele : This car is so warm

-She rubbed her hands together -

Me : Are you okay?

Banele : Yes. I'm okay now

-I grabbed my phone and called the nearest hotel. She was looking at me throughout the call. -

Banele : Still the powerful Osama, I see.

Me : I'm not powerful. I'll take you to the hotel and you can spend as many days as you need

Banele : Thank you so much Osama. I don't know what was going to happen to me if you didn't show up

Me : What are you doing in Eastern Cape?

-She coughed-

4

OSAMA

-There was silence all the way to the hotel. I placed her bag on the bed -

Me : I must go now

-She looked around the hotel room -

Banele : Thank you, for all of this.

Me : I guess you are not going to tell me how you ended up here.

-She cleared her throat -

Banele : This was supposed to be my family vacation but Dalukhanyo dropped me at the last minute. He had work to do

Me : Who told you that I'm here?

Banele : No one, I promise. I didn't even know that you were here, I swear to God.

-I looked into her eyes and I knew she was telling me the truth -

Me : Good. I don't want troubles here

Banele : But the police are still looking for you Osama.

Me : I know and I'm keeping it low key, unless you are going to throw me in.

Banele : I don't have time for nonsense Osama, I'm too old for that, God will deal with you in his own way.

-I swallowed hard -

Me : I see.

-I reached for the door -

Banele : Are you still doing it? Killing every Dlamini for your father's sins?

Me : No

-I said with my back facing her-

Banele : How do you sleep at night knowing what you did?

Me : I sleep very well Banele, thank you for asking.

-She laughed sarcastically -

Banele : You are still cold for an old man like you. I thought you changed but I guess people never really change.

Me : I don't know.

Banele : You came to your own funeral and you stole Melokuhle.

Me : I didn't steal him. I took what was mine

Banele : Oh please Osama, he wasn't yours. He is never going to be yours even in that grave.

-I turned around with my brow raised-

Me : Grave?

Banele : Don't act dumb, we know that you killed him. You killed an innocent boy Osama! Melokuhle didn't deserve what you did to him, he was young.

Me : I don't know what you are talking about. Melokuhle Nkwanyana is alive

-She froze for a moment -

Banele : He... he is alive?

-I walked closer to her -

Me : Listen here Mrs Ndlovu, I have my life all together and you are not going to screw it up for me. Do you understand me?

Banele : Y...yes.

Me : Good.

-I turned around to walk out-

Banele : How is he?

-I smiled -

Me : Very well. He is a man now

Banele : Please sit down

-I looked at the time in my watch -

Me : It's late

Banele : Just 10 minutes - She laughed - It's not like you have a wife waiting for you.

-I shook my head. I sat down on a small couch -

Me : Is that what you think?

Banele : Come on Osama, wena all you ever cared about was money and I'm sure that hasn't changed.

Me : My whole life has changed Mrs Ndlovu...for the better

Banele : You wish. Not after everything you have done Osama

-My phone rang. It was Silumko, she was probably worried sick

-

Me : Lumka - I answered -

Silumko : Baby thank God, where are you?

-She sniffed between words. She was crying -

Me : I'm coming.

Silumko : Where are you Babah? I'm sorry about what happened. Please come back home

Me : Don't be sorry. I'm on my way

-I took my car keys next to me and I stood up. -

Silumko : I love you baby

Me : I love you too

-Banele looked at me with her eyes out. She looked shocked. I hung up -

Banele : Wow. I don't believe this

Me : I need to go

Banele : Why didn't I see that? Ngaze ngayislima - I'm so stupid

-

Me : What?

Banele : That ring, you are married, Osama.

-I smiled -

Me : I am. To a beautiful woman who changed my life - I chuckled- She drives me crazy sometimes but I love her with all my heart. You know after all the darkness

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dryness and turmoil around me it finally rained. A man with no children is a man with no purpose. I always thought I had a problem with having kids but God said no, I'm going to make it rain Osama and he blessed me with a beautiful baby boy and I named him Linile "It has rained"

-Her mouth gape opened-

Me : After Linile I was blessed with my genius. You know what happens after the rain? Plants look beautiful and greener, that's when we reap so I named my second born Vunani. Linile Vunani "It has rained so reap Osama" , God said.

-I smiled -

Banele : Wow. I don't know what to say, I guess congratulations.

Me : I don't deserve all the good things that happened to me but what can I say? As fucked up as I am but I'm still blessed.

Banele : I think you should leave

Me : What?

Banele : Leave Osama

-A single tear squeezed out of her eyes. I was confused-

Me : Is everything okay?

Banele : Go. Go

Me : What have I done?

Banele : Nothing. Please leave

-She pushed me out of the door and the door closed -

Me : Ohhhkay

-I looked at the door and walked away -

SILUMKO

-I kept staring at the clock on my phone, I couldn't sleep without my husband but I couldn't keep my eyes open anymore. I woke up with his arm wrapped around me. -

Me : Baby?

-I checked the time. It was 3am, I slept for two hours. -

Osama : Sleep nana.

Me : When did you get back?

-I turned around and faced him. He grabbed my leg and wrapped it around him. He kissed my cheek-

Osama : Now that's better

-I smiled -

Me : Please don't ever do that again. We don't do that Mntu'wam, we don't run when we have problems, we sit down and fix them.

Osama : I know. I'm sorry

Me : It's okay my love

Osama : How is he?

Me : I gave him painkillers. He will be fine

Osama : I love my son. I don't know how things got out of hand.

Me : He will get over it babah

Osama : Yah

Me : Are you okay?

Osama : I saw someone I haven't seen in years.

Me : Who?

Osama : My ex girlfriend.

-My throat closed up -

Me : You were with your ex?

Osama : Yeah, She needed a place to sleep. Her husband didn't show up, they are on vacation.

Me : Husband?

Osama : Yes.

-I felt relieved -

Me : That's good

Osama : I told her about you and our boys but she acted weird

Me : Weird how?

Osama : I don't know. Let's sleep

-Osama didn't like to speak much. It was like talking made him sick. -

Me : Are they going to be here for Christmas?

Osama : I don't know sweetheart, we didn't speak that much.

Me : That's good....I mean that's - I sighed -

Osama : I'm yours Lumka. Yours only

-He said with his eyes closed, he was falling asleep. I smiled looking at my beautiful husband. He was mine, mines only -

-The following morning I woke up to Osama speaking to someone over the phone -

Osama : What do you mean he wasn't attending classes for the whole year?

-I sat up quickly -

Osama : And why am I only finding out about this now? What kind of school is that? Ey! Ey! Fuck you, fuck all of you!

-He hung up and threw his phone on the bed-

Me : What's wrong?

Osama : I'm going to kill Linile Nkwanyana

Me : What happened? What did he do?

Osama : He wasn't going to school. I want a meeting with all our drivers

Me : What do you mean he wasn't going to school?

Osama : Lumka yini ongayizwa?

Me : Everything, I don't understand a thing Osama.

-He shook his head and walked out. I got out of bed, wore my gown and followed him-

Osama : Linile!! Linile!!

-He yelled -

Me : Can you tell me what's going on?

Osama : Ey Linile!!! Wake up!!

-He banged Linile's door. Vunani and Melokuhle woke up-

Melokuhle : Baba what's going on?

Osama : Linile, if you don't open this door I'll break it!!

-The door opened -

Linile : Who died?

Osama : You are going to die!

Linile : Me?

Osama : Show me your school books

Linile : Oh no

5

SILUMKO

-The drivers walked in one by one. The 10th driver walked in and Osama finished his drink and looked at his glass. -

Osama : Can one of you explain to me why I hired 10 of you to take my boys to school?

-The drivers looked at each other -

Osama : Nobody wants to answer me, fine. Simo, I hired you first and I expect you to give me an answer to my question.

-Simo scratched his beard-

Simo : Because you knew that 10 drivers were enough to always get your children to school, in case one is sick, dealing with personal problems or anything else....

Osama : There is always going to be one to ensure that these boys get to school. Because I knew that 10 drivers would never get sick or deal with other shit at the same time

-He cut him off -

Simo : That's true

Osama : Now I want to know how come Linile did not attend his classes for the entire year?

-They looked at each other -

Osama : Rodger?

Rodger : We... I can't answer the question because whenever it's my turn to take Linile to school I always ensure that he gets to school on time. I always leave him in school and that goes for all of us

Osama : But why did.....

-Linile yawned -

Linile : This is tiring and boring at the same time. Sharp, I didn't go to school, I never sat my foot in matric because school was exhausting and a waste of my time.

-My knees started shaking -

Osama : How?

Linile : What do you mean by how, Bah? I lied about going to school and it's not like if I told that school was shit you were going to understand so I took care of things myself.

Me : Took care of things?

Linile : I paid my teacher to keep her mouth shut.

Melokuhle : You paid your teacher? With what money?

-Melokuhle's face turned red immediately -

Linile : With our money, from the Nkwanyana account. It was the only account I had access to

-Osama stood up and walked all around with his hands at the back of his head -

Vunani : Aibo Linile!

Linile : This has got nothing to do with you bro, you are too young for these things. Go and watch cartoons or something

-Melokuhle jumped from his seat and strangled Linile. I had no energy to stop him-

Melokuhle : You did what?

Linile : Get away from me!!

-Linile pushed Melokuhle roughly and Melokuhle looked at all of us in disbelief -

Linile : I used the money so what? Is your father going to kill me now? Let him kill me, I don't give a shit anymore!

-Tears ran down my cheeks. I couldn't believe that was my son, a son that I carried for nine months was doing that to me? -

Me : How much?

Linile : R600 000 and I did other things with the rest.

-I looked at Osama who was pressing his head against the wall -

Melokuhle : Baba uyamuzwa u Linile?

Osama : Get out

-Osama turned around and looked at the drivers. They all stood up and walked out -

Osama : What did you do with the rest of the money?

Linile : Baba you don't want to know

Osama : Tell me.

Linile : I had to take care of my son while I look for a job

-My heart was pounding, my eyes were blurry -

Vunani : You have a son?

Linile : I wanted to tell all of you but no one gives a shit about me in this family, you guys don't even....

Melokuhle : Baba!!

-Osama was on the floor. I screamed-

OSAMA

-"God will deal with you in his own way" I remembered Banele's words. Oh hell he was dealing with me and he used Linile to deal with me. What kind of a kid does that? He was only 18 years. He had a child and he dropped out of school? -

Me : I'm fine Lumka, I don't need hospital.

Silumko : You had a black out Osama

Me : Just a black out. These things are normal, please go to work.

Silumko : I know this is hard, Linile is showing us flames but I need you. I need you to be strong for me

-Tears ran down her face -

Me : Sweetheart I'm fine. I will deal with Linile

Silumko : Are you going to beat him up again?

Me : No, I'm done with Linile. Your son is dead to me

Silumko : Oh? He is MY son now?

Me : He is your son!

Silumko : You are to blame for all of this. I told you that you were spoiling these boys, Osama I told you! I told you that Linile was getting out of hand but you thought I was crazy. Injani ke ngoku xa inje? Linile doesn't care about school ngoba uyayazi uba he gets everything on a silver platter, ngoba uyayazi uba soze asokola! You screwed up OUR son!

Me : Are you blaming me for his behavior? Are you blaming me ngokumithisa kwakwe Lumka? Ey listen here woman, it was your job to teach that boy about the risk of having unprotected sex. You are a nurse, not me!! You failed your son!

-She placed her arms over her head -

Silumko : Really Osama?

Me : Yes really!! Amukela marn Lumka. Accept that you are not a fit mom and stop trying to make me guilty for your son's mistakes!!

Silumko : I can't believe you right now. Osama, after everything that we've been through, I raised Melokuhle as my own. He was 6 years old and I became a mother to him, I took him to school whilst you were busy fixing your businesses, I was there for your son when you were busy chasing money and today you have the audacity to stand here and tell me that I am a bad mother? Osama if I am a bad mother ndimkhulise njani u Vunani kanye no Melokuhle?

-Silence -

Silumko : Thetha!!! How did I raise a son that's not even mine if I am a bad mother? Why didn't you go and dug up your wife's grave and let her raise your son since I was a bad mom? Huh?

Me : I'm sorry

Silumko : No you are not!!

Me : Sweetheart wait, I'm really sorry. I'm just stressed. Lumka I hate not knowing how to get my shit together, for the first time

in my life I don't know how to fix my own problems and that is driving me nuts! I...

-I pressed my stomach. I felt myself running out of breath -

Silumko : I hate this. I hate how things are changing between us, it's sad to watch.

-I took a breath in and out -

Silumko : Are you okay?

Me : Yes. I'm sorry, sthandwa sami and I promise you that I will never speak to you in that manner again. Lumka I love you so much, I don't love you because you are beautiful, because you raised my son or because you gave me Linile and Vunani but I love you because you make me a better man, you soften my heart, you make me smile, you are my peace.

-She smiled and wiped her tears.-

Me : And I don't love you because you have a beautiful smile

-We laughed and I kissed her lips -

Me : I love you woman

Silumko : I love you too baby. Please promise me that you won't do anything bad to Linile, yes he needs to be punished but not with violence.

Me : I promise.

Silumko : I love you Babah

Me : No, I love you.

Silumko : Melokuhle will take me to work

Me : Ok

Silumko : I'm late... See you later.

-I kissed her and I didn't want to let go of her. She laughed -

Silumko : Ok stop now

Me : Ok go

-She blew me a kiss and she walked out-

SILUMKO

Me : I don't know what to do anymore. A whole baby Kuhle?

Melokuhle : It's shocking, I wonder how old that baby is.

Me : I don't know. I can't believe that we've been dealing with Linile's shit every December for the past 3 years, it's exhausting Kuhle.

Melokuhle : I know Mah but I think ukushaya u Linile doesn't help anymore, you and Bah need to sit down and talk to him like an adult.

Me : He is a kid!

Melokuhle : He is a father now

Me : I want to see that girl, Talk to your brother about it. Ok?

Melokuhle : I will

Me : I thank God every moment for allowing you to be part of my life but I still want to know if you are happy

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Kuhle did I not fail boy?

-He pulled out a face-

Melokuhle : Fail me? Of course not Mah, look at me. You did a great job

Me : You know what they say about stepmothers so sometimes I.....

Melokuhle : You are not my stepmother, you are my mother, you raised me.

-He cut me off and smiled-

Melokuhle : I love you

Me : I love you too son

Melokuhle : Don't ever doubt your parenting skills Mah

Me : Ok - I kissed his cheek - I need to go now. Thank you for bringing me to work, I know I wasn't going to manage to drive.

Melokuhle : Did Bah tell you about the meeting?

Me : He did and I told him that I won't be part of it. Kuhle your father can't keep pushing us to these meetings like he is running away from something, those are his businesses and they need his attention. We all have work to do

Melokuhle : I was checking the registrations, Mah and I was shocked to find out that all his companies are registered under our names and none of them under his name. I don't know when he changed the Messiah Construction and registered it under City's name but none of them are under his name anymore, it's confusing.

Me : I know, he told me but what I fail to understand is how he does it? I'll never understand your father

Melokuhle : He is different.

-I sighed-

Me : I need to get going. See you guys later

Melokuhle : Ok Mah. Take it easy, okay?

Me : I will.

-I got out of the car -

-I walked inside the hospital and I was glad that the following day it was my last day in that hell. I bumped myself into someone-

"Sorry, sorry"

Me : Jesus! Jonga apho uyakhona sisi citsho ndakonzakalisa -
watch where you are going, I almost hurt you -

-It was a woman. Her eyes were red and swollen -

Me : Are you okay?

Her : Yes, Yes.

-She ran out of the hospital -

"It's her mother, shame it must be hard for her"

-I turned around to see Zizo -

Me : Whose mother?

Zizo : That lady who tried to kill herself. Ye wethu apparently
her daughter lost a lot of blood and she needs a transfusion.

Me : So what's the matter?

Zizo : No match.

Me : Oh bawo! Citsho wasweleka - She almost died-

Zizo : Ewe, she was found in a bathtub, bleeding.

Me : Thiza wami! Ithini into yabantwana ka nene? - What's wrong with these children? -

Zizo : Kwaye wena u late - You are late-

Me : Ndiyayazi. I had my own family issues ke tana

Zizo : Ndixelele - Tell me-

Me : Hhayi izo needa ixesha kwaye ndi late. Khangela I watch -
No, it will need time and I'm late. Look at the time-

Zizo : You are at the Outpatient department today.

Me : Hhayi kwakhona? - Again? -

-She laughed -

Zizo : Ewe, Hhamba - Yes, go-

-I walked away dragging my feet. Luckily it wasn't that busy in
that department -

Me : Please give me a minute

-I lifted my eyes and it was that woman I bumped into -

Me : Please take a seat

Her : Thank you, I just need something for my headache. I struggle with migraine

Me : Did you eat?

-She shook her head -

Her : No

Me : But you are aware that's one of the triggers? Please sit down and relax

-She pulled out a chair and sat down-

Her : I know, I don't have an appetite.

Me : Is it your first time coming here?

Her : Yes and someone told me to come to this department. My daughter is admitted in this hospital, she is in a coma.

-Tears spilled over the sides of her eyes-

Me : I'm really sorry to hear that sis....

Her : Banele Ndlovu, Mrs Banele Ndlovu.

Me : Ok, Mrs Ndlovu please remove that doek on your head, it seems tight and please close your eyes.

-I stood up and checked outside, there was no one. I locked the door and deemed the lights -

Me : This should help for now

Mrs Ndlovu : My husband is supposed to be here with me but all he cares about is that stupid business.

-She said with her eyes closed. I felt her pain -

Me : But this an emergency, he needs to be here.

-She shook her head -

Mrs Ndlovu : Dalukhanyo doesn't care.

Me : I'm really sorry

Mrs Ndlovu : Don't be. My daughter needs blood and I'm not a match, she is going to die.

Me : No no don't say that.

Mrs Ndlovu : I'm scared nurse, I'm really scared.

Me : Please call me Silumko

Mrs Ndlovu : Can I open my eyes now Lumka?

-Hheyake! Only my husband calls me Lumka -

Me : Of course

-She sighed -

Mrs Ndlovu : I feel much better now

Me : Really?

Mrs Ndlovu : Yes

Me : I'll give you some painkillers but I still recommend that you go and see the doctor for more tests.

Mrs Ndlovu : I will as soon as I get back to KZN

Me : You are from KZN?

Mrs Ndlovu : Yes, my daughter has been seeing this guy. They met on these stupid dating sites and they were dating for almost a year now. The guy is from here so my daughter is the one who usually comes here to visit him and she arrived a couple of days ago but when she got here, her boyfriend told her that he has a kid and she... she... she

-She broke down -

Mrs Ndlovu : She tried to kill herself

-I tried to comfort her but things got worse -

Mrs Ndlovu : My daughter has been through so much, I thought I had her depression under control but I failed my daughter!!

Me : No no Banele you did not fail!

Mrs Ndlovu : I did! She tried to kill herself over a man. Is my love not enough for her? I know that she needs her father's love but I'm trying. I'm trying!

Me : You can't do it on your own, speak to her father, tell him that her daughter needs him.

Mrs Ndlovu : I tried to speak to Dalukhanyo but since he found out that he is not her biological father, he changed.

Me : Oh, He is not the father?

Mrs Ndlovu : No he is not. I was so sure that he was the father but as Melukhanyo grew up I saw that she was nothing like the Ndlovus and she started getting sick, we took her to every medical doctor, every sangoma but nothing helped. She needs her father and I can't stop thinking that her biological father might be the only one who can save her now.

Me : You think that his blood may be a match?

Mrs Ndlovu : I know so.

Me : Then try to look for her biological father or his family

Mrs Ndlovu : I don't want him near my daughter, he is a cruel man and besides that, he seems happy now and he will never accept his daughter.

Me : You don't know that. Mrs Ndlovu this is no longer about you and your feelings, this is about saving your daughter's life.

Mrs Ndlovu : I know but where do I find Osama now?

Me : What?

6

-There was absolutely no way to describe how I felt after the conversation I had with Banele Ndlovu. -

Me : I want to go home, Zizo. Now!!

Zizo : What happened?

Me : That lady in a coma is Osama's daughter!

-I was walking up and down -

Zizo : I knew it!!! She looks exactly like Vunani. Who told you?

Me : Her mother.

Zizo : Oh yes, I saw her looking at Melokuhle's car after she bumped into you.

Me : She was looking at Kuhle?

Zizo : Yes and a few minutes later I saw her going to your department.

Me : So this woman knows who I am and she just sat there and pretended not knowing anything about me!! What is she up to? Did she speak to Kuhle?

Zizo : No, I don't think she knew it was Melokuhle but the way she was looking at him.

Me : She knew!

Zizo : Is she his mother?

Me : What? No, I didn't ask her. Oh my God Zizo, what if she is Melokuhle's mother? I know I've been asking this a million times but I'll ask again, Zizo what if Melokuhle's mother didn't die? What if Banele is Melokuhle's mother and she is here to

take back what belongs to her, which is Osama and Melokuhle?

Zizo : That's bullshit! Osama belongs to you! Silumko you had every chance to ask that woman questions and you just let her go just like that?

Me : I got nervous, Zizo, I didn't even tell her that I'm Osama's wife. You should have heard bragging about how much Osama loved her and how she messed up a good thing they had. I swear that woman came to see me because she knew who I was

Zizo : She must forget about Osama! That man is yours Silumko, let her come and take her son but Osama is not going anywhere

Me : No, Osama will never survive without Melokuhle, he loves him more than he loves Linile and Vunani and you know it.

Zizo : What if she really doesn't know who you are?

Me : Why would she tell me all those things? why would she trust me with her personal things, secrets like that? Zizo let's be real, you can't just walk into a stranger and start telling them all about your personal life unless you are up to something.

Zizo : What if she was lying?

Me : She wasn't. Osama told me that he met with his ex and I'm sure he was talking about her

Zizo : Osama said that?

Me : Yes

Zizo : Silumko what are you going to do now? Are you going to tell Osama about this?

Me : For what? For him to leave me and our boys? Never! If I tell Osama that he has a daughter that he didn't know he had

he will leave me Zizo, fuck! Even if he doesn't, I'm sure this will change everything, it will cause tension in my family. We are already dealing with a lot right now, Linile is.... - I sighed - yazi intoni? I won't allow that woman to come into our lives, over my dead body!!

Zizo : His daughter needs blood Silumko, he needs to know and maybe his blood can save his daughter.

Me : No no no. I don't care!

Zizo : Hhayi!!

Me : Ewe! Zizo listen to me and listen to me carefully, I will not allow anything to come between me and my husband, not that Banele woman, not her daughter. Osama will not donate his blood to her daughter, Osama is not going to find out about that daughter and I will make sure of it! Ndingu Silumko Ndamase ke mna tana I fight for what's mine.

Zizo : What if she dies, Silumko Ndamase? You know what the doctors say? If she doesn't get a donor in the next 3 weeks she will die.

Me : Let her die!!!

Zizo : Yoooh!

-I pulled out my phone and called Simo to pick me up from work -

SILUMKO

-I arrived home earlier than usual. My palms started sweating the moment I saw Osama -

Osama : Sweetheart you are home early today.

Me : I know. Tomorrow is my last day so yeah

Osama : I missed you sthandwa sam, why didn't you tell me to pick you up?

Me : No no no

I wanted to surprise all of you.

Vunani : We are surprised

-They laughed. I looked at them and I knew there was no way I was going to allow a stranger to come between us -

Melokuhle : City is cooking today

-I looked at Osama-

Me : That's nice. I don't remember the last time I saw him at the kitchen

Vunani : He is trying to do something nice

Melokuhle : He is really trying, angithi bafo?

-Linile shrugged -

Melokuhle : Go easy on salt

Linile : Got you

Osama : Are you okay?

Me : Yeah yeah yeah. Why wouldn't I be?

-I faked a smile -

Osama : Let me take to the bedroom

Vunani : Oh no

-We all laughed as Osama picked me up and carried me to our bedroom -

Me : How was your day Babah?

Osama : Nothing new.

Me : Any news from your ex?

Osama : Lumka come on, don't let me regret telling you about Banele.

-My heart raced -

Me : Oh so her name is Banele?

Osama : Yes but we are not going to talk about her. Banele and I are history, yeah I saw her and that was the last time.

-Yes it was hubby -

Me : That's good

Osama : Uyeke isikhwele Mlwandle mkami - Stop being jealous my wife -

Me : I'm not jealous, I just don't want another woman near my husband.

Osama : There is no other woman

Me : I love you baby

Osama : I love you

-We kissed and he tried to get under my underwear. I pushed his hand -

Me : The strangers are here

-He laughed -

Osama : Come on sweetheart this is our bedroom, Kuhle said no sex in the LIVING room.

Me : No baby, they will hear us.

Osama : They won't.

Me : No Nkwanyana

-He pulled me by my arm and kissed my neck -

Me : Osama wait, I've been thinking here.

Osama : Mhmmmm?

-He said while kissing my neck and rubbing my nipples -

Me : Love, wait.

-I pulled away as I felt myself getting wet -

Osama : Yeah yeah, tell me about it.

Me : So I was thinking....

-I stood on my toes and kissed his nose -

Me : How about we...

-I kissed his mouth -

Osama : Yeah?

-He smiled with his brow raised -

Me : We go out and have Christmas outside of SOUTH AFRICA, just you and I?

Osama : Are you serious?

Me : Yes baby, just you and I away from the children for a whole 4 weeks!

Osama : But Christmas is....

Me : Is for family time, it's important for us to be together for Christmas, I know that but that is overrated baby. Let's do something different for once, honestly I just want to be alone with my husband this year for Christmas and fuck him all I want.

Osama : Oh yeah?

-He smiled -

Me : Yes baby. Think about it. Let's see how these boys can cope without us.

Osama : It's a fascinating idea but you know how much I hate traveling.

Me : Just once Osama, please mntuwam.

Osama : Let me think about it

Me : I'm giving you one night

Osama : Oook

-He laughed -

Osama : So how about you give me what belongs to me while I think?

-He ran his hand between my thighs-

Me : No, think first.

-We laughed. Later we sat down and had dinner, it was a bitter awkward on the table. Osama wasn't saying anything, I guess he was still angry at Linile-

Melokuhle : So City

Linile : Sup?

Melokuhle : When are you planning to go back to school? You need matric khehla

Linile : No bro, maybe I don't. I need a job

Melokuhle : You do have a job waiting for you at Messiah Construction but without matric you can't get it.

Linile : That's bad. I guess being a Nkwanyana is really like a sandwich, no matter how you flip it around bread always comes first.

-Osama stopped eating and looked at Linile for a moment and he continued eating -

Vunani : What do you mean?

Linile : Nothing

Me : Can we just eat in peace?

Melokuhle : Sorry Mah

Me : It's okay boy.

Vunani : Manchester lost Bhuti Kuhle

Melokuhle : Ha! Ha! Ha! I don't believe you little bro

Vunani : Tell him City

Linile : He is right, 3-2. Ronaldo was playing shit today but at least he scored one goal.

Melokuhle : No no. I want to see it myself

Linile : No different. You still owe him

-They laughed -

Vunani : I'll be R500 rich as soon as you open your wallet Bhuti
Kuhle

-We all laughed except Osama of course -

Me : Since when do you love money this much Nani?

Vunani : He wanted this bet Mah, not me.

-We laughed -

Linile : Ay no I went all out today, my food was amazing.

Me : It was. Thank you so much Nile for saving me from the
kitchen

Linile : Any day Mah.

Melokuhle : Do we have dessert chef?

-Linile laughed -

Linile : You sort that one out.

Melokuhle : Never

-They laughed. Osama cleared his throat and drank water -

Osama : So the food was great, Linile?

-Linile smiled and rubbed his hands together -

Linile : Obvious tayma, look at your plate, it's empty.

Osama : Great! Now get the hell out of my house.

-We were all stunned -

"What?" - We all asked -

-Osama stood up and wiped his mouth with a napkin -

Osama : Now Linile!!!!

-He yelled and hit the table -

7

OSAMA

-I found Linile packing in his bedroom -

Me : You only have 5 minutes to leave my house, oh and please leave those clothes, they were bought with my money.

Silumko : Osama please don't do this, it's almost 9pm, where is he supposed to go at this time?

Me : Where he makes babies. Leave Linile

Linile : Why do you hate me?

Me : Get out

-Silumko cried-

Silumko : Baby please don't do this to our boy.

Me : Linile leave

-Linile shook his head and walked out with the only clothes he was wearing -

Silumko : Osama what....

Me : Lumka!!

-I looked at her and followed Linile all the way to the door -

Vunani : Bah you don't have to do this

Me : Phuma

-Linile looked at me and I opened the door for him, as soon as he was out I locked it -

Me : Now let me make this clear

-I looked at Melokuhle and Vunani -

Me : This is my house and I will not allow osihlama nje abafana nani to control me under my roof! If one of you feels like he is a man now, there is the door!

-They looked at each other, Melokuhle mumbled something -

Me : If you have something to say Melokuhle Nkwanyana say it to my face!

Melokuhle : No I'm good

Me : Good. Sweetheart let's go to bed

-I went to the bedroom. Silumko did not follow me, I kept hoping that she was going to walk in any time but the next I opened my eyes and it was already 06h00 am. Silumko did not sleep in our bedroom, I went to check all the guest rooms and I found her getting dressed for work -

Me : Don't ever do that shit again Lumka

Silumko : Morning Osama

Me : Morning? Is that what you are going to say after letting me sleep all night alone?

Silumko : Are you going to complain about sleeping alone?
Semdala.

Me : Excuse me?

Silumko : Osama you are old, you don't need me to babysit you all night.

Me : Is that so? Lumka, what do you want from me? If I spoil these boys, you complain and if I.....

Silumko : He is only 18 years old! He needs his parents, he needs shelter! Aren't you worried about him sleeping in the streets last night?

Me : No

Silumko : You are unbelievable! I know I blamed you for spoiling your children but what you did last night was out of control!

Me : Linile is not coming back to his house so get used to it, Lumka.

Silumko : Where is he going to stay? In the streets?

Me : He fits perfectly in the streets....Lumka you are my wife and I expect you to support my decisions. Linile is a father now and his time to be treated like a child is up!

Silumko : He needs us Babah

Me : No he doesn't! Linile is rude and he thinks he is a man now, I will not allow him to be a man under my roof!

Silumko : Baby please, I'm.....

Me : Linile is my son, don't educate me on how to raise my children Lumka.

-She sighed-

Silumko : Fine

Me : I'll drop you off at work on my way to the meeting

Silumko : Work? No don't worry about me, I'll drive myself to work.

Me : Are you sure?

Silumko : Of course. Are you going somewhere after your meeting?

Me : No, do you need anything?

Silumko : No baby. Did you get time to think about what we spoke about yesterday?

Me : Our trip? Yeah I did and I don't think it's a good idea after you left me alone last night

-She laughed and wrapped her arms around my waist -

Silumko : You are such a baby. I'm sorry mntuwam, I was just upset but I promise you that it won't happen again.

Me : I don't believe you

Silumko : I promise, please.....

Me : Choose a country you want us to go to.

-Her eyes were wide open -

Silumko : Are you serious?

Me : If you ask me that again, I'll change my mind.

Silumko : No no. Thank you my love, thank you. Thank you

Me : I love you

Silumko : Kiss me

Me : I want to do more than that

Silumko : I'm all yours

-She giggled as I threw her to the bed-

-I hated people and I hated meetings but I had no choice. Mrs
Liyana Ndlovu was the last one to walk into the boardroom -

Me : Thank you for allowing this meeting to be held here

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I know it was hard for all of you to get here.

Kgosi : It was a taxing task. Let's commence, ladies and
gentlemen.

Liyana : Liyana Ndlovu, representing Mbani Web solutions LLC.

Kgosi : Kgosi Mathada representing KM jewelry also a stand in for Mehluko Trucking under my son Celwenkosini Mabaso who is not present today. Objections?

Me : Clear

Nomathingo : Nomathingo Gcaba stand in for Gcaba Brothers.

Kwalunga : Kwalunga Hlela representing True Red Investigators.

Me : Osama Nkwanyana standing in for Messiah Construction under Linile Nkwanyana who is not present today.

Liyana : Perfect. Let's all move to Section A, under Government Assistance programs, let's scroll down to General Financial Assistance. All in?

"Yeah" - We all said-

Liyana : Mrs Gcaba over to you

Nomathingo : The cases of human trafficking has increased by 30% in the last 3 weeks with 0% arrests. The SA government together with the SAPS have tried to solve these cases with zero success, it is time we step in.

Kwalunga : The Italian investigating team is here to help. Ladies and Gentlemen South Africa is my home and it pains me to come across these articles about human trafficking that are happening in my country. I want to help but I can't do it on my own. I can assure you that I have the best team behind me and we can crack these cases. Ladies and gentlemen True Red Investigators is the best investigating company in the whole world right now and we have awards to prove that.

Me : Where is this whole thing going?

Kgosi : The aim is to transmigrate Nkwanyana

Me : What?

Kgosi : We need the Italians to move here and run this investigation but that will require a lot of money. Our government needs a hand... Support

Me : Which is why we are here today.

Kwalunga : The investigation on its own will also need a lot of money.

Me : How long will it take to solve this case Hlela?

Kwalunga : 6 months or maybe less

Me : How much are we talking about here, all costs included?

-Kwalunga typed something on his laptop and we all received a notification -

Nomathingo : 2 million?... This is a zero interest investment, are we all aware of that?

-I looked all around the table and it seemed like I was the only one who wasn't aware -

Kgosi : This isn't about money, it's about saving our country. Look at it as some sort of emancipation

Me : Messiah Construction R300 000

Kgosi : That's more like it. KM jewelry together with Mehluko Trucking, R500 000.

Liyana : Mbani Web Solutions LLC R200 000

Nomathingo : Gcaba Brothers R600 000

Kgosi : We are 400 short

-We looked at each other -

Kgosi : 100 more in

Kwalunga : I'll add 100

Me : I'll cover the remaining

"No you won't"

-All eyes turned towards the door as Linile walked in with our family lawyer. My jaws tightened -

Kgosi : Who is this junkie now?

-Linile was wearing a fuckin ripped jeans. His blazer was unbuttoned revealing a torn t-shirt underneath. His dirty All star made my blood boil -

Me : Mathada, stay out of this, I'll handle it. Linile what are you doing here?

-He chuckled and pulled out a chair -

Linile : Messiah Construction is registered under my name, I am the majority shareholder and Messiah Construction will not contribute any funds towards this stupid government assistance program

"What?" - Everyone asked-

Nomathingo : Nkwanyana what is this?

Kgosi : Eh mona! We are not frolicking here, this is business!!

Linile : I'm 18 years old and over, I have every right to be part of the decisions making of this company, Bah if you don't want me to be part of this meeting then remove Messiah Construction from this stupid project.

Me : We are trying to help our government. It's a great initiative.

Linile : Like hell we are! You are trying to help our government by hiring Italian private Investigators when you can build your own? What if they fail to solve these cases, will all this money go to waste?

Kwalunga : Non sai di cosa stai parlando - You don't know what you are talking about -

Linile : I don't give a shit who you're or what you are saying. Bah, the Nkwanyana Accord House is there to build, we can build our own Investigators that will help our government. South Africa is full of masterminds who need a chance to prove themselves.

Kgosi : We don't have time to search for those masterminds, people are going missing every hour, I'm talking about our very own people. This an attempt to break the deadlock

Linile : Not with Messiah Construction's money! If anyone is against my decision, my lawyer is here.

-My chest tightened, I couldn't breathe. I stood up and walked out. My skin became dry, I struggled to see clearly. I got inside my car and pulled out my phone-

Me : Dr James, I think I'm dying.

8

SILUMKO

-At the hospital they arranged a small farewell party for me and to be honest I was really not in the mood -

Zizo : A little something from me to you

-I smiled-

Me : Aaaw! You didn't have to my friend

Zizo : Don't open it now

Me : But I know what it is

Zizo : Is it that obvious?

Me : Mhmmmm another bottle of wine

-She rolled her eyes -

Zizo : It is that obvious but I didn't steal that one, I bought it
CASH.

-We laughed-

Me : Thank you so much

Zizo : I'll come to visit every weekend

Me : I'm sure you will

-We laughed -

Zizo : I have something to tell you

Me : Not another speech

Zizo : No, Linile was here.

Me : What? When?

Zizo : Before visiting hours, he begged me to take him to that lady in a coma

Me : Melukhanyo?

Zizo : Yes, he was so desperate to see her

Me : But why Zizo? Linile doesn't even know that girl

Zizo : Well from what I saw it didn't seem like that in fact he seemed like someone who had a strong bond with her

Me : Strong bo...

-I paused when my phone rang-

Me : Kuhle - I answered -

Melokuhle : Baba is sick, Mah, he is really sick.

Me : Intoni? Where are you?

-I was shaking -

Melokuhle : He called me to pick him up, he was at that meeting. Mah please talk to him and convince him to come to the hospital. He is refusing to come because Dr James is not on call.

Me : You want to bring him here?

Melokuhle : Yes, He is sick.

Me : No! - I sighed - no no, Kuhle you can't bring your father to this hospital.

Melokuhle : Ngoba?

Me : Because I... Because... Yazi intoni? libala. Osama is not coming here.

Melokuhle : Mah....

Me : I'm coming home now, call Dr Gordon.

-I hung up. -

Zizo : And?

Me : My husband is sick, I'm going home.

Zizo : Osama? Sick? Are you serious right now?

Me : I know it's unlike him but he is. I'm sorry I won't make it to our dinner

Zizo : No no it's ok my friend, I get it so is he coming here?

Me : Hell no! Not with Banele walking in and out of this hospital.

Zizo : Have you spoken to her?

Me : About what? I hate that woman and I'm not going to pretend to like her because I need some information from her, I will get the information I need without Banele.

Zizo : Last night she wanted to sleep in her daughter's ward. The doctors told her to spend as much time as she could with her daughter because the chances of her pulling out from the coma are unobtainable especially if she doesn't get a donor.

Me : What if Linile.... - I paused - I need to find Linile. I need to bring him back home

Zizo : Bring him back home? What do you mean?

-My mind was working overtime and there were some things that I forgot to tell Zizo about -

Me : Never mind..... I don't want to see anyone now, please help me with these gifts to my car.

Zizo : You can't just leave like this Silumko

Me : I can, I'm tired of all these people pretending to like me when they were treating me like shit my entire life in this hospital. Come Zizo, I have important things to do before the end of today.

Zizo : Silumko uphezu kwantoni?

Me : Nothing illegal. Come

-Zizo accompanied me to my car with my gifts. I got inside the car-

Me : I don't think it's my last day in this hospital anymore. I still have some demons that I need to take care of in there

Zizo : You are confusing me Silumko

Me : I'll call you.....and Zizo if you happen to see Linile anywhere near this hospital, please call me right away.

Zizo : Fine

Me : See you Sunday?

Zizo : Of course. My head feels heavy right now, I'm trying to think what is on your mind.

Me : Don't worry about me.

-I drove off. I kept trying to call Linile all the way home but he wasn't picking up my calls. I arrived home, I took off my heels and ran inside the house barefooted-

Melokuhle : Mah!

Me : Where is my husband?

-He pointed upstairs -

Melokuhle : E bar

Me : He is drinking? Didn't you say he was sick?

Melokuhle : He is sick but....

-I ran up the stairs to the third floor. I found Osama sitting on the floor smoking a cigar

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there was a bottle of whiskey and a glass next to him -

Me : Baby?

-He lifted up his head -

Osama : You are back

-He was still wearing his suit -

Me : How was the meeting? Melokuhle said you were sick....

Osama : Sick?

Me : Osama what's going on?

Osama : Your son embarrassed me in front of my business partners today.

Me : Linile?

Osama : Who else is capable of doing that Lumka?

Me : So you weren't sick, you were embarrassed?

Osama : He walked in that boardroom and he said our program is shit!

Me : Oh

-He raised his brow and stood up -

Osama : Oh? What does that mean?

Me : You know Linile, what do you want me to say, Babah?

-He shook his head and headed out-

Me : Where are you going?

-He turned around and looked at him confused -

Osama : Where am I going?

Me : Are you going to the hospital?

Osama : No

-I sighed in relief -

Me : That's good.... I thought you were sick and I was worried.

Osama : I'm fine

Me : Are you angry?

Osama : Yes

Me : But Osama....

-He walked out -

OSAMA

-The following day I woke up early, I had to see Dr James-

Silumko : Are you going somewhere?

Me : Yes, I need to fix the mess your son created.

Silumko : Where are you going to fix it?

Me : Why are you worried about where I'm going? You don't give a shit about what Linile did and you're only worried ngokuthi ngiyaphi?

Silumko : I just want to know. Osama you didn't even ask me about my last day at work and that got me thinking.

Me : About?

Silumko : If leaving my job was a good idea

Me : Come on sthandwa sami, it was the best thing to do.

Silumko : But you are already leaving me alone

Me : I'm not. I need to do this but I'll be back before lunch

Silumko : Do you promise?

-I kissed her cheek -

Me : I promise... See you later.

-A drive to the hospital was short due to everything that was happening in my head. I bumped into Linile on my way in -

Linile : Baba

Me : Yah, what are you doing here?

Linile : I - He swallowed - I was here to see Mah but they told me that yesterday was her last day.

Me : I see

Linile : Wena?

Me : Mina?

Linile : What are you doing here?

Me : I'm here to pick up something for your mother

Linile : Ok

-I took a few steps -

Linile : I miss home Bah

Me : After that shit you pulled yesterday, you don't have a home anymore City.

Linile : I need you Baba, I'm going through some shit.

Me : That's the only time you need me, when you are going through shit. Fix it yourself!

-I walked away. Dr James was waiting for me. I explained everything to him -

Dr James : Mr Nkwanyana I'm starting to get really worried about this. This seems like pneumothorax

Me : What?

Dr James : Your lungs are collapsing, there's a space between your lungs and chest walls so when air escapes the lungs it fills up the space between your lungs and your chest wall, this build-up of air puts pressure on your lungs, this causes shortness of breath and chest pains because your lungs cannot fully expand.

Me : Is it treatable?

Dr James : It is but we are still not certain of what we are dealing with. I still recommend that X-ray

Me : Do it now

-He looked shocked -

Dr James : Are you sure?

Me : I know I was against it but I'm ready now

Dr James : Excellent. Please take off your jacket

-I took off my jacket he looked at the scars on my arms -

Me : Don't worry about these

Dr James : I'm not.

-The X-ray process was done. He looked at the picture of an x-ray and back at me. He sighed and I knew it was bad -

Me : Say it

-He sat down and explained to me -

Dr James : I'm going to be very honest with you Nkwanyana. These results are worse than I expected. Can you see this?

-He pointed at that radiography -

Dr James : These are your lungs and as you can see they...

Me : They are damaged.

Dr James : Very damaged and from what you told me regarding your shortness of breath, this will lead to ARDS, acute respiratory distress syndrome where you won't be able to breathe on your own and require ventilator support to help circulate oxygen in your body.

Me : Is that the only way for me to survive?

Dr James : There is a doctor in the UK who is very....

Me : Is it fatal?

Dr James : Yes, it kills more people than any other disease but you may live 10 to 20 years after diagnosis. Mr Nkwanyana we are still not sure if this is COPD or IPF so I....

Me : Thank you for your time.

-I took my jacket and car keys. I walked out. I got inside the car and I rested my head on the steering wheel. -

"Yesterday you just walked out of the meeting. That was unprofessional Nkwanyana"

-I lifted my head in disbelief and when I looked at my rear view mirror Kgosi Mathada was seating at the back seat -

Me : How did you get inside my car?

Kgosi : People like you and I need the government on their side more than the gods. We need to pursue this program whether you like it or not.

Me : You know nothing about me Mathada

-He laughed sarcastically -

Kgosi : You wanted SAPS to accompany me to see that what I know surpasses what you think?

-I swallowed -

Kgosi : My wife is waiting for me back home so I don't have time to run after you like a sick puppy. I have overstayed my welcome here, I need to go back to Johannesburg. You know what you need to do, don't allow that junkie of yours to stand in our way.

Me : I'm still part of the program. I will give all the money that I promised to give

Kgosi : Good

Me : Now get the hell out of my car!

Kgosi : The war is brewing Nkwanyana, someone came to see you after our meeting yesterday.

Me : Who?

Kgosi : Another Dlamini.

Me : What do you mean?

Kgosi : This is not my fuckin business so I won't hold the fort. It's time you stop being a blockhead and realize that the shit you created in Pretoria is coming for you.

-He opened the door and got out -

9

SILUMKO

-Osama has been stuck in that room ever since he came back. It wasn't a busy room and he was the only one who used it. I stood up quickly when Linile walked in -

Me : You are back

Linile : Baba wanted to see me

Me : He called you?

Linile : Yeah, where is he?

Me : In his other room. Akumuncu ke kulendlu ndikuxelele -
Things are very sour in this house -

Linile : What happened? Where is Nani and Bhuti Kuhle?

Me : Vunani is playing games in his room, Melokuhle is still at work.

Linile : Ok

Me : How are you? Where are you staying?

Linile : In a hotel, Mah. Ifuna ntoni I boyfriend yakho kum? -
What does your boyfriend want from me? -

Me : Andiyazi. Let me go and call him for you

Linile : Yoow please, I need to be somewhere.

Me : You mean at the hospital?

-He froze-

Me : Weee Linile, what are you busy with in that hospital?

Linile : Nothing for you to worry about Mah

Me : No I want to know now

Linile : It has nothing to do with your husband's reputation.

-I closed my eyes and sigh -

Me : You are not going back there and I will make sure of it.

Linile : Ngoba kutheni?

Me : Because I say so!

-I went to check on Osama but I stopped when I heard him talking -

Osama : So you have finally found me Ndlovu?

-The door was opened but Osama's back was facing me so he didn't see me standing there. He was on the phone-

Osama : You want me to believe that? No no no, Ndlovu I'm ready. I'm ready for you.

- He opened a drawer and pulled out a shiny knife, my heart started racing -

Osama : If it's blood you want, I'll give you blood.

-He removed the phone from his ear and tucked it in his pocket. He brushed the knife in his hand and I swallowed hard when I saw him lifting his hand that had blood to his mouth -

Me : Can I come in?

-He lowered his hand and turned around with a smile -

Me : Are... are you....

-I looked at his hand and my heart was pounding -

Osama : Get out sweetheart

Me : But....

Osama : Get out Lumka!!!!

-He yelled and I jumped. I ran back to Linile-

Linile : Are you ok? You look....

Me : I'm fine

-I felt tears burning in my eyes -

Linile : Where is Bah?

-I ignored him. I took my car keys and walked out. More than anything I was nervous, I had never seen Osama like that. Who was I married to? Who was that man because that was definitely not my Osama? My hands were sweating and trembling, I kept rubbing them on my jeans. I started my car not knowing where I was going but I wanted to be far away from that house-

OSAMA

"Baba"

-I lifted my eyes, Linile was walking in -

Me : What took you so long?

Linile : What did you do to Mah?

Me : Nothing

Linile : She was crying when she left

Me : She left?

Linile : Umenzeni?

Me : Nothing... Linile, who came to look for me after yesterday's meeting?

-He was confused for a moment -

Linile : Oh yeah, I wanted to tell you. There was a man who came there looking for you but that's not important, Bah I'm sorry for what I did kuleya meeting

I was angry at you and I wanted to take out my frustrations. I know how important that program is to you and I promise to back off

Me : Describe him

Linile : What? Oh the guy was Tall, light skinned and he had big eyes.... And a long beard.

-No one came to mind -

Linile : What happened to your hand?

Me : What did he say exactly?

Linile : You are not going to tell me what happened to your hand?

Me : Linile

-I glared at him-

Linile : Nothing... He said he is Lindani... Lunga's brother angisakhumbuli but he wanted to know about your logo designs.

-Now that was Lungelo Dlamini's brother -

Me : Lungelo's brother?

Linile : Yeah, Yes! Lungelo! he also mentioned some Lungani's name

Me : Mhmmmm

Linile : So you know him?

-I opened my drawer and took out the gun and bullets. I opened the second drawer and pulled out the knife. I lined up the bullets on the table. Linile was silent, I didn't even look at his face -

Me : I know him. You know, I thought I was done with this life but if it means I have to run out of breath and die while killing the Dlamini's then so be it.

Linile : Baba what are you talking about?

Me : Killing means nothing to me, I will kill like nobody's business. Blood or not, if you come for me, I will kill you.

-I picked up each bullet and looked at it -

Me : This one is definitely for him, this one is for Banele and this one is for Ivan Ndlovu.

-I smiled and looked at Linile and he looked confused -

Linile : Wait wait... Di....did you say Ndlovu?

Me : And these are for all his ass lickens. I hate guns, the last time I used a gun, I....

-I paused -

Linile : Baba? Baba! Please tell...

Me : We are done here. Close the door on your way out

-I cut him off -

Linile : Can you at least talk to me?

Me : Hamba Linile

Linile : No Bah, I want to know what you are going to do with all these things, since when are you this person who carries guns and knives?

Me : This is nothing new

Linile : It's new to me, to Mah... To all of us Bah!!!

Me : I asked you to leave

Linile : No!!! What are you hiding from us?

-I loaded my gun and cocked it -

Me : I said get-the-hell-out-of my house!!!!

-I pointed the gun at him and he wasn't even shaken-

Linile : You want to shoot me? Do it

-He raised his hands in the air. -

Linile : Shoot me Osama!

-I lowered my gun in defeat-

Linile : I'm not scared of you Baba, never have and definitely never will.

-He took the gun from me and placed it on the table. He shook his head with a disgusted look and walked out-

10

SILUMKO

-There was a private lounge that was just a few hours away from our house. Osama introduced me to that place, well only rich people came there. I scanned his card and walked in, there were 2 men and women sitting there. I sat on the couch that was facing the window, I looked out through the window. The waitresses interrupted me -

Me : A bottle of white wine please

"Yes mam"

-She walked away "

" Sarà così bello avervi ragazzi in Italia. "

-I turned my face to that woman who was speaking Italian. She was the only Italian sitting there. She was pressing her head on

the Black guy's shoulder. They all looked so happy, I smiled looking at them. The other man looked familiar. It was Kgosi Mathada and his wife Moy'omuhle Mathada, the richest couple in SA. I looked at my wedding ring, and he was the one who designed that ring on my finger. I wanted to go and greet them but my pride wouldn't let me. I couldn't keep my eyes off them though. I almost jumped when I heard someone clearing their throat next to me "

Me : Hi

-It was a man with a long beard. I didn't know him-

" Can I sit? " - He asked -

Me : Yes of course

-He sat down next to me, I moved a bit away from him -

" Mark Dlamini " - He said while giving me his hand and I just looked at it-

Me : Silumko Nkwanyana

Mark : You look beautiful Miss Nkwanyana

Me : Mrs Nkwanyana

Mark : My bad

Me : Can I help?

Mark : Oh no, I'm just new here and I saw a beautiful woman sitting alone and I said why not?

-I giggled -

Mark : Where does one get a drink here?

-He wasn't a regular -

Me : You can wait for assistance or you can use that thing to place your order

Mark : This tab?

-He picked it up and flipped it around -

Me : Yes

Mark : Ah technology huh? So ngibashayela ucingo okanye umqhafazo? -Do I call them or send them a message?-

-That Zulu man was going to be a problem -

Me : It's not an actual phone, it's for orders only. Do you have a card?

Mark : Card?

-I sighed -

Me : Never mind

-I scanned my card on that tab and I asked him to place his order -

Mark : Mhmmmm izinto zabelungu, very complicated.

Me : They are not complicated, you just need to use your head.

-He laughed -

Mark : Uthi ngisphukuphuku? - Are you saying I'm dumb? -

Me : Did I?

-We laughed -

Mark : Yesterday I bought olives thinking I was buying grapes.

Me : You are stupid Mark

-We laughed -

Mark : I'm from KZN, I don't know the difference between these things.

Me : No no people from KZN are very smart

Mark : I almost took a plane to Brazil thinking it was a plane to Eastern Cape.

-I laughed out loud. Mark was crazy -

Me : Out of all the things that never happened, that never happened the most.

-He laughed-

Mark : You got me.

-Our orders arrived. We drank and laughed, Mark was funny -

Mark : You have a beautiful smile

-I blushed-

Me : Thank you

Mark : Your husband is very lucky

Me : He is and he knows

Mark : But why is he not here if he knows ?

" I'm here"

-I froze. That was Osama's voice behind us. -

Me : Baby?

-I stood up. Osama was leaning against a statue with his hands in his pockets -

Me : When did you get here?

-He walked closer to me and kissed my lips. Mark cleared his throat -

Mark : You must the husband

-Osama just looked at him-

Me : Let's go sweetheart

-I looked at Mark and held Osama's arm. We walked away from Mark. Kgosi Mathada stood up when he saw us-

Osama : Because brothers don't let each other wander in the dark all alone

-What? -

Kgosi : Not always eye to eye, but always heart to heart.

-Kgosi and Osama shook hands. What were they talking about?

-

Kgosi : Mrs Nkwanyana

Me : Hi

Kgosi : Please take a seat

-We sat down. Kgosi kisses his wife cheek before he sat down -

Osama : I didn't know that Mrs Mathada was also here.

Kgosi : A man would die without his heart, Nkwanyana.

-Mrs Mathada smiled -

Osama : Kwalunga, Sky.

Kwalunga : Osama

-Oh the Italian lady was married to that Kwalunga guy. She raised her glass with a smile -

Osama : This is my wife

Kwalunga : We finally meet, I'm Kwalunga Hlela and this is my wife, Sky.

-I smiled -

Me : Hello Sky, Mrs Mathada Hi.

"Hello" - They both said -

-Their wives were beautiful. Kgosi couldn't keep his hands away from his wife, if he wasn't brushing her hair, he would kiss her hand -

Sky : We were talking about how nice it would be to have all of you in Italy this Christmas.

Osama : Italy? I don't know Sky

Kwalunga : It's going to be great

Me : I think it's a good idea Babah

-Osama shrugged-

Kgosi : It's my son's first Christmas, we can't go.

Sky : You have a baby?

Moy'omuhle : Yep

Me : That's good

Kgosi : He cries day and night. It's tiring

-We laughed -

Osama : That's what happens when you become a father at a late age

Kgosi : Oh fuck you Osama

Osama : I'm still older than all of you here Mathada

-We laughed -

Kgosi : It's actually great to have a baby in the house. I just can't imagine my life without my son

Moy'omuhle : Is that so?

Kgosi : And my wife

-He kissed Moy'omuhle's neck. We laughed -

-We stayed there till late. When I looked where Mark was sitting the table was empty. He was gone -

Osama : Kgosi can we talk?

-Kgosi looked at his wife -

Kgosi : No, maybe some other time.

-He kissed his wife's hand. I almost rolled my eyes -

Osama : Fine, Lumka let's go.

-Osama seemed irritated -

Me : It was great to see all of you. Next time I'll dress up.

-I giggled -

Osama : You look beautiful in anything sthandwa sami.

-I kissed his cheek -

Kwalunga : It was good to see you Mrs Nkwanyana, I didn't know it was you sitting with that man. Where is he anyway?

-Kgosi cleared his throat -

Kwalunga : Scusa - Sorry -... Anyway we are going back to Italy tomorrow. The account is up to date.

-Sky and Moy'omuhle cheered up. I guess I was the only wife who had no idea what they were talking about -

Osama : Good. We need to get going

Moy'omuhle : Nihambe kahle

Me : Thank you

-Osama and I walked out.-

Me : Where is your car?

Osama : I didn't come with my car, Lumka what the fuck were you thinking driving here all alone? Do you even know that man you were sitting with?

Me : It's not a big deal Osama

-I got inside the car. He got to the driver's seat -

Osama : It's not a big deal?

Me : Yes!

Osama : You were sitting with another man! My enemy!

Me : Your enemy?

-He swallowed -

Osama : Every man who sits with my wife in my absence is my enemy. You should know that by now

Me : Hhayi Osama. Hhayi

Osama : What do you think would have happened if Kgosi didn't tell me that you were here?

-I was shocked -

Me : Kgosi Mathada is the one who told you to come here and babysit me?

Osama : Babys...-He paused- Lumka things are going to be different now. Today was the last day you went out without me. Do you understand?

Me : Osama that is....

Osama : I mean it, Lumka!

Me : Hhayi! Not after I found you sucking your own blood! Not after I found you with a knife and you told me to get out.

Osama

you don't respect me anymore, I don't even know who you are after what I saw today.

-Silence -

Me : Who were you talking to on the phone?

Osama : We are not going anywhere for Christmas.

Me : Oh?

Osama : Yes. We are going to stay here with our children

-I was so disappointed and angry -

Me : Osama phuma, get out of my car.

Osama : Excuse me?

Me : Ewe ndithe phuma!

Osama : Why is this trip so important to you?

Me : Ndithe hhamba!

Osama : Fine

-He got out of the car. I jumped to the driver's seat. I accelerated the speed driving past him -

OSAMA

-I ordered a ride and it dropped me off at the hotel. She opened for me and looked at me from my face to my feet -

Me : Banele

Banele : Why are you so dirty?

Me : Ngithelwe imoto ngamanzi

Banele : How? Where was your car?

Me : Why are you here?

-I took off my t-shirt -

Banele : I told you what happened.

-I took off my sneakers -

Me : I don't buy it.

Banele : What do you want me to say?

-I reached for my jeans and she stopped me -

Banele : That's enough!

Me : Mxm

-I took off my jeans and she looked away -

Me : You know my dick more than any other woman. Awuyeke lento oyenzayo

-I walked to the bathroom and took a towel. I wrapped it around me -

Banele : Where is your wife?

Me : Home. Why are you here?

Banele : Don't worry about me, I'm going back to KZN tomorrow.

Me : I don't have a problem with you being here, I have a problem with people who are trying to fuck up my life.

Banele : What do you mean?

Me : Your husband is making a wrong move, Banele. Do you remember what I said to you?

Banele : No

Me : I'll remind you. I told you that if you dare break my heart....

Banele : Just stop! Osama should I remind you about all the things you did to me? To my family? You gave them Uncle Mdelwa's skin to eat! You gave Ayanda i weave ka Thando, a weave of a dead person!! A person that you killed! What more did you do to me?

-Silence -

Banele : You killed your own girlfriend and you gave me her cars! All the things that you have today, it's because of Jacinta Moloi's blood! You have nothing Osama , lomcebo onawo it's all because of someone's blood!

Osama : So?

-She chuckled -

Banele : Uwusathane wena! You are evil and I wonder if your family knows who you are.

Osama : Keep my family out of this!

Banele : What do you want here? Is it because you paid for me and you think you can come and go as you please in this hotel?

Osama : I'm here to tell you that I'm going to kill you. I'm going to kill you, your husband and your child.

-She seemed terrified -

Me : I have paid for my sins Banele and I was ready to let everything slide. You slept with my best friend waze wamitha but I was ready to let it slide. Your husband killed me but I was ready to let it slide.

Banele : Ivan did not kill you

Me : He did. Twice. He took you away from me and he left me in a burning mortuary, Banele that night your husband killed me

Banele : You were planning to kill my family that night!

Me : But you knew I was going to kill them. I told you straight to your face that the day you broke my heart I was going to kill you. Banele did I not tell you that if you feel that my love was no longer enough you were supposed to come to me and tell me that?

-She swallowed -

Me : I don't want you anymore, in fact I hate you, I hate the fact that there was a time where I thought I would never survive without you. Banele you are nothing but a Dlamini bastard that I should have killed a long time ago.

-She shook her head and tears rolled down her cheeks -

Banele : You don't mean that

Me : I do. You know, my days are numbered now but I will make sure that the day I take my last breath I'll be done with all of you.

Banele : Osama I....

Me : I tried so much to put my life together, I stayed away from all of you. I tried to become a better man but you didn't want that and you decided to come here to remind me who I was, to awake the beast in me.

-My throat closed up. I sniffed and looked away-

Me : Do you think I enjoy this whole thing, the killing? I don't but I will not allow a Dlamini to fuck up my life all over again. My father did a great job ruining that and when I....

-My chest tightened -

Banele : Osama I'm not planning to ruin your life. That's not the reason I'm here

-I groaned as I felt an unbearable pain in my chest -

Banele : Osama?

Me : Give me my phone

-She shook her head. She walked closer to me and unwrapped my towel. She kissed me while rubbing my dick. My body heated up-

Banele : I missed you - she whispered -

-I looked into her eyes. I remembered my beautiful wife that I left home back home. Lumka didn't deserve that -

Osama : You and I are over

-I grabbed my phone and called Melokuhle to come and called Melokuhle to pick me up -

Banele : You really don't have to go... Osama awusangiboni? It's me Banele, the woman you loved more than anything.

-She tried to touch me -

Me : Don't!

-I looked at my dirty t-shirt and I decided to only wear my jeans -

Banele : Osama please, we need to talk about something really important. Our daughter is....

Me : My son is here. Bye Banele

Banele : Ngiyacela. Just 2 minutes

Me : No

-I took my t-shirt -

Banele : Ok can I please see Melokuhle ke? Please

Me : I don't want you anywhere near my children.

-I walked out. Melokuhle was waiting for me outside his car -

Melokuhle : And then?

Me : This t-shirt is messed up

-I got inside the car. Melokuhle got in -

Me : Are you smoking now?

Melokuhle : Me? No baba

-I grabbed him by his neck -

Me : Speak!

-He shook his head-

Me : Since when do you smoke?

Melokuhle : I'm sorry

-I let go of him. He started the car and drove off. I saw him pulling something out of his pocket and he ate it-

Melokuhle : Are you ok?

Me : Yah

Melokuhle : City....

Me : I don't want to talk about your brother

Melokuhle : There is a girl in the hospital who almost died because of him.

Me : What?

Melokuhle : His girlfriend tried to kill herself because she found out about his baby

Me : What are you saying?

Melokuhle : Baba u City had another girlfriend, it was a long distance relationship but the girl came to visit City once or twice I'm not sure. This time when she came to visit him, City told her about his baby and he broke up with her

Me : He chose his baby mama over his girlfriend, that's a boss move, a true Nkwanyana move.

-I smiled. Melokuhle shook his head -

Melokuhle : Someone almost died Baba.... She lost a lot of blood and she needs a donor.

Me : People die all the time son, let her die.

Melokuhle : Baba!

Me : If it's her time, it's her time. No one can stop her death

Melokuhle : Well that's not what Linile thinks, his blood is a match.

Me : So he wants to donate his blood?

Melokuhle : Of course Baba

Me : He won't do that shit!

Melokuhle : Baba it's his....

-I pulled out my phone and dialed Linile's number. I went straight to voicemail-

Me : Linile Nkwanyana call me back as soon as... Fuck that! As soon as you get this message come back home!

-I left him a message -

Me : I don't have a son who will go around giving blood to bitches. Over my dead body!

-Silence -

Me : Who do you think your father is? Some stupid man who you can all jump on his head?

Melokuhle : No

Me : Good. It's time I show you boys what the fuck I'm made of.
Nxi!

-We arrived home. I went to my bedroom and I found my wife getting dressed for bed. I closed the door and walked straight to her-

Silumko : I was...

-I silenced her with a deep kiss. I ripped off her underwear while kissing her, I took off my jeans. I lifted each of her legs and wrapped it around my waist, I fucked her while carrying. I spanked her ass and her head fell back while her arms wrapped around my neck. I couldn't keep up with her soft moans, she was close and so was I. I groaned as I burst -

Silumko : Fuck, I love you Osama.

-I placed her on the bed and I slowly pulled out and slid back in

-

Silumko : Oh my God - She whispered -

11

SILUMKO

-Having a beautiful sleep after a rough sex and waking up in my husband's arms on top of him was the best thing. I loved sex more than anything in my marriage oh and Osama's money... No, I loved that I was married to Osama, I mean any woman would have loved to be Osama's wife. That man knew how to satisfy a woman everywhere -

Osama : Oh fuck!

-He laughed -

Osama : Ey lamajita asishayile Ispani

-I was sleeping and he was watching TV, he was laughing and talking to himself the whole time. I tried to move away from him and he held me tight-

Osama : Uh-huh baby

-I didn't know if that was a disease or what but Osama always wanted me close to him even when we were eating, he hated being far away from him and during the night he struggled to sleep without me on top of him, if I wasn't on top of him, he would make sure that my legs and my arms were wrapped around him all night. Whenever I tried to move away, his breathing would change like he was drowning and he would quickly pull me back to his arms. At first I didn't understand until I realized that he couldn't sleep without me next to him and I got used to our sleeping positions -

Osama : South Africa is fucked up ha ha ha

-He laughed out loud disturbing my sleep -

Me : Osama stop that

Osama : Ngiyaxolisa sthandwa sami

-Only a few minutes passed and he started laughing again. I lifted my head and glared at him -

Osama : I'm sorry sweetheart but look at that

-I changed my sleeping position and slept on my back on top of him. I rubbed my eyes and watched TV -

Me : IT WAS ONLY TWO MEN WHO ROBBED SA's BIGGEST BANK AND WALKED AWAY WITH 2 MILLION RANDS. - I read and Osama laughed -

Me : What the fuck did I just read?

Osama : They are top dogs I give them that, robbing a bank is no child's play now imagine only 2 guys cracked it.

Me : We shouldn't be praising crime, Osama

-He laughed -

Osama : No one is praising crime sweetheart

Me : Well it seems like SA news is doing just that,look " It was only two guys who walked away with 2 million rands" does that sound right to you? A lot is wrong with that article, it's like they are worshiping those robbers for what they did. South Africa still has a long way to go, Imagine...

-I paused when the news started -

News Reporter : At least only two security guys were left dead following the bank robbery that hap....

-I grabbed the remote from Osama and switched off the TV. I was angry -

Me : Osama we are not watching that shit. People died and that lady is saying "at least" lyoooh!! Why do people think that killing is a joke?

-I was fuming -

Osama : Sweetheart you need to calm down, people die all the time.

-What did Osama just say? -

Me : Uthini?

Osama : Nothing.

-He kissed my neck. -

Me : How is your hand?

Osama : I'm fine

Me : Can we talk about it now?

-He moved me away from him -

Osama : No

-He got out of bed and opened the curtain. He looked out the window with his arm pressed against the window -

Me : Osama can you put yourself in my shoes for once?

Osama : Why would I do that? Lumka ungazibuzi izinto ongeke uzimile, what you want to know is deep and you won't stand it

Me : Try me.

Osama : No

-I got out of bed and pulled him by his arm-

Me : Nkwanyana, Mlwandle...

Osama : No no no. Drop it Lumka!

Me : Ok ok ok. At least tell me where you were last night

-He raised his brow-

Osama : I was with Melokuhle.... Linile is coming back home.

Me : Really?

Osama : Yes

Me : Should I be worried Osama? Should I buy a bulletproof vest and hire bodyguards for me and our children?

-He chuckled -

Osama : That's ridiculous

Me : Usitsho.... The truth is I don't know you anymore

Advertisement

I feel like I'm losing you with time. What I saw yesterday was...

Osama : Nothing is going to happen to you and our boys... Did Melokuhle tell you about Linile's girlfriend who tried to kill herself because Linile broke up with her?

Me : What?

Osama : He will tell you.

Me : No I don't believe you

Osama : Ok

Me : You know some time away from you would be really great right now.

-I wore my robe and slippers -

Osama : Did you see the time? Isn't it too early for us to eat?

Me : For us? What are you talking about?

Osama : You and I sweetheart

Me : Forget it

-He laughed -

Osama : Why are you angry?

-I ignored him and walked out. I found Melokuhle in the kitchen-

Melokuhle : Mama

Me : Morning boy boy, are you ok?

-He pointed at his stomach -

Me : What?

Melokuhle : It's cramping.

Me : Oh my baby. Why didn't you wake me up?

Melokuhle : I do have medication Mah but... I'll have cold water with sugar, it does wonders.

Me : Tell me if you need more than that

Melokuhle : It's 06h00am why are you up so early?

Me : If I spent one more minute with your father I would have killed him.

-He laughed -

Melokuhle : What did he do this time?

Me : Uh uh Kuhle, you mean what didn't he do? Your father does everything

-He laughed -

Me : I was... Mxm forget it

Melokuhle : Oook... Anyway, are we even having Christmas this year nithe cwaka ninomntu wakho, ithini into?

Me : Hhayi boy boy we are not quiet, I was talking to my mother last night and she wants to be with you boys this Christmas, especially you.

Melokuhle : Hhai mama, I'm not going to Gqeberha this year.
Makhulu must come here and let us spoil her

Me : How about you call her and tell her that?

Melokuhle : I will.

Me : That's settled then. This year we are doing our usual lunch
and we will have braai later. No friends

Melokuhle : Mah

Me : Do you want to deal with your brother's evil friends this
year, kwakhona?

Melokuhle : Hell no, City's friends are out this year. I have a
surprise for you and tata.

-I smiled -

Me : Mhmmmm plus I Birthday ka tata akho on the 26th so tell me about this surprise. Are you getting married? Oh my God am I going to be a gran?

-I hugged him. He laughed -

Melokuhle : Gran? Hhayi mama, you sound like mama sgebengu when you say that, don't say it again.

-We laughed -

Melokuhle : You are a gran already, City....

-I stopped laughing -

Me : Melokuhle don't. I don't want to talk about Linile or his baby

" Awunyanzelekanga tu, - you don't have to - my daughter doesn't need you mama in fact angidingi ngisho oyedwa wenu - I don't need any of you-"

-Linile said while walking down the stairs. Why didn't I see him there? I was sure that he heard everything, Linile was just like his father, they came out of nowhere especially when the conversation included their names-

Me : Oh you are back

Linile : Qho kwakhona

-I rolled my eyes. Melokuhle looked at me and went back to Linile. Linile opened the fridge-

Me : Soze uthinte ukutya kwami ngezandla ezimdaka Linile - You are not going to touch my food with dirty hands -

Linile : Jesus - He whispered and banged the fridge closed -

Me : Linile sundiqhela andingo chommie yakho mna ghaa!

Linile : Ndiyayazi

Me : Nyani?

-His eyes widen -

Linile : Yoooh!

-Linile had the most dramatic "yooo" in the entire world -

Linile : Uxolo

-He took a packet of chips and headed to the living room. I noticed that he was limping-

Melokuhle : What happened? Why are you walking like that?

Linile : I was drunk and I fell.

-I was so disgusted-

Me : Ziphi intloni?

Linile : Sorry

12

OSAMA

-I was on a zoom call with Kgosi Mathada-

Kgosi : I missed home man, I missed my son more than anything.

Me : You left last night?

Kgosi : Yes, we used my aircraft

-He was holding his son -

Me : Kgosi why did you lie?

Kgosi : About what?

Me : You said it's your son's first Christmas this year, that baby is old.

-He laughed -

Kgosi : Eh mona, I was trying to get Kwalunga and his wife off my back. You know they push ceaselessly.

Me : I'm not going to Italy Mathada

Kgosi : Don't. His wife is discourteous

Me : Huh?

Kgosi : Kao chayela. Last night I was so frustrated with Kwalunga, the man is just a gutless wonder around that woman and she speaks to him as she pleases. Last night Kwalunga was suggesting that they take a late flight due to our meeting with the president. Kwalunga told her that she would stay with rato la pelo yaka while we - He paused and looked up - Yah yah re a tswa for breakfast motho waka, tell them to come later.

Kgosi : Aowa rato la pelo yaka, o batla go dira eng jaanong?

-He was talking to his wife. I placed down my laptop and lit my cigarette whilst he was busy with his wife-

Kgosi : Sorry about that man.

Me : No worries

Kgosi : Kwalunga told her, she can't come with us to the president house and she lost it, she yelled at him and told him that she misses her children, she wants to go back to Italy, this president meeting is wasting her time and I was like eh mona is this how she speaks to you?

-I laughed -

Kgosi : Kao chayela joe, she went all dranged. I don't think that woman would ever survive a day without Hlela

Me : Just like you wouldn't survive without your wife

-He laughed -

Kgosi : Fuck off

Me : Advocate I need your help man, I want to update my will.

Kgosi : My daughter is your lawyer, not me.

Me : I need someone with a strong input, someone with decades of experience. I believe in your daughter but....

Kgosi : I will need her go ahead. You are not my client, I don't want any conflict of interest.

Me : Fine

Kgosi : I'm meeting with the president this evening. I'll be at his house during our zoom meeting

Me : What time is the meeting?

Kgosi : I think midnight, Italian time. I think Kwalunga will be home around that time

Me : Damn 01h00 am? But It's a good thing you'll be at his house for our meeting, yeeer your president is always late for these meetings.

-We laughed -

Kgosi : They robbed the bank that side

Me : Yeah I was watching the news.

Kgosi : Those bastards are good. 2 million in 30 minutes?
Osama that's insane

Me : 20 minutes?

Kgosi : Yeah I spoke to the bank manager last night and she said they lost 2 million in 20 minutes. The footage is showing them walking in but their faces are not visible

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before they walked out they shot the cameras.

Me : But they will get caught

Kgosi : I doubt.

Me : They are good

-Kgosi looked up again and whistled-

Kgosi : Ah Nkwanyana, ay mosadi waka wa chesa. Ay fuck I'm going to my wife..

-He left me like that with his camera still on. I laughed and ended the call. Lumka walked in eating Oats-

Me : Hau sthandwa sami, where is mine?

Silumko : In the kitchen. Was that Kgosi?

Me : Yeah, he left me hanging and went to his wife

Silumko : He loves his wife

Me : I love my wife too

Silumko : I know mntu wam but senditsho uba yena u worse

Me : Yeah, he failed to spend one night without his wife and he told her to come here.

Silumko : Is that why she came here?

Me : Yeah. Kgosi is crazy

Silumko : He is in love,baby, I didn't know that you two were close.

Me : We are not close, we just have a few things in common other than that it's just business.

Silumko : A few things in common?

Me : Things that I would rather not talk about.

-Kgosi's mother killed his father and she lied to the police and said it was self defense. She didn't get arrested and because of that Kgosi wanted to be a lawyer. I never understood his reasons but according to him he wanted to defend people like his father who couldn't defend themselves because they were dead. His mother died 2 years after his father's death . I was the

first person he told about his father's death. Even his wife and his children didn't know what happened to his parents. -

Silumko : I'm your wife

Me : I know sweetheart but I can't tell you about Kgosi's business.

-I took her oats -

Silumko : Ah Osama

Me : I love you more

Silumko : Did you.... - She paused-

-Linile walked in -

Linile : Oh you are both here? Great

Me : You don't knock anymore?

Linile : I'm sorry Bah

Silumko : I'll leave you two

Linile : No Mah please don't.

-Lumka frowned and looked at me -

Silumko : Oook

-I pulled her closer to me-

Me : Ufunani Linile?

-He cleared his throat -

Linile : Eh mama, tata ndi....

Me : Khuluma isiZulu ngikuzwe kahle.

Linile : Ngi...I want you to meet my daughter

Me : You want us?.. Wait, you have a daughter? I thought they said your baby was a boy.

Linile : Ngiyacela, Bah, Mah I want my daughter to know her home, to have a relationship with my parents, her grandparents. I just realized that if something happens to me, she won't have anyone else. I know I'm not the best son and I'm sorry. Please don't punish my daughter for my own sins, this is her home

Me : What do you mean if something happens to you? You mean when you go to jail? Everyone knows that jail is your second home.

-Silence -

Me : Othi kancane Lumka -I moved Lumka from my shoulder and I stood up - Linile come here

-He smiled and stood up. I went closer to the mirror-

Me : Come closer

-He did-

Me : Look at the mirror

Linile : Bah?

Me : The mirror

-He looked at the mirror -

Me : What do you see?

Linile : Myself

Me : Are you proud of what you see? These tattoos and all this piercing on your face?

-Silence -

Me : Be honest with yourself.

Linile : Yes. This is me, this is who I am and if I didn't have these tattoos and this piercing I wouldn't be Linile. What you see in this mirror is what defines me. You understand?

Me : No I don't. Do you see a father in this man in front of you? Look closely Linile with an open mind and heart

-He moved away from the mirror and sat back down -

Linile : I asked my baby to come with my daughter this Christmas and I'm asking you to welcome them.

-I laughed and shook my head -

Me : What about that girlfriend of yours that is in hospital?

-He looked at Lumka-

Linile : That one is sorted

Silumko : So it's true?

Me : Wait Lumka, what do you mean it's sorted Linile? Did you give her your blood?

Silumko : Wooo! Woo! Nikhuluma ngani?

Me : Tell your mother about the shit you did

Linile : I didn't do anything. I broke up with her and she tried to kill herself

-Lumka jumped from bed -

Silumko : Ini?

Linile : I didn't know....

Silumko : Linile please tell me that the girlfriend your father is talking about is not Melukhanyo

-Linile swallowed. Lumka covered her face with her hands-

Linile : It's her

Me : You know her?.

Silumko : No but I heard about her. She is admitted to my hospital

Me : Did you give her your blood?

Linile : Not yet.

Silumko : Good! You are not going to donate your blood to that girl Linile. Do you understand me?

-Silumko yelled-

Me : No he knows he won't.

Linile : But....

Me : But nothing!! Angithi you want to be a good father to your daughter? You want us to welcome her?

Linile : Yes

Me : Then stay away from that girl. You want to go around giving your blood to strangers? If you want to know what happened to the last guy who donated his blood, go to Kgosì Mathada and he will explain to you how that shit ended.

Linile : I won't donate my blood.

Me : Excellent, now get out of here!

-He walked out -

13

SILUMKO

-I was staring at the swimming pool, standing in the patio with my hands wrapped around my coffee mug, my mind was pretty much busy, things were not going according to plan -

"Mfazi ka baba!!"

-I turned around quickly and he laughed -

Me : Mhmmmm? What?... Oh Kuhle, sorry I didn't see you there.

Melokuhle : And you didn't hear me calling you.

Me : You did?

Melokuhle : I did... Mah are you ok? You look different.

Me : I'm fine Kuhle, I'm just tired.

Melokuhle : Tired?

Me : What do you want, boy boy?

Melokuhle : I don't know, I guess I want to talk.

Me : Mhmm-mhmm

-He pulled out his phone-

Melokuhle : I just received an email from this woman

-I squinted my eyes-

Me : I don't have my glasses here, I won't see that.

Melokuhle : Let's go inside, I'll show you on my laptop.

-He held my hand and we went to his study room. He pulled out a chair for me, I sat down and he stood behind me -

Melokuhle : Click that

-I clicked and a picture of a woman appeared on his screen -

Me : How did you get her picture?

Melokuhle : I used her name from the email she sent me and I searched for her on some social platforms and I found this picture on Instagram.

Me : Show me the email

-He sat down next to me and opened his emails -

Melokuhle : Here

I HOPE YOU ARE WELL, I KNOW THIS EMAIL WILL FIND YOU. I MISS YOU SO MUCH MY BOY AND I WOULD DIE JUST TO GET A GLIMPSE OF YOUR FACE, YOU MUST BE A GROWN MAN NOW..... LOVE YOU ALWAYS

S SEDUPE

-I finished reading and looked at Melokuhle confused -

Melokuhle : Who is Singethiwe Sedupe?

Me : I don't know boy boy, I really don't know.

Melokuhle : Nami angazi. She is the owner of J&O designs but that's all I got. I tried to dig deeper but I reached a dead end.

Me : No, she sent this email to a wrong person.

Melokuhle : I want to believe that but this is not even my work email, it's my personal email address.

-My heart started racing. What if I was right all along about Osama's wife being alive? What if that email was from her and she was trying to reach out to her son?-

Me : Melokuhle, what do you remember about your mother?

Melokuhle : Mah?

-What the fuck did I just asked my son? Apparently he was only 3 years when his mother died so of course he didn't remember anything about his mother -

Me : Forget I asked that.... Umhmmm... Where is your father?

Melokuhle : He was playing games with Nani.

Me : A fuckin grown ass man busy playing games with a child.
Your father is an idiot!!

-Melokuhle was shocked. -

Melokuhle : Mah!!

Me : No Kuhle, I'm sick and tired of your father and his secrets!

Melokuhle : What secrets? Mah what are you talking about? Is this about this stupid email?... Hhaibo Baba has got nothing to do with this.

Me : Then you don't know your father!

-I marched to Vunani's game room. We called it his game room because he was the only one who used it, Osama joined him when he was in the mood. There was noise as usual, I never understood why they never used those headphones. I sighed-

Me : Osama?

-They both didn't hear me. I walked closer to Osama and tapped his shoulder. -

Osama : Swee....

Me : I want to talk to you

-I cut him off. I went straight to our room and waited for him. I was pacing around playing with my fingers, I was trying to keep my emotions under control. He walked in -

Osama : Is everything alright?

Me : I don't know. Who is Singethiwe Sedupe?

-Osama had the most beautiful and mesmerizing eyes but when he was lying, I could see right through them. When he was hiding something he moved them around a lot and that was exactly what they did when I asked him about Singethiwe. He knew who Singethiwe was! -

Osama : Who is Singethiwe Sedupe?

-Was that Zulu man fuckin kidding me? -

Me : That's what I asked you.

Osama : Am I supposed to know who Singethiwe Sedupe is?

Me : Because she sent your son an email.

Osama : Do I look like that email?

Me : What? Of course not

Osama : Then why don't you go and ask that email who Singethiwe Sedupe is?

Me : That is so rude Osama!

Osama : No Lumka, what is rude is you asking me about other women.

Me : Oh so she is a woman?

Osama : I don't know Lumka

Me : But you said she is a woman!!

-His jaws tightened and his breathing grew a bit louder-

Osama : Lumka, what do you see when you look at me? Do you see a man who sleeps around with every single woman?

Me : That is not true Babah

Osama : No baby it's true

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you don't trust me.

Me : I do! I'm just scared

Osama : Scared of what!!?

-He yelled and tears rolled down my cheeks-

Me : Of losing you

-I whispered -

Osama : Sweetheart, come here

-He pulled me to his chest. He rested his head on top of mine and squeezed me in his arms -

Osama : If there is one person you are never going to lose it has to be me. Maybe you are not mine but I am yours, my heart is joined together with yours - He sighed - And I will fearlessly love you until I take my last breath.

-I cried even more-

Me : No, I love you and I will not allow anyone to take you away from me. You are mine Osama Nkwanyana, You are the father of Melokuhle, Vunani and Linile ONLY. Do you hear me?

-He cupped my face and it felt like he cupped my heart. He looked into my eyes and I couldn't stop myself from smiling-

Osama : Of course sweetheart

Me : I love you

Osama : I love you even more

-He wiped my tears using his thumbs-

Me : I need to go somewhere

Osama : Where?

-I removed his hands and pulled away from him -

Me : I - I swallowed - I need to see Zizo

Osama : Is she not working today?

Me : No

Osama : Fine. I'll take you there

Me : No no no. I'll go alone

Osama : Are you sure?

Me : Yes

Osama : Ok

Me : I won't be long

Osama : Please

-We kissed -

-Few hours later I was at the hotel parking lot. That was the hotel Osama paid for a few days ago as per our bank transaction. I had to find out why? I spoke to the receptionist

and checked if there was any Singethiwe Sedupe who checked in and she said no. I checked for Banele Ndlovu and her name was in black and white. I went to her room, she was shocked to see me -

Me : Hi

Banele : Hi. You are that nurse from the hospital, right?

Me : Yes. Are you going somewhere?

-Her clothes were all over the bed -

Banele : Yes I'm going back to KZN.

Me : Oh, no I just came to check on you. I haven't seen you in a while

Banele : How did you know that I was here?

Me : That's not important. How is your daughter?

Banele : Are you stalking me?

Me : Don't be ridiculous

Banele : Who are you?

Me : Drop the act Mrs Ndlovu, you know exactly who I am and that's the reason why you came to me in the first place.

Banele : I really have no idea what you are talking about.

Me : I'm Osama Nkwanyana's wife

Banele : Oh. I really had no idea

Me : I'm not stupid. Tell me, did he pay for you to stay in this hotel?

Banele : What are you doing here? Did he send you here?

Me : This is the second question I've asked without an answer. Did Osama....

Banele : No, you can't come here and demand answers. I don't owe you anything

Me : Really?

Banele : If you are here to fight Osama's battles, I really don't have time.

Me : If you know Osama as much as you think you do then you should know that he can fight his own battles. The real question is are you here to destroy my marriage?

Banele : Destr... Oh please Lumka, your marriage is already destroyed.

Me : Do not call me Lumka!

Banele : Listen I have so much to deal with, my daughter is dying and you think I have time to fight over a man? A murderer? Think again.

Me : What do you mean a murderer?

-She laughed -

Banele : You don't even know who you are married to. Sisi, I am not here to destroy your marriage and as you can see that I'm busy packing, getting ready to go back to KZN.

Me : No you are not going to drop a bomb and expect me to forget about it. Uthini xa usithi Osama is a murderer? What do you mean?

Banele : That came out wrong

Me : Uyaxoka!!! - You are lying!! -

Banele : Leave me alone!!

Me : No I'm not going to leave you alone. Not a chance.
Thetha!!

-I pressed her against the closet -

Banele : I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Me : No no no. Who are you? Are you Melokuhle's mother?

-She shook her head -

Banele : No

Me : Who did Osama kill?

Banele : No one, I promise no one. Please let me go, I need to go to the hospital, my daughter is being transferred to KZN today, I can't pay the hospital bill anymore so she needs to go back. Please let me go

-Tears ran down her cheeks and I let go of her. -

Me : I'm not a bad person Banele but if you are going to come between my husband and I then you will leave me with no choice but to be that person....A bad one.

Banele : I won't bother you and Osama

Me : And you are not going to tell him about your daughter.
Right?

Banele : My daughter doesn't need Osama, yes at first I thought she did but after the last time he came here I realized that we don't need him.

Me : He came here?

-She swallowed -

Banele : But I didn't tell him anything. I promise you, nothing happened

Me : Are you sure?

Banele : Yes, Yes.

Me : Who is Singethiwe?

-She swallowed roughly I saw her throat moving -

Banele : I don't know

Me : Don't you dare lie to....

-I paused when I heard a knock on the door. Banele ran to the door and opened -

"Mam is everything okay here?"

-Someone asked at the door -

Banele : Please...please tell her to leave

-She broke down -

Me : Dammit - I mumbled -

-A man who was wearing a suit walked in-

Man : Mam I am the hotel manager and I'm going to ask you to leave before I call security.

Me : Fine. I'll go

-I grabbed my bag while looking at Banele. I headed out and I stopped next to her -

Me : This is not over

-I whispered in her ear and I walked out-

14

OSAMA

-After Lumka left I had to call Singethiwe and get a few things straight -

Singethiwe : Hello?

-I remained silent -

Singethiwe : Helloooo.. Who is this?

-I let out a cigarette smoke through my nose -

Me : What do you want from my son?

Singethiwe : Osama is that you?

-I walked to my bedroom window and I looked down at the tennis court. Melokuhle and Vunani were playing tennis. I took a picture of them -

Singethiwe : Osama?

Me : Check your phone, I sent you something.

Singethiwe : Oh OK

-There was silence -

Singethiwe : It's a picture

Me : Yes, a picture of my sons playing tennis. Do you see Melokuhle?

Singethiwe : Ye.. Yea..yes

-She was crying -

Me : He is happy here. Do you still remember what happened at my so-called funeral? I didn't force you to give me your son, I told you that I was leaving and you begged me to take Melokuhle with me. Do you remember what you said?

Singethiwe : I trust you with my son and his future more than I trust Ivan.

Me : That's exactly what you said. Now why the fuck are you sending my son emails?

Singethiwe : I thought life was going to be difficult after you left Pretoria and I didn't want Melokuhle to suffer again. You out of everyone knows how far I have come with that boy, you know that he grew up drinking sugar water instead of baby milk so I was scared that we would have to go back to that life after you left. Osama I gave you my son because I wanted a better life for him, not because I hated him, not because I didn't care about him - She sniffed - I miss my son.

Me : I told you that as soon as I got inside the plane with that boy, things would only go my way, my only way. I told you that you'll never have a say in his life if you let him come with me and you said you were fine with that. You said even if I told him you were dead you'd be fine with that and that's exactly what I told him, that you are dead.

-Silence. She was crying -

Me : I gave you money, I gave you my company to ensure that you don't suffer after I left because I knew that your boyfriend and Ivan were useless but now you want to fuck up my life. Do you think that's fair?

Singethiwe : No, not after everything you've done for me, not after you raised my son. I'm sorry

Me : Of course you are. Now tell me, where did you get his email address?

Singethiwe : I guessed it. You know I have a gift so I... - She paused -

Me : Gift? Right. Singethiwe stay away from my son. Melokuhle is mine and nothing will ever change that ngisho sengifile and please change the name of your damn company!!

-I hung up as my chest started to close up

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that happened a lot when I spoke for too long. I drank my pills and I realized that they were running out. I rested for a few minutes and I went to Melokuhle and Vunani to the tennis court -

Vunani : It's a Deuce bhuti Kuhle

Melokuhle : Deuce evela phi? Sugeza kwedini. It's 30, 40. I'm leading

Vunani : You hit the ball outside of bounds. You lost points... Ay Bhuti Kuhle is cheating Bah, please come and play with me.

Me : This thing is for women

-They looked at each other and laughed out loud. I sat on a bench -

Vunani : Bah please don't ever say that again. Uyasihlaza - You are embarrassing us -

-We laughed -

Melokuhle : Let's take 5 little bro

Vunani : Sho

-Melokuhle was gasping for air-

Melokuhle : Are you okay?

-He sat down next to me and wiped his head with a towel. He opened a bottle of water-

Me : Where is Linani?

Melokuhle : I don't know - He drank water- He is never here

Me : I see. How is the business going? Are my clients still happy with our paint?

-He laughed -

Melokuhle : Sikhiqiza upende osezingeni eliphezulu umhlaba wonke - We produce high quality paint in the entire world - yesterday we got 10 orders from India. Oh and we hired 6 more people, 2 in each department, the laboratory, pre - mixing department and.... Stability inspection department.

Me : That's good and when last did you check on them in the tobacco factory? I tried one of our new flavors this morning, the mint flavor and I think we should go easy on the mint.

Melokuhle : The peach flavor is out of this world, you should try it. Anyway I spoke to Baxter last night and he said everything is going well. I'll go there on Tuesday

Me : Ok

Melokuhle : Do you ever sit down and think about how much money your businesses are making? Ay baba you've made way more than enough money, it's like you were born to have money. Have you checked the accounts?

-He laughed and shook his head-

Me : I did.

Melokuhle : We are making a lot of money and it keeps coming in Mlwandle

Me : Then spend the money Melokuhle, buy yourself a brand new car every month if you want to, buy a house or a car for your girlfriend. Go overseas. Do whatever you want to do with the money

-He laughed -

Me : I'm serious Melokuhle. I worked so hard to get here, I did a lot of shit to ensure that I give my children the best life one day. It wasn't easy to get here son but do you know what matters to me?

Melokuhle : No

Me : To see that all the shit I did to get here was worth it. I want to see my wife happy, I want to see my children happy - I sighed - Even if that is the last thing I see before I take my last breath. I don't know when that will be but I know it will happen soon so please allow me to witness your happiness before I die. Can you do that for me?

Melokuhle : Baba is everything okay?

-I smiled -

Me : Can you do that for me?

-His eyes searched all over my face -

Melokuhle : Yes baba

Me : Thank you son.

Melokuhle : Baba are you sure you're fine?

Me : Oh and your mother told me about the email you received.

-He stood up and bent his knees in front of me -

Melokuhle : Mlwandle, I don't give a shit about that email. Can you please answer me for once? Are you okay baba?

-I swallowed and looked away-

Me : I'm okay Makhanda

-I stood up and looked at Vunani-

Melokuhle : What are you not telling me about? I know you Baba.

Me : I want to buy a car for Vunani

Melokuhle : Oh that's good but he doesn't have a license

Me : I don't care. Ngitholele uhlobo lwemoto ayithandayo.

Melokuhle : Mlwandle

-I went back to the house. I was busy pouring whiskey for myself when I received a message -

YOUR TIME IS ALMOST OVER. - it read-

15

25 DEC

SILUMKO

-I thought I never needed to have a helper in my house because my husband was always helping around the house but not anymore. It was time for me to reconsider my decision. I was swamped in the kitchen as always on that day, I loved cooking different foods for my family for Christmas but I always went to bed looking like a zombie at the of the day -

"Yeh mama, makhulu is not coming anymore"

-Melokuhle said while walking in. His eyes were glued to his phone screen -

Me : Ewe, Nontshumayelo called me. Jonga boy boy, I need blueberries, can you go to Woolworths for me?

Melokuhle : Hheyake, when did aunt Ntshumi come back from the UK? Mkhuseleli says she is the one who stopped makhulu from coming here.

Me : Uthetha no Mkhuseleli?

Melokuhle : Uh, on whatsapp

Me : Ewe, Nontshumayelo is here for Christmas. Kuhle please put that phone down and help me here

Melokuhle : Just 2 minutes Mah, please.

-I rolled my eyes -

Me : I wonder what you are busy with on that phone because you don't even have a girlfriend

-He laughed -

Melokuhle : I don't?

Me : No you don't

-I pulled out a funny face. Vunani and Osama walked in singing some maskandi song-

Me : You guys are awake? Great!! I need extra hands

Vunani : It's not even 07h00am yet. I'm just here to get something to eat and go back to my room

Me : Nani no, I need someone to go to Woolworths for me.
Where is Nile?

-Osama continued singing and wrapped his arms around me -

Osama : Gqoka kahle mtanami mawuya esikoleni, uyeke lento yokuveza imilenze Aw ngoba lento yokuveza imile.... - He paused singing-.... Ouch!! - He pressed his chest and flinched-

Me : Old age?

-I laughed and Osama shook his head-

Osama : Yes sweetheart, it's killing me.

Me : You don't go to the gym anymore.

Osama : Ngivila - He whispered -

Melokuhle : Baba are you okay?

Osama : Yes my boy. What are we cooking sthandwa sami?

Me : A lot of things mntuwam

Osama : Ok

-He took the apron and wore it -

Me : I'm going to need blueberries here but your sons are ignoring me.

Melokuhle : Hau mah I didn't ignore you

Osama : Vunani take my car and go to Woolworths uyothengela umawakho lezinto zakhe.

Me : Nani doesn't have a license, Osama. Where is Linile?

Vunani : City is sleeping mama, I'll go. Woolworths is just 15 minutes away

Me : Uzothini xa udibana namapolisa? - What if you come across the cops? -

Vunani : Soze mama. Relax

Me : Fine

Melokuhle : We need coals and more beer

-Melokuhle played with his eyebrows while looking at Osama -

Osama : You don't only smoke. You drink now?

Me : He smokes? Kuhle!!

Melokuhle : No mah. Eish

Osama : You go and buy coals and whatever else... Wena Nani ubuye manje.

Vunani : I will bah

-Vunani was so excited -

Melokuhle : Wait wait don't use my car. I just washed it last night

Vunani : I'm using Bah's Ferrari, not your car.

Me : Ay Osama! He is driving a Ferrari.

-Osama threw his hand in the air-

Me : Oh wow. I give up

-Vunani popped out his tongue and they walked away with Melokuhle -

Osama : Melo Tell Linile to wake the fuck up
this is not his house!!

Melokuhle : His room is locked but I'll try

-It was Osama and I left in the kitchen-

Me : Did you see what time he came home phe zolo?

Osama : I'm going to take my car from that boy

Me : Please do Babah, Yoooh ndikiwe nyani u Linile wakho - I've
had it with your Linile-

-He let out a heavy sigh-

Osama : Mhmm-mhmm

Me : Are you alright?

Osama : Yeah yeah I'm good, sweetheart. Do I add more feta here?

Me : Yes baby... No No please slice the avo. Sorry

Osama : Ok

Me : My mother is not coming anymore, Nontshumayelo is home.

Osama : Ha ha ha is that what they told you?

Me : What do you even mean?

-He raised his brow-

Osama : What do you even mean, what I mean? Your mother doesn't like me.

Me : Oh come on Osama

Osama : I'm serious. It's not like I like her either

-I laughed and hit his shoulder -

Melokuhle : We are out of here. We'll have breakfast in town .
Love you Mah, love you Bah.

Osama : Don't open the other garage Melokuhle. You know why.

Melokuhle : Got it

Me : And stop wasting money.

Osama : What do you even mean woman?

-He gave me a dead stare. I laughed -

Me : I'm joking babah

-He shook his head -

Osama : My children will suffer when I die.

Me : Luckily I'll die before you do

-He sighed -

Osama : That's not true sweetheart

Me : Uh?

Osama : Nothing.

-His phone rang, he wiped his hands on an apron and pulled it out -

Osama : It's Kgosi... Ey Mathada injani indoda? - He answered -

-He walked away and left me with all the work -

-I was busy setting up the table when Melokuhle walked in with a beautiful girl -

Me : Ok

-I smiled looking at Melokuhle -

Melokuhle : Mama this is her

Me : Her?

Melokuhle : Mah! - He laughed - I mean my girl.

Me : Oh oh wow ok. Osama? Baby come here

Melokuhle : I doubt he heard you

Me : Wait here. I'll go and call him

-I was so excited. I ran upstairs and I found Osama getting dressed -

Me : Baby come and see

Osama : See what?

Me : Our son brought a girlfriend

Osama : Which one?

Me : Melokuhle obviously

-He smiled -

Osama : That's my boy

Me : You are not wearing that track pants

Osama : I'm not?

Me : It's exposing your dick print

-He laughed -

Osama : I'm old. Jesus, you are so stupid Lumka.

Me : You? Old? Never

Osama : Fine

-He pointed at the closet. I gave him his jeans and a t-shirt -

Osama : Whatever makes you comfortable sthandwa sami

-He took off his track pants and my stomach had that feeling. I bit my lower lip-

Me : Baby?

Osama : Yah mamah

Me : Are you in a hurry to see Kuhle's girlfriend?

-He looked at me confused -

Osama : I wouldn't say hurry. Why?

Me : Because I....

-He laughed -

Osama : Ah fuck you Lumka. You always want sex. No

Me : I just miss my man

Osama : No sweetheart, we have a guest downstairs.

-He quickly wore his jeans -

Me : Awusasheshisi. Relax I won't rape you

Osama : I know

-He laughed and walked out while wearing his t-shirt. I followed him and we found Melokuhle and his girlfriend kissing. Hhayi, not in my house! -

Osama : Ah Nkosazana

-The girl quickly pulled away from Melokuhle and stood up -

Her : Mr Nkwanyana

-Melokuhle stood up and held her hand-

Melokuhle : Sthandwa, these are my parents. Mah, baba this is Keletso Komane, my girlfriend.

Me : Nice to meet you my baby

-Osama smiled and looked at Melokuhle, he shook his head. He was impressed -

Me : Let me go and finish setting up the table

Keletso : I'll help you mma

Me : Oh thank you baby

-As soon as we were done we all sat down and ate. Only Linile was not at the table -

Me : Your girlfriend is beautiful Kuhle. I'm proud of you son

Keletso : Thank you mma

Melokuhle : I hope you are learning a thing or two Nani

Vunani : I don't even have a car, women won't even look at me.

Me : Ooow is that the reason why you want a car?

Vunani : No mah

Osama : Vele

-We laughed. Linile appeared wearing only his ripped jeans of course. He looked so lost, he looked at us and closed his eyes and opened them again -

Osama : You look lost Linile

Linile : Yeah sure. What is the date today?

Me : Oh my God - I whispered -

-I was so embarrassed. Linile didn't even know what date it was? What happened to my son?. Vunani laughed -

Vunani : It's Christmas bro.

Linile : Christmas oh shit!! Please excuse me

-He almost fell running back upstairs. Osama shook his head-

Osama : Welcome to Nkwanyana resident Nkosazana, that over there is our loony but you'll get used to it.

-Keletso laughed with his hand covering her face. Linile came back quickly-

Linile : Hi everyone.

-He held a car key with his mouth and wore his jacket -

Me : Linile?

-I looked at Keletso -

Linile : I'll be back

-He ran out -

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OSAMA

-After a few hours Linile came back. This time he didn't come back alone but with a girl and a baby. Oh he did tell us about that baby -

Silumko : What is her name Linile?

Linile : Nomvuyo

Silumko : Mhmmmm okay and the baby?

Nomvuyo : Linile named her Yara mama

-I laughed and shook my head -

Me : Mxm ay - I sighed- Yara? Right

Silumko : Let me dish up for you Nomvuyo

-Silumko tried to stand up and I held her hand stopping her. -

Me : Don't. Linile will do it

Silumko : But...

Me : Lumka no

Linile : I'll do it

-Yara started crying -

Osama : So what do you do... What is your name again?

Nomvuyo : Nomvuyo

Osama : Yeah that.

Nomvuyo : I just finished my matric this year

Silumko : Really? You look...

Me : Old

-Linile tightened his jaws-

Melokuhle : Keletso let's go to my room

-Melokuhle and Keletso stood up -

Me : Sit down, Nkwanyana! We.... - I sighed - can you make her stop crying?

-Nomvuyo tried to shush the baby-

Linile : Maybe this was a bad idea

Me : Of course it was a bad idea!! Nazini Nina ngengane? What the fuck were you thinking umithisa ingane yeskole? Linile usewusihlama kwayiwena and you.... Fuck!!

-My chest tightened -

Silumko : Babah please calm down

Linile : I apologized, kanti sekumele ngenzeni Osama?

-I banged the table-

Me : Osama? Did you just call me Osama?

Silumko : Ok ok, can we all calm down? Please. Babah?

-I stood up and pushed back my chair -

Me : Fine.

-I threw a car key at Vunani and he looked at me confused-

Me : Well done on your results son. Your car is in the garage

Vunani : What?

-Melokuhle and Keletso clapped. Vunani hugged me and pulled my arm -

Vunani : Come bah, where is it?

-We went to the garage and he screamed looking at his brand new car -

Vunani : Porsche macan? What the fuck!!

-He placed his arms over his head and went down on his knees -

Vunani : Thank you Bah

-He broke down. I pulled him up -

Me : Come here my boy. I'm proud of you

-Silumko and Melokuhle joined the hug. I turned around to see Linile and his "family" getting inside Linile's car -

Me : What the fuck do you think you are doing?

Linile : I'm not welcome here

Me : Then leave my fuckin car!!

-He walked closer to me. He grabbed my hand and placed the car key in my hand. His eyes welled up with tears -

Linile : Sharp

-He sniffed and walked back to his baby mama. They took a few steps to the gate and a BMW drove inside the gate. Linile covered his face with his hands. -

Melokuhle : Who is this?

-A lady walked out of the car and took out a baby at the back -

Lady : Hey baby. Surprise!!

Me : What the fuck is going on?

-We were all confused -

Me : Linile?

-I looked at the baby. It was a baby boy and he was probably 10 months, his mom was a beautiful albino -

Me : Linile, who are these people?

-I walked closer to them -

Lady : Sir, you must be Linile's dad. I'm Bianca

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Linile's baby mama.

Me : Linile?

Linile : Eish! Eish! This is my son baba

Silumko : What? You have another baby? Osama hhai!!!

-Lumka broke down -

Me : Woza la wena shlama!

-I grabbed Linile by his jacket -

Melokuhle : I told you City.

Me : You knew about this?

-Silence -

Me : Melokuhle!!!

Melokuhle : Yes

-I dragged Linile back into the house and I locked the door. I started beating him up -

Linile : I'm sorry baba, I'm sorry.

-I continued beating him up. Lumka was banging the door knocking. I stopped and opened for her -

Silumko : Oh no... Osama, this is enough!!

Me : Enough? He lied to us Lumka!!

Silumko : Oh yhiini kodwa Linile?

Linile : I'm sorry

Silumko : Why didn't you say anything about that boy?

Linile : Because he is doing fine Mah. Mlwandle is doing fine, Bianca is working and her family is doing fine but u Nomvuyo yena? My daughter needs this family Mah.

-He named his son Mlwandle, Our clan name. Fuck I didn't care who his son was, Linile lied to us. I grabbed him by his neck and Lumka stopped me-

Silumko : Hhai Osama!!

Me : Linile, listen to me. Get out of my house and never come back here. You are DEAD to me!!!!

Linile : Baba I'm sorry. Ngiyaxolisa baba

-He kneeled down with his hands together. Tears running down his face. I slapped him -

Me : Get out!!!

-He touched his cheek and looked at me. He looked at his mother and wiped his tears. He stood up and he looked like he never cried at all. I knew those were crocodile tears. He walked out -

Silumko : Osama?

Me : I need to breathe Lumka. Please

-I went to my room and took my car keys. I went back downstairs -

Silumko : Where are you going?

Me : Far away from here

-I walked out. It was empty outside, Vunani's car was also not there. I got inside my car and drove off. I drove until it was dark, I wasn't sure where I was anymore. A black SUV blocked me and 4 men came out of the car. By the time I tried to reach for my gun it was already too late -

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OSAMA

-My head was feeling heavy, I was drugged. I tried to move but my hands were tied. I heard men voices getting closer -

Voice : It's after midnight Nganono if we don't kill this motherfucker now we are going to be in trouble with Mark

Another voice : Mark is my brother, I know him.

-If it was after midnight that meant it was already the 26th of December, my birthday. Something was covering my head and one of them removed it. I lifted my head and saw two men in front of me -

Man 1: Osama! Osama! Unjani Dlamini?

-Oh shit, whoever that was knew exactly who I am. -

Me : Fuck off!

-They laughed -

Man 2 : Kill this bastard Nganono

Nganono : Relax Sibü. I want to ask him a few questions first

-A phone rang-

Sibü : See, it's Mark. Kill this bitch Nganono!

-I softly laughed. Sibü grabbed a gun from Nganono and cocked it -

Nganono : Relax Sibü

-I tried to look at them but my vision was blurry-

Me : Who are you?

Nganono : Oh me? I'm Nganono, Lungelo and Lungani's older brother.

-Dammit! It was over for me-

Nganono : Are you not going to say anything?

Me : Ey fuck off

Nganono : You thought you got this Dlamini kanti aykhona.
Uyabona thina we have eyes and ears everywhere
oh yes it took us some time to find you but all thanks to
Singethiwe

-I quickly lifted my head -

Me : Singethiwe?

-Nganono laughed-

Nganono : You know Singethiwe? That's nice. Yah Singethiwe helped us a lot, shuthi u Mark umbhebha kamnandi mase ekhuluma zonke izindaba

-Singethiwe did that? -

Nganono : She wants you dead for keeping her son away from her. See, Osama nobody wants you alive anymore. The world will be a better place without you

Me : You better kill me now because if you don't I swear to God liyoshona emini

-They laughed -

Nganono : Uh the mighty Osama, liyoshona emini. Did you hear that Sibu?

-They laughed -

Nganono : You see those calls you kept making to Singethiwe
ahhh! They helped us a lot. They helped us track you down

-Fuck! -

Me : Kill me

Nganono : I am going to kill you phela wena you killed our
blood. You killed Lungani and buried him in your office and
after that you killed Lungelo!! Osama I'm going to kill you

Me : Yeah that's what I want.

Nganono : Give me the gun Sibu

-I closed my eyes. It was over. I heard gunshots and then there was silence but I was still alive. Someone was busy untiring my hands, so I opened my eyes. On the floor it was Nganono and Sibu laying in a pool of blood. I quickly lifted my eyes to see my son, Linile Nkwanyana -

Linile : Happy birthday baba

-He tucked his gun under his jacket and walked away. I closed my eyes trying to make sense of what just happened, I thought maybe I was dreaming. I stood and looked around. Sibu and Nganono were really dead and I was alive. My son saved my life -

SILUMKO

-I was sitting in a bar alone. I was never a bar person but that night I wanted to lose myself. My family left me alone on a Christmas day after all that shit I needed some time with myself and I found myself in that bar. -

Bartender : Mam it's almost midnight, should I call a driver for you?

Me : Driver yantoni? Letha utywala ndisele - What driver? Give me alcohol and let me drink -

Bartender : Yes mam

-I kept hitting my nails on a counter waiting for my drink -

Me : Yeh wethu phangisa - Make it quick -

"A woman with no patience. I like that"

-I rolled my eyes hearing a man's voice next to me -

Me : Leave me alone

Man : Awucabangi ukuthi usuphuze ngokwedlulele?

-Damn I knew that voice. I turned my face to his direction. It was Mark -

Me : I knew it's you

-I laughed and I almost fell trying to stand up-

Mark : Wooooh easy!

-He laughed and held my arm-

Me : Sorry

Mark : I think you've had enough of that now

Me : Of what? Alcohol? No ways

Mark : Let me take you home

Me : Nope

Mark : Ay kulungile ke.

-I balanced myself on his lap-

Me : What are you - I burped- doing here?

Mark : I thought this was a church and I walked in.

-I laughed out loud -

Me : You are so crazy Mark

Mark : You still remember my name?

Me : Of course I do silly

Mark : Wow I'm impressed

Me : Really?

Mark : Yes Lumka

-I shook my head -

Me : Don't call me Lumka. Only my Osama calls me Lumka

Mark : I see. Another round?

Me : Beer please

Mark : Eh bar man awungigaye ezi 2

Bartender : Sharp

Mark : So where is your husband?

Me : And don't ask me about my husband

Mark : Yes mam!

-He kept checking his phone -

Me : Your date is late?

Mark : Date? Kuyini lokho?

-Typical Zulu men always trying to act dumn-

Me : Nothing. It's nothing

Mark : Please excuse me. I need to make a phone call

Me : Whatever shuni wenkabi

-He laughed -

Mark : I'm what now?

Me : I didn't say anything.

-We laughed and he walked a few feet away from me. He placed his phone in his ear and continued walking away. I rested my head on my hands and when I lifted my head I looked at my ring. I looked around and I shouldn't have been there. I took my car keys and walked out of the bar ensuring that Mark did not see me -

-I was finally in my car and I started it and drove off. I was probably 30 minutes away from home and I don't know what happened but I was blinded by lights and I screamed as a car crashed into mine.-

OSAMA

-When I got outside my car was parked there, I couldn't remember how it got there. I looked around and the house I almost died in looked like an old building. Linile was no longer there, I got inside my car and checked my phone, it wasn't there. Those fools must have stole it after kidnapping me. I couldn't wait to take a shower, I was feeling out. Finding a way home was a bit of a hassle plus it was the early hours of the morning and it was still dark. I made it home after getting lost a few times. Melokuhle's car was parked in the driveway and I couldn't drive in so I left my car at the gate and walked. I looked at my house while trying to gather some strength to face Lumka. My house was a beautiful 3 floor house but no house compared to the one I left in Pretoria. There was noise inside, only in the Nkwanyana household people fought early in the morning. I walked inside -

Melokuhle : Don't tell me you believe City!!

Vunani : He said he is fine, ay hlukana nami Kuhle!

-They froze when they saw me by the door -

Melokuhle : Baba where were you?

Me : How are we supposed to drive in when your car is blocking the way?

Melokuhle : I was worried about you

Me : Get your fuckin car out of the way!!

Vunani : Happy Birthd.....

Me : Fuck off Vunani!!!!

-I cut him off. I went to one of the guest rooms and showered. When I thought about what happened my blood boiled. I kept hitting the wall with my fist trying to fight my anger. I needed

my wife more than anything. I walked out of the shower and went to our room but she wasn't there, our bed was neatly made. I checked all the other rooms but Lumka was nowhere. I went back down to the boys-

Me : Where is my wife?

-Vunani ran outside -

Me : What's wrong with him?..... Where is your mother?

Melokuhle : They didn't call you?

Me : Call me? Obani?

Melokuhle : Something happened

Me : What?

Melokuhle : Something happened to Mah

-My heart and mind stopped functioning -

Melokuhle : I got a call from...

"Singethiwe wants you dead for keeping her son away from her".. "It took us some time to find you but all thanks to Singethiwe" I was staring at Melokuhle talking but I couldn't hear what he was saying because Nganono's words were ringing in my head. I jumped and strangled Melokuhle -

Me : Did your mother kill my wife?

-He tried to remove my hand from his neck and I tightened my grip -

Melokuhle : Please....

-He couldn't speak -

Me : Who killed my wife!!!?

-I yelled. He shook his head, he was unable to speak. I let go of him and he coughed -

Melokuhle : She is not dead

-I couldn't believe those words -

Me : What?

-He held his neck and threw himself on the couch. He was gasping for air -

Melokuhle : Mah is not dead, she - He coughed- she is in hospital.

-I grabbed the first car key I saw and I walked out. It was Melokuhle's car key so I got inside his car and I almost smashed my car driving out. As soon as I arrived at the hospital, I ran inside-

Me : Doctor where is Lumka? Where is my wife?

Doctor : Sir may I assist you?

Me : Ey wena slima

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where is my wife? She is.... - I paused -

-I was running out of English. That happened a lot when I was stressed. I left that white doctor and headed to the black doctor -

Me : Dokotela ngizobona umfazi wami, ungeniswe khona la izolo okanya namhlanje angazi - Doctor I'm here to see my wife, she was admitted here yesterday... Today, I don't know -

Doctor : So you don't know when she was admitted?

Me : Ngiyeke ngemibuzo. I want to see my wife!!!!

-My chest tightened and I felt drowsy -

Doctor : Hey! Hey! Look at me. Look at....

-I collapsed-

OSAMA

-I opened my eyes and I got confused about where I was. I tried to sit up when I remembered about my wife-

"Mr Nkwanyana please"

-It was Dr James -

Me : What happened? Where is my wife?

Dr James : You fainted and I want you to remain calm, okay?

Me : No no I can't, I need to see my wife. Why won't you let me see my wife?

Dr James : I want you to relax before I let you see your wife...
Mr Nkwanyana your wife is doing way better than you do.

Me : Then let me see her! What happened to her? Huh?

Dr James : You don't know?

Me : No but I want to see her, please.

Dr James : She is in a coma but she is stable. Nkwanyana, it's you that I'm worried about.

Me : Coma? Why? What happened?

-He sighed -

Dr James : She was involved in a car accident but I can assure you that she is in good hands and we are doing our best to save her.

Me : Lumka is a damn good driver, I know my wife so how did that accident happen? Where did it happen?

Dr James : I know you are concerned about your wife but can you focus on yourself right now? Osama things are not looking good... I'm sorry but I took your blood for tests, I know you were against this whole thing but I did because I care about you and your family.

Me : Take me to Lumka

Dr James : Osama can you focus? You know what? If those results come back, you might have to join your wife in that coma but only SHE will survive, not you!! Do you understand?

Me : I don't care.

-I got out of bed and removed that damn thing I was wearing -

Me : Where are my fuckin clothes?

-Dr James sighed and shook his head -

-When I saw Lumka laying in that bed my throat closed up and tears were burning in my eyes. My wife almost died and maybe if I was home none of that would have happened -

Me : H...ho..how bad is it doctor?

Doctor : She is critical but stable. We managed her internal bleeding but we are still running more tests. I'm worried about that injury on her forehead but....

Me : Is she going to be fine?

Doctor : It's hard to say at this stage but we cannot lose hope.
Mrs Nkwanyana is a fighter

-I clenched my teeth -

Me : Who did this to my wife?

-I rubbed my forehead in frustration -

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OSAMA

"Mr Nkwanyana? Mr Nkwanyana?"

-Someone was calling me. I opened my eyes before I lifted my face -

Me : Yes

"Sir you've been here all night. You need to go home and get some rest"

-I lifted my head and saw Lumka laying in bed. I was in hospital, I slept there on a chair. I turned my face to see Zizo behind me -

Me : No

Zizo : Osama please. Silumko needs you to be strong for her

Me : Strong?

-I stood up -

Me : Zizo how did this happen?

Zizo : I really have no idea

Me : Who crashed into her car?

Zizo : No one knows. I think it was some sort of a hit and run because when the police arrived at the scene they found Silumko's car only.

Me : Those bastards!!!

Zizo : Do you know who it was?

Me : I think I do. I need to go, I'll be back in a few hours.

Zizo : Yes sir

Me : Th... Thanks.

-I walked away. I dialed Kgosi's number on my way home-

Me : Mathada

"Hi Kgosi is...."

Me : Who the fuck are you? Give the phone to Kgosi!

-It was a woman who answered his phone-

Woman : And who are you?

Me : Damn!

-I quickly hung up when I realized it was Kgosi's wife who answered. I drove home and I bumped into Linile on his way out. It was the first time I saw him after... he saved my life.-

Me : Hi

Linile : Hi

Me : Going somewhere?

Linile : Yes, to the hospital.

Me : Your mother is going to be fine

Linile : I know

-He began walking -

Me : Take your car

Linile : No, I'm good. Keep it

Me : Oh

Linile : Yes

-I cleared my throat -

Me : Linile yesterday....

Linile : No, don't.

Me : But....

Linile : I need to go

-He walked away. I stood there and watched him waiting for the gate to open and he walked out of the gate. A car parked next to him and a man got out of the car. They shoulder bumped and the man opened the car door for Linile. They both got in and the car drove off. I sighed and walked inside the house. Vunani was walking up the stairs carrying a first aid kit -

Me : Vunani?

-He stopped walking but he didn't turn around to look at me -

Vunani : Bah?

Me : Are you okay?

Vunani : I'm okay

Me : Ohk... What are you doing with that?

Vunani : What?

Me : The first aid kit

Vunani : Oh this...

-He turned around -

Vunani : I was helping, City. He broke the glass and cut his hand

Me : Okay.... Look son, I'm sorry about yesterday, I was worried about your mother. I know you meant well but I took out my frustrations on you. I'm sorry

Vunani : It's ok bah, I get it. Uvela esibhedlele?

Me : Yes, I was at the hospital. I slept there

Vunani : Ok. How is mama?

-I walked up the stairs until I reached him. I wrapped my arm around his shoulder -

Me : Mamah is going to be fine, my boy.

Vunani : Do you really believe that?

Me : Yes. I'm going back there, do you want to come with me and see her?

Vunani : I w...

Me : Sorry

-I cut him off when my phone rang. It was Kgosi-

Me : Ey ndoda. Ukahle? - I answered -

-I removed my arm from Vunani and walked past him-

Kgosi : You called?

Me : I did and your wife answered

Kgosi : And because you are one fry short of a happy meal you decided to speak to my wife like shit.

-He was definitely calling me dumb in a smart way. Kgosi was an asshole-

Me : Look, my wife is in hospital.

Kgosi : And that is your justification for how you spoke to my wife?

Me : Can you let it slide already?

Kgosi : What do you want, Dlamini?

-Did he just call me Dlamini? -

Me : You really know more than I think but I won't allow you to call me that.

Kgosi : I thought as much.

Me : Some fool crashed into her car and that landed her in hospital. I know it was Mark Dlamini who tried to kill my wife and I want him dead

Kgosi : Of course it was Mark but you can't just... Take him out - he whispered -

Me : Is your wife next to you?

Kgosi : She is around and this is not the good time to talk about this. My house?

Me : Phew! I don't know

Kgosi : My craft will pick you up in 4 hours

Me : 4 hours? Ok ok.

-I hung up and threw my phone on the bedroom sofa.
Melokuhle walked in and looked at me with his arms crossed -

Me : Fine. I'm sorry

-He shook his head -

Melokuhle : That's not why I'm here.

Me : So why aren't you sleeping?

Melokuhle : Because mama is in hospital tata and you just went, Mia yesterday. Do you know how worried I get not knowing if I'll receive another call telling me that you were also in an accident or killed?

Me : Killed?

Melokuhle : I don't know what's going on in this house anymore

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everyone is acting strange. City said you almost got killed.

Me : Don't worry, I'm fine.

Melokuhle : So it's true? Who wanted to kill you?

Me : No one. Let it go Melo

Melokuhle : I don't want to lose you Baba

Me : That's not going to happen.

Melokuhle : What's going on? Please be honest with me

Me : Nothing is going on.

Melokuhle : Nothing? U Mah ungene engozini yemoto and I still don't understand how that happened.

Me : You don't have to worry about these things.

Melokuhle : Was it the same people who tried to kill you abadale leyangozzi? Were they trying to kill mama as well?

Me : I don't know... Melokuhle enough with these questions. I'm going to Johannesburg, I'll be back tomorrow night.

Melokuhle : Johannesburg? Why?

Me : I need to sort out some things

Melokuhle : Mah is in hospital for heaven's sake! She needs you
Baba!!

Me : I know.

Melokuhle : So why are you leaving?

Me : Why don't you go and make some breakfast since you are
up already?

Melokuhle : I don't want breakfast baba

Me : Melokuhle!!

-He sighed -

Melokuhle : Fine.

-He headed out-

Me : Kuhle I'm sorry my boy

-He turned around -

Melokuhle : No, I'm sorry. I know you are going through a lot and I'm busy asking you 21 questions

Me : And there is nothing wrong with that

Melokuhle : I just want you to know that I got your back, whatever you do, I got you.

-I smiled and signaled him to come closer. I pulled him into a hug -

Me : Ngiyabonga Makhanda

Melokuhle : Are you okay?

Me : Take care of Vunani while I'm gone

Melokuhle : I will Mlwandle

Me : I need to get ready.

Melokuhle : I'll prepare some breakfast for us before you go.

Me : I think we need to get someone to help around the house since your mother is..... not here.

Melokuhle : I'll get that one sorted

Me : I'm leaving in 2 hours. Ngifuna ukudlula esibhedlela

Melokuhle : I'm coming with you to the hospital

Me : No Vunani naye

Melokuhle : Ok.

-He walked out and I switched on the TV. -

News reporter : Top News this hour, Another bank was robbed in the Eastern Cape following....

Me : What the fuck? Again?

-I packed a few clothes for my trip to Johannesburg while I watched the TV . I wanted to charge the phone I was currently using after I lost mine but my charger was not in my room. Only Linile used to take that charger without my permission -

-We had breakfast. -

Me : Where is Vunani?

Melokuhle : I think he is still sleeping

Me : Did you tell him that we are going to the hospital?

Melokuhle : I did

Me : Tell him to get fuckin ready. We are leaving in 10 minutes

Melokuhle : Ok

-We stood up. -

Me : Have you seen my charger?

Melokuhle : Nope

-He walked away. I finished my drink and went to Linile's room. His room was clean for a person like him. I looked around for my charger and I didn't see it. I opened the drawer and I took out some gloves and overalls that were stashed there but still I couldn't find my charger. I left his room -

Me : And?

Melokuhle : He is not in his room

Me : What?

-Melokuhle took out his phone -

Melokuhle : I'll call him

Me : Do that

Melokuhle : Nani where are you?

-Silence -

Me : Uthini?

Melokuhle : But you knew that we were going to the hospital.

-I took my bag and my car keys -

Melokuhle : Uyahlanya wena. Listen bah is going to Johannesburg so you better come back home early today

-Melokuhle hung up -

Me : Uthini?

Melokuhle : That car is driving him crazy. Uzoboshwa u Vunani baba, he is driving everywhere without a license.

Me : Talk to him. He is your brother

Melokuhle : I'll try

Me : Give me your charger. I'll wait in the car

Melokuhle : Please get mine out of the garage

Me : Sho

-He threw me his car key and I walked out. When I got to the garage Linile's car was not there. What confused me was that I saw him leaving without it. -

Melokuhle : Is everything okay?

-I turned around -

Melokuhle : Here is my charger

-I took the charger -

Me : Where is Linile's car

Melokuhle : I don't know. Kanti uhambe ngani?

Me : He left with his friends

Melokuhle : Ay angazi

Me : Fine.. Uhhh... leave your car, you'll come back with mine.
Mathada is picking me up

Melokuhle : Ok. Let's use the Mercedes today

Me : Yah, whatever.

-We went to the hospital. Seeing Lumka laying there not talking or moving was killing me and I couldn't stay for too long. I arrived in Johannesburg. Kgosi welcomed me and we got inside. His house was something that I had never seen before, when you walked in the door there was a wine cellar that looked like a dark hallway, it led all the way to the living room. I looked at all the wines around me as we walked-

Me : This is crazy

-He laughed -

Kgosi : I have a bunch of women in my life and they all love wine so why not?

Me : It's amazing

Kgosi : You are going to show my wife some reverence. How you spoke to my wife over the phone was rather abrupt and I won't let it slide without addressing it.

-Kgosi was really crazy when it came to that woman -

Me : Apologies

Kgosi : Excellent... Mme Mathada, Osama is here.

-Moy'omuhle appeared looking like a queen of the world that her husband thought she was -

Moy'omuhle : Osama, welcome.

Me : Thank you

-I wasn't going to apologize to her. Sorry-

Kgosi : I'll be in my study room rato laka.

Moy'omuhle : Ok baby

-Kgosi kissed and whispered something in her ear. She giggled -

Moy'omuhle : No

-They laughed. -

Kgosi : Nkwanyana shall we?

Me : Sho, Mrs Mathada

-She smiled -

Moy'omuhle : See you around. Oh Kgosi, Dora will show Mr Nkwanyana to his room.

Kgosi : I'll do it my love

-Kgosi took me to the room where I was going to spend the night -

Me : Let me change these clothes and we can get to it

Kgosi : Yeah sure. I need to make a phone call anyway

-He walked out. I opened the closet and closed it-

Me : No wait

-I opened it again because I was sure that I saw something I've seen before. The black overalls and gloves I saw in Linile's room were exactly the same as those -

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-I went to Kgosi's study room and I found him there -

Kgosi : Kwalunga and his team have left Italy, they should be here before midnight.

Me : Yah

Kgosi : Cigar?

Me : Whiskey

Kgosi : Was the trip that long? Huh?

Me : What if these Italians fumble this investigation?

Kgosi : Nkwanyana you are behindhand to raise that. The Italians are on their way

Me : I'm just curious

Kgosi : No, those guys are exceptional at what they do. What happened to your face?

-I poured whiskey -

Me : The Dlamini's were trying their luck

Kgosi : Oh that

Me : Oh that?

Kgosi : I managed to track down Mark Dlamini, he works for eThekweni Municipality. Here are his contact details

Me : Kgosi when I told you about my wife being in hospital you weren't surprised at all and you are doing the very same thing about the Dlamini's attacking me. You knew that my wife was in the hospital, didn't you?

Kgosi : Why would you think that?

Me : No Mathada you knew! Are the Dlamini's using....

Kgosi : Ey Nkwanyana shut up! I have nothing to do with the Dlamini's.

Me : Who told you about my wife?

Kgosi : City

Me : Wha....who?

Kgosi : Your son told me

Me : Uhlanguka kanj...

"Tayma I....oh sanibona"

-His older son was at the doorstep-

Kgosi : Celwe come in my boy

Celwenkosini : I didn't know you had company

Kgosi : This here son is my friend Osama Nkwanyana

Celwenkosini : Hi

Me : Hi

-We shook hands and Kgosi's son was staring right into my eyes. That was rather uncomfortable and I quickly broke the hand shake -

Celwenkosini : Your face looks familiar

Kgosi : Of course it is, he is a millionaire.

Celwenkosini : Right. Tayma we are going to Khayelisha

Kgosi : And Lerato?

Celwenkosini : Yes father. Tomorrow it's Luyanda's birthday, remember?

-A baby walked in -

Baby : Papa

-Kgosi and his son cheered up.-

Kgosi : Ah rremogolo's princess, come here.

Baby : Uh! Uh!

-She shook her head and stretched her arms for Kgosi's son to pick her up. They laughed -

Celwenkosini : Come to papa

-She was Celwenkosini's daughter -

Kgosi : Mehluko tlaa kwano

-Her name was Mehluko. Kgosi took her from Celwenkosini -

Kgosi : Keng nkare o tshwere ke tlala?

Celwenkosini : O jele

Kgosi : O jele? Mehluko o jele?

Mehluko : Mhmm-mhmm

-She was busy playing with Kgosi's beard. Can they just leave already? I had serious business to discuss with Kgosi -

Celwenkosini : Re tsamaya le Moy'omuhle

-Kgosi laughed -

Kgosi : Aowa! hobaneng?

Celwenkosini : Aren't you going to court tomorrow?

Kgosi : I am but I'll be done by 10h00am.

Celwenkosini : I knew you would protest

-They laughed -

Kgosi : Ga ke thlaloganye, o lereng mosadi waka? O batla go tsamaya kajeno?

Celwenkosini : I don't know. Go and ask her

-Celwenkosini and Kgosi laughed. -

Kgosi : Osama, I'll be back, I need to speak to my wife.

Me : Yeah sure

-They walked out. I sat down and something struck me from Kgosi's laptop. I placed my drink aside and read it-

Me : Heist payout?

-I clicked open -

Me : Monwabisi "K" Ngubane R500 000 - I looked closer - Linile "City" Nkwanyana R600 000. - I read -

-I lifted my head and looked around trying to think about what I just read. How was Kgosi involved with my son? -

Me : What?

-Kgosi finally came back and I closed his laptop -

Kgosi : I think I should tell the Italians to come straight here. My wife is going to Khayelisha

Me : Mhmmmm

Kgosi : Yah. So what's your plan of action?

-I looked at him not knowing where to start asking him about what I saw -

Kgosi : Nkwanyana?

Me : Yah

Kgosi : You needed my help to take down Mark Dlamini.

Me : Tell me about your business with my son.

Kgosi : Which one?

Me : Linile

-He swallowed -

Kgosi : Linile is a man Nkwanyana

Me : I know that.

-He looked at his laptop -

Kgosi : He needed money because you are shutting him out.

Me : So you gave him money?

Kgosi : He worked for it.

-I slowly got up from the seat -

Me : What do you mean he worked for it?

Kgosi : He worked...you know.

Me : No I don't.

Kgosi : They hit the bank

-I froze -

Me : Wha...what did you say?

Kgosi : It's just a bank's money, the insurance will cover the losses. Get over it!

-He made it sound like Linile stole a lollipop. My son robbed a bank for fuck sake. I wanted to kill Kgosi -

Me : Mathada which bank did they rob?

Kgosi : In the Eastern Cape

-I tried to punch him and he blocked me-

Kgosi : Don't you dare!!

Me : You want to get my son arrested!?

Kgosi : No one will get arrested!!

Me : And how the fuck do you know that? Because uwena angithi i leader of this whole madness?

Kgosi : I've been doing this for years and I got my boys! Nobody will touch them!

-I covered my face with my hands. I was losing it. I headed out -

Kgosi : Where the fuck do you think you are going?

-I looked at him and walked out. I didn't know where I was going but I wanted to be far away from Kgosi. I took a walk and I walked until it was dark. I sat on the side of the road. My phone rang -

Me : Hello

"Baba it's Kuhle. The hospital is trying to get hold of you"

Me : Melokuhle

Melokuhle : Yes. Why are you not picking up your phone?

-I stood up -

Me : What's wrong? Did anything happen to my wife?

Melokuhle : Mah is alive but you need to go to the hospital. Bah you need to come back home

Me : Yah, I'm coming back tomorrow.

-It was probably Dr James wanting to inform me about my results -

Melokuhle : Ok. Please answer your phone

Me : I will. Are you all alright? Where is Vunani?

Melokuhle : Sleeping

Me : Is he sick?

Melokuhle : No baba, he is fine.

Me : Ok, nidlile?

Melokuhle : Keletso is around

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she cooked.

Me : That's good. I'll see you boys tomorrow

Melokuhle : Love you Bah. Goodnight

Me : I love you too

-I hung up. My phone rang and I knew it was Dr James so I ignored it. I decided to go back to the house.-

Kgosi : Sometimes I forget that you are a serial killer and you don't mind the dark.

Me : I want you to stay away from my son.

Kgosi : I will - He looked at me- only if he wants me to stay away from him.

Me : You are fucking up my son!!!

Kgosi : He is fucked up already! He robbed a bank in 20 minutes, what does that say about him?

Me : You taught him shit!!

-He laughed and shook his head -

Kgosi : That's very rich coming from you. Blood serial killer acting all virtuous! Fuck you Osama!

Me : Fuck you too!!

Kgosi : Your son has done more than robbing a bank, he killed!!! He dropped out of school because he knew that school was not his place! He knew that he belonged to the streets!

-I was fuming -

Me : Shut up!

Kgosi : Osama, you are his father, what did you expect? That you were raising a bishop?

-I clenched my teeth -

Kgosi : It's too late Nkwanyana.

-I sighed and rubbed my face. He tapped my shoulder and walked away . -

OSAMA

-I couldn't wait to get out of that house. Those Italians were too loud. Just two hours in the house and I already wanted them gone. Kwalunga came along with Thomas, Anthony and some Tina girl who smoked a lot. We finished having breakfast and we chilled-

Thomas : I retired years ago but I'll do anything for SudAfrica

Kgosi : We are counting on this team.

Me : We need the government on our back more than we ever did so this investigation better be a success.

Kwalunga : Of course. You know I thought that we were all going to be here

Me : Mrs Gcaba and Mrs Ndlovu couldn't make it but they will be part of the zoom meeting tomorrow.

Kgosi : Yah

Kwalunga : That's good.

-I took a second pull of my cigarette and my chest tightened. I pressed my chest -

Me : Please excuse me

-I stood up and went to the bedroom. I opened my bag and took out my pills -

"Nkwanyana are you okay?"

-I turned around. It was Kgosi -

Me : Yeah

Kgosi : And that?

-He pointed at the pills-

Me : Nothing. I need to go now

Kgosi : Let me see that

Me : It's nothing

Kgosi : No!

-He grabbed the pills from me and he looked at me -

Me : I'm dying, Mathada. My lungs are fucked up

-He slowly sat on the bed -

Kgosi : What?

Me : After that fire in the mortuary I was never the same again.
I'm just waiting for my results and I think they are back because
I got a call from my doctor

Kgosi : Ivan did this to you?

Me : Maybe I deserved it Mathada

-He shook his head-

Kgosi : No, no you didn't.

Me : I don't know anymore

Kgosi : How.. How bad is it?

Me : I'm waiting for results

-He sighed -

Kgosi : Fuck

Me : But I'm ready to die. I've done enough for my family, what I will leave behind will be enough for my next generation.

-He stood up quickly and placed his hands on my shoulders-

Kgosi : Look at me Osama!

-I lifted my eyes and looked at him-

Kgosi : You are not going to die! I won't allow that.

-I chuckled-

Me : There is nothing you can do. My time is over Mathada

Kgosi : No!

Me : I mean it. I'm not even going to try and fight this thing

Kgosi : What about your wife? Your children?

-I sighed -

Me : I need to go, Mathada. Thank you for everything. I'll handle Mark, even if it's the last thing I do.

Kgosi : Give me a few minutes.

IN THE EASTERN CAPE

-Before I went to my house, I started at the hospital. Lumka was awake but the doctors said she didn't want to see me -

Me : I don't get it, doctor, why would my wife refuse to see me?

Doctor : Mr Nkwanyana please sit down

-I sat down -

Me : Doctor what's going on?

Doctor : Your wife is fine but....

Me : But what? When can she come back home?

Doctor : Please listen to me

Me : I'm listening but you are not saying anything

Doctor : As I was saying, your wife is fine but her spinal cord is injured which means....

Me : Which means what?

Doctor : Your wife might not be able to ever walk again.

-My world shattered -

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SILUMKO

-With all the pain I was feeling in my body nothing compared to the pain I was feeling in my heart.-

Doctor : Mrs Nkwanyana your husband has left

Me : That's good

Doctor : There is someone else here to see you.

Me : Who?

Doctor : He said his name is Mark Dlamini

Me : Mark? Oh yah, please let him in.

Doctor : No problem

-A few minutes later Mark walked in. He smiled -

Mark : You are more beautiful in hospital white sheets

-I laughed softly -

Mark : How I wish to be that bed and have your body that close to me.

-I shook my head and smiled-

Me : Stop it Mark

-He gently ran his hand on the bandage in my head -

Me : There is a horrible scar under that bandage.

Mark : I told you to use your glasses when you are driving, see now? You have a scar on your beautiful face.

Me : You are so crazy

Mark : How are you?

Me : I can't walk and I'll never be able walk again.

Mark : Are you serious?

-I sighed -

Me : I wish I wasn't.

-His eyes dropped -

Mark : Lumka that is... I'm sorry.

Me : It's okay. Life goes on.. Anyway who told you I was here?

-He looked away -

Mark : I have my ways

Me : I don't buy that. Try again

Mark : Fine, I read about your accident.

Me : Oh. I didn't know that I made it to the news

Mark : Why did you leave without me? You were drunk Lumka.

Me : Can we not talk about it?

Mark : No we have to talk about it. You don't listen Lumka

Me : You don't know me Mark

Mark : Do you listen?

Me : Of course I do

-He held my hand -

Mark : Can you hear that?

Me : What?

Mark : You don't.

-He let go of my hand. -

Me : What are you talking about?

Mark : Never mind. Where is your husband?

Me : Home

Mark : He is always home. Even on Christmas you left him home and you went to drink all alone and that's why you are here today

Me : I think you should leave

-He was really starting to get on my nerves -

Mark : I don't think so

-He took out his phones from his pockets and he sat down -

Me : What are you doing here?

Mark : To tell you something I should have told you the first time I saw you.

Me : What?

Mark : Osama doesn't deserve you

-The audacity! I chuckled-

Me : And I guess you do?

-I expected him to laugh but he didn't -

Mark : Yes

Me : Very funny

Mark : Look at me Lumka, do I look like I'm joking?

Me : No, you look crazy.

Mark : If telling you how I feel makes me crazy then I want to be crazy. I love you Lumka

Me : Mark

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are you crazy?

Mark : If loving you makes me crazy then I want to be crazy for the rest of your life.

Me : Are you even listening to yourself?

-I looked all over him. One of his cell phones looked like Osama's phone-

Mark : Loud and clear

Me : Please leave.

Mark : Your husband is going to die very soon Mrs Osama and when that day comes I'll be your shoulder to cry on. Goodbye Silumko

-His words stung. Who was Mark Dlamini? How did he know my husband? I got nervous -

Me : Leave!!

-He laughed and stood up -

Mark : Don't lose your breath.

Me : I said leave!!! Nurse?

-I called out -

Mark : There is no need for that. I'm leaving

-He walked away-

OSAMA

-After the Uber dropped me off I went to my garage and stayed inside my car. I kept tightening my hand on the steering wheel. "Your wife might not be able to ever walk again" Those words kept repeating themselves in my head -

Me : Noooooooooo!!!!

-I screamed while banging my steering wheel. I got out of the car and walked inside the house. -

Me : Melokuhle!?! Melokuhle!!.

-I yelled out. The house was empty. The door opened behind me. Melokuhle walked in coming from work-

Melokuhle : Baba?

Me : Put all that shit down and track this number for me. I want to know where this person is and I want to know that now!!

Melokuhle : What?

Me : Melokuhle!!

Melokuhle : Fine fine, I'll do it.

-Linile walked down the stairs. My body shivered-

Me : Wena woza la

Linile : Baba?

-I walked closer to him and grabbed him by his neck -

Me : Do you know Kgosi Mathada?

-He shook his head -

Melokuhle : Baba what's going on?

Me : Wena go to your room and do the shit I told you to do!!

-I dragged Linile to my room and I locked the door -

Me : Start talking!

Linile : I've only met him once, at that meeting.

Me : Do I look stupid?

Linile : What do you want from me Osama?

-I pulled him by his neck and hit his dead all over the wall -

Me : Are you robbing banks? Huh!?

Linile : Yes

-I couldn't believe it. I took out all of my anger on him as I punched him. He fell down on the floor and I continuously punched him until my chest couldn't let me any more. I walked out and left him laying on the floor. I bumped into Melokuhle who was standing outside my door. He looked at my hands-

Me : Did you do what I told you to do?

Melokuhle : Baba what have you done to Nile? Where is he?

Me : Ey! Ey! Answer my bloody question!!!

-He shook his head. I wanted to slap him-

Me : You are useless Melokuhle

-I pushed him out of my way and walked away. I needed to think so I took a drive to the bar. I ordered whiskey but I couldn't drink, I was just staring at it. Someone laughed at the corner and I turned my face to their direction. It was the one and only Mark Dlamini. My hands were sweating, I let out a sigh and looked around for the cameras. I drank my first glass of whiskey. He stood up and he made his way to the bathroom. I called the bartender -

Me : Hey do you have cameras around here?

Bartender: Footage?

Me : I want to fuck someone at the bathroom. Is there anyone watching?

-He laughed -

Bartender : No sir

Me : Thank you

Bartender : I hope you bought enough condoms

-I pretended to laugh and I stood up. I headed to the bathroom. I found him washing hands. He was whistling. He dried his hands, that was my chance. I walked closer to him and pushed him inside the toilet and locked the door. He laughed -

Mark : Aw Dlamini. We finally meet and today it's just the two of us

-I reached for my ankle and pulled out my knife. He looked nervous-

Me : Yes it is.

Mark : Let's talk Dlamini

Me : I don't want to talk.

Mark : Osama wait

Me : No

-His phone rang. He looked at me -

Me : Take it out

-It was clear to me that he had no gun. He pulled out a wrong phone and it was my phone. I laughed and shook my head-

Me : Give it to me

Mark : I can explain to you

-He handed me my phone. Remember that one I lost? Yep -

Me : Explain to me

Mark : I understand why you killed my brothers and I'm not angry anymore. Can we.....

Me : Can you make my wife walk again?

Mark : What? I don't know what you are talking about Osama.

-I looked at his mouth as he spoke. My hands were trembling. I shoved the phone inside his mouth-

Me : Swallow it

-He shook his head -

Me : Swallow it!

-I tried to push my phone down his throat. He was fighting it. The phone ended up on the floor. I fixed the knife in my hand and it met his throat. I kept pushing the knife deeper in his neck while staring into his eyes. A single tear ran down his cheek as he took his last breath. I pulled out the knife and his lifeless body fell on my feet. I kneeled down and cleaned my knife with his t-shirt. I pulled up my jeans and placed back the knife. I half opened the door and looked if there was anyone there. There was no one. I whistled as I walked out. The bartender looked shaken when he saw me. I looked at my hands, damn they had blood. I lifted my head and looked at him. I shook my head warning him to keep quiet. He quickly looked away and I walked out of the bar-

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OSAMA

-I finished taking a shower and wore my tracksuits. I went downstairs and I found all of my sons eating. Linile's face was pretty fucked up. Great! I needed to remind him who I was. I tucked my hands inside my pockets and watched them-

Melokuhle : Oh tata I didn't know you were back.

Me : I am. Vunani how are you?

-He looked at Linile and Melokuhle. He swallowed -

Vunani : I'm okay....I'm fine.

Me : Good

-Linile tried to leave the table -

Me : Sit the fuck down!

-He rubbed his nose and sat down -

Me : Tell your brothers about what you did. Tell them what you do to make money

Linile : Osama please

Me : Put your hand on your chest

Linile : Tata?

Me : Do it

-He looked confused as he placed his hand on his chest -

Me : Say I

Linile : What?

Me : Say it!!

Linile : I

Me : I, Linile Nkwanyana is robbing banks and I will end up in jail and this time Osama is not going to bail me out!!!

-I yelled and banged the table next to him. Vunani covered his ears, I shook my head and chuckled-

Me : You motherfuckers have no idea who I am.

Melokuhle : Bah you are scaring Vunani

Me : Am I scaring him?

Melokuhle : Yes baba look at him

-I looked at Vunani through the corners of my eyes -

Me : Vunani am I scaring you?

Vunani : Y.....yes.

Me : Good. Now you know that nobody fuck with me. Vunani, if you go around doing shit like your brother, I will kill you my boy and I mean it.

-I brought my gaze back to Linile -

Me : I'm sure you are wondering why I haven't killed you? The answer is very simple Linile, you are already dead to me. You are a shame in this family, I hate knowing that you are my son!!! - I yelled -

Melokuhle : Baba please stop

Me : Shut up Kuhle!!.... Linile you disgust me.

Linile : I'm sorry

-I bent over my knees next to him-

Me : You are sorry?

Linile : Yes

Me : For what exactly? For being stupid? No Linile, it's too late. I gave up on you long ago and I'm just grateful that God gave me Vunani after you because wena you are not my son, you are just some shit that was sent by God to punish me for my sins.

Melokuhle : Baba ngiyacela yiyeke Mlwandle - please stop-

-Linile tightened his hand on his glass-

Me : That's the only thing you will ever break Linile, not me. If you think that you are trying to break me with all the shit that you are doing, forget it! All the shit you are doing, you are doing it for yourself. I am done with you!

-I stood up -

Me : I want you all to listen to me. You see all this flashy lifestyle you boys are having? It didn't come easy. I fought to be where I am today. This is all my blood, sweat and tears. Everything I did

I did it for my family, for all of you!! And nina nenzani?

-I looked at each of them -

Me : Nothing, u Linile doesn't even know which day it is today if you ask him. What I have didn't come easy, Linile building my name wasn't easy and I'm not going to allow you to fuck it up. I will kill to protect what belongs to me, I don't care if you are

family or not but if you come for my peace I will kill you. Do you understand me?

-Silence -

Me : You don't? Huh?

Melokuhle : We understand Mlwandle but you are saying some horrible things to City? I don't know what you heard about him but....

Me : Melokuhle are you sure you want to talk about horrible things?

-I cut him off-

Melokuhle : What I'm trying to say is....

Me : Do you know what's horrible? What's horrible is that my wife is in hospital. What's horrible is that my wife! Your mother! Will never be able to walk again!

-I don't know who broke the glass on the floor amongst them but I heard a sound of a breaking glass -

"What? " - They asked in unison-

Me : Now that is horrible.

-Vunani got up from his seat and ran upstairs -

Me : I'm going out. Don't wait up

-I walked out of the door. I had to visit that bartender. I drove to the bar and I stayed in my car when I saw the police van outside the bar. I didn't know what to do? What if that bartender told the cops everything? I braced myself and walked out of the car. I went straight to the bar and I found the same bartender speaking to the cops. He froze when our eyes met-

Cop : I'm sorry sir but as you can see, the bar is closed. There was an accident.

Me : Is it?

-I kept my eyes on the bartender as I spoke to the cop -

Cop : Yes please leave.

-It was a female cop. She tried to push me and I looked at her hands up to her face. -

Me : Don't do that

Cop : I'm sorry, please leave.

-I took steps back to the door with my fixed on the bartender. I went back to my car -

Me : Dammit!

-I cursed in frustration. I hated not knowing what was going on. I sighed when I saw the cops leaving the bar and driving off. A few minutes later the bartender walked out, looked around and went back inside. I got out of the car and headed back. I leaned against the wall. He walked out and fixed his backpack on his shoulders. He wasn't aware that there was someone standing behind him. He lit the cigarette and started smoking, he was definitely waiting for someone to pick him up -

Me : You know, I hate it when people poke their nose in my business.

-He turned around quickly -

Me : Hi it's me again. Skuif?

-He handed me his cigarette, his hand was shaking. I took the cigarette and looked at it before I dropped it deliberately on the floor. I smashed it while looking at him -

Me : You know what's good for you, right?

Bartender : I didn't say anything to the cops. I swear, I told them that I didn't see anything.

Me : Did you see anything?

Bartender : No, no I didn't.

Me : Excellent. Let me take you home

Bartender : Excuse me sir?

Me : Home.

Bartender : I don't....

Me : Follow me

-He followed me to my car and I drove off. He kept stealing glances -

23

OSAMA

-I was busy doing some work in my bedroom. Melokuhle walked in -

Melokuhle : I sent you the new strategies and developments. Please check your emails

-I lifted my eyes. This motherfucker doesn't greet me anymore?
-

Me : I saw it. Is that the final draft?

Melokuhle : Yes, is there a problem?

-I shook my head -

Me : No

Melokuhle : I'm going to work

Me : Uhambe kahle

Melokuhle : Can we talk?

Me : If this is about last night then I don't want to talk.

Melokuhle you cannot teach me how to speak to all of you. You are my children!

Melokuhle : No, it's about the car you bought for Nani.

-I closed my laptop -

Me : What about it?

Melokuhle : I haven't seen it for a while now baba, in fact I haven't seen it since the last day you gave it to him.

Me : What are you saying?

Melokuhle : I'm serious. He went to buy milk yesterday and he used City's car and that's when I realized that his car has not been here for days now.

-I got out of bed -

Melokuhle : Please don't be hard on him baba, I'm sure there is an explanation.

Me : I'm sure there is.

-I went to Vunani's bedroom, I pushed the door open. I looked around and Linile was sleeping in Vunani's room on the couch. Vunani was sleeping in his bed. Linile got up quickly, he was a really gangster, phela gangsters don't sleep they only close eyes-

Me : Why are you sleeping here? What's wrong with your room?

Linile : Nani was having nightmares so I....

Me : So you thought you were his keeper?

Linile : No

Me : Linile you are not going to fuck up my son's future ngalamasimba akho owenzayo.

Linile : I was only trying to help Osama

-He threw the pillow on the couch -

Me : There is only one thing I need you to do for me, see, I'm going to the hospital in the next 3 hours and when I come back I want you gone.

-He shook his head -

Linile : Osama I'm done trying to prove myself to you, maybe I don't need you.

-I looked at Vunani in bed and walked closer to Linile -

Me : Prove yourself? Linile you think that killing those bastards who tried to kill me was your way of proving yourself to me?

Linile : No, I know that didn't mean anything to you.

Me : Yes because you killed!!

Linile : I killed to save your life. Osama, all I ever wanted was you to look at me as you look at Kuhle and Nani but it's okay, I don't need that anymore. I'll leave

-He was so calm about the whole thing and he spoke so slowly.
He walked out and I marched to Vunani's bed and pulled his
duvet -

Me : Ey ey wena wake the fuck up
where is the car I bought for you?

-He opened his eyes and looked around like he wanted to run -

Me : Talk Vunani!!

Vunani : I.... I

Me : Yey khuluma maarn!!

Vunani : Linile's friend borrowed the car.

Me : I knew it, I knew it!..... Linile!!!?

-I yelled while walking out of Vunani's room -

Me : Melokuhle where is Linile?

Melokuhle : I... I think he.....

Me : You know what? I want Linile's name out of my company, out of my will and out of my fuckin life!!!

Melokuhle : Baba you don't mean that

-He followed me into my bedroom. I continued working-

Me : I do. Okunye futhi I want to buy a new house.

Melokuhle : What?

Me : Yeah I can't stay in one house for more than 10 years, it's not good for my energy but that's not the point. The point is,

my wife is coming out of the hospital soon and moving around this house with a wheelchair is going to be difficult for her.

Melokuhle : I still can't believe Mah will never be able to walk again.

Me : The last thing I want is for you to feel sorry for her when she comes back here. Melokuhle our lives are going to continue as normal

Melokuhle : Vunani needs to hear that more than I do. Baba, he doesn't even want to visit mama in the hospital, ever since the accident happened.

Me : He is still a kid and he is just too soft. We can't force him to go to the hospital

Melokuhle : Ngiyezwa. I need to go, I'm late for work.
Bendinga nokugqitha pha esibhedlele

Me : See you later

Melokuhle : Hhaibo I almost forgot to tell you, do you remember that bartender yase Glitters? The tall one with a white eyebrow angathi washa?

Me : What about him? I didn't know that you were a bar-goer

Melokuhle : Come on baba.... Yeah, he was found this morning sitting under a tree on the side of the road, Dead. Can you believe it? He was such a cool guy. Do you think he was killed? But that's not possible, I mean the man was found with his backpack and he didn't even have a single scratch.

Me : Mhmmmm. You said you will start at the hospital?

Melokuhle : Yes.... Baba did you hear what I just told you? A bartender from Glitters Bar was found dead.

Me : I heard you. People die all the time, get over it.

-He looked so disappointed -

Melokuhle : Oh.... Ok. Bye

-I wasn't looking at him directly but I saw him heading out, he stopped by the door and turned around to look at me. He slightly shook his head and walked out. I sighed. How was I going to tell him that I killed his favorite bartender -

24

SILUMKO

-He walked in and I smiled -

Me : How do you do it?

Osama : What?

Me : How do I still find you so attractive with that grey beard and those grey hair after 17 years of marriage?

-He laughed and shook his head. Damn! I missed my husband -

Osama : I don't have grey hair, sweetheart.

Me : Ha ha ha come here and I'll point them out for you.

-He sat down next to my bed and held my hands. He pressed his lips on my hand -

Osama : I love you

-I didn't expect that -

Me : I thought you were angry

Osama : About?

Me : About me refusing to see you.

Osama : I am but that doesn't mean that I don't love you. I have nothing else to do but to love you, Lumka.

-If I didn't know Osama I'd say he was trying to make me feel better about my situation but that was my husband and he always assured me that he loved me -

Me : I love you too Babah and I'm sorry I shutted you out. I just wasn't ready to see you, I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know how you were going to take the news if you found out that I can never walk again but then I remembered how much you love me.

Osama : You can never walk again?

-My heart started racing. Oh my God he didn't know -

Me : You....you didn't know. They didn't tell you?

Osama : Tell me what?

Me : That my spinal cord is injured and that I won't be able to walk again?

Osama : What do you even mean woman? What is walking anyway? Who needs to walk?

-I sighed in relief and let out a soft laughter. Sometimes I forgot that I was married to an idiot-

Me : Osama you scared me.

Osama : I love you Lumka and I want you to know that I'm always going to be here for you. Wena I've always known that you don't need feet because you have me to carry you.

-Tears ran through the corners of my eyes-

Osama : Don't do that

-He whispered -

Me : Sometimes I wonder if I have thanked God enough for bringing you in my life.

-He smiled -

Osama : When are you coming home?

Me : I don't know baby but I don't want to be here on the new year's eve babah, I don't.

Osama : Hey hey sweetheart look at me

-I looked at him-

Osama : I'll make sure that you are home on the new year's eve.

Me : I miss my boys. Melokuhle was here this morning but Linile doesn't come anymore. u Vunani yena I last saw him on Christmas day.

Osama : You know Vunani, he is sensitive but I'm sure he will come to see you soon.

Me : I hope so too. I miss him so much

Osama : And me?

-He bit his lower lip and raised his brow. I giggled -

Me : Wena I miss you more than anyone else.

Osama : Mhmmmm really?

-He looked around and stood up. He kissed my lips down to my neck. I laughed-

Me : Baby what are you doing? Stop that

-I laughed-

Osama : I need you baby

Me : I'm in hospital.

-He walked to the door and closed it-

Osama : Who cares?

-He undid his jeans -

Me : Osama no no no. You can't do that. No.

Osama : I'll be quick

Me : No! Not here. What if a doctor walks on us?

Osama : So?

Me : Hhayi Osama

Osama : You don't have to worry about anything, just give what's mine sweetheart.

Me : I'm scared.

-He grabbed a pen and a paper and wrote something -

Me : Osama what are you doing?

-He continued writing -

Me : Let me see

-He showed me -

Me : ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK

-I read and giggled -

Me : You can't - I laughed - you can't do that.

-He stood up. There was a small thing like a window on the door, Osama placed that piece of paper there. I wished I could walk at that very moment. That man was going to be the death of me -

Osama : Better?

-I laughed and shook my head-

Me : No.

-He climbed on my bed. His touch was enough to make me realize that I needed him as much as he needed me. I swallowed hard as he kissed my neck whilst gently removing that hospital gown I was wearing. He sucked my nipples and I moaned softly. I was a bit uncomfortable though and I think he saw it -

Osama : Lumka?

Me : Yes

Osama : Relax mamah

-He gently separated my legs and rubbed my clit. I closed my eyes and swallowed. I don't remember what happened next but I felt Osama's dick moving inside my pussy. I didn't even feel any pain in my legs as I expected. I moaned as he gently moved between my thighs. He stopped and looked at me -

Me : What now?

-I got confused -

Osama : I love you

-With that said he continued making love to me. How did I get so lucky? There was a knock on the door. Osama looked at me -

"Mrs Nkwanyana?"

-Someone called out for me at the door -

Me : Yoooh Osama. Stop

-I whispered -

Osama : No

-He whispered back and continued stroking me until we both cum. He let out a sigh. I couldn't see his face, I only saw his chest because he was taller than me. I poked his chest with my index finger -

Me : Move

-He laughed and got out of bed. He cleaned me and he wore his clothes. The knock was back again. Osama stood up and opened the door

the piece of paper fell on the floor. Osama came back and sat down on a chair like nothing happened. A doctor walked in-

Doctor : Is it safe to come in?

Osama : You are already in Doc.

-The doctor looked around. I swear to God that doctor knew what just happened -

Doctor : Mrs Nkwanyana are you okay?

-I cleared my throat -

Me : Yes Doc

Doctor : Ooook... Umhmmm I'll...You need to take your meds
but I'll...

-He swallowed -

Doctor : I'll come back later

-He quickly walked out and I couldn't stop myself from laughing
-

Me : Osama what have you done?

Osama : Nothing sweetheart except making love to my wife.

-He kissed my nose -

Me : I love you

Osama : Do you want me to sleep over?

-I laughed -

Me : Hhayi Hhayi go home to our boys.

Osama : They are grown men, they can take care of themselves.
Move

Me : I can't move

Osama : Oh mamah I forgot.

-We laughed. He slept next to me and placed his head on my chest. Could somebody remind Osama that I was sick, in a hospital bed and I couldn't babysit him? -

OSAMA

-The next morning I went back home. I was about to get to the shower when my phone rang -

Me : Hello?

"Mr Nkwanyana I heard you were here but I didn't see you. Your results are back and I think it's better you come and see me immediately"

--That was Dr James--

Me : Oh?

Dr James : I'm begging you Nkwanyana. Please come and see me, it's really important.

Me : Sharp

-I hung up and threw my phone on the bed. That was the last call I needed. I took a few steps and it rang again. Kgosi -

Me : Mathada so early?

Kgosi : How do I sleep when I have people who kill and expect me to preserve them?

Me : Don't act like they don't pay you for it. An advocate who doesn't wake up for anything less than R100 000? Mxm

Kgosi : I'm the best advocate in South Africa, Nkwanyana.

Me : You are, I'll give you that. What can I do for you?

Kgosi : I called the hospital today and I heard about your wife's paralysis

Me : Linile told you. Just say it Mathada

Kgosi : How are you holding up Nkwanyana?

Me : I'm fine. We are going to be fine

Kgosi : And the results?

Me : They are ready. I just got a call from Dr James telling me to come to the hospital but I'll only go there tomorrow.

Kgosi : What time?

Me : I'm not sure. Why?

Kgosi : I want to be there with you when you receive them

Me : Kgosi I.....

Kgosi : I insist.

Me : I'll call you tomorrow.

Kgosi : There is something else I wanted to tell you.

Me : Oh yeah?

Kgosi : Yeah man. The Italians found something

Me : Something?

Kgosi : That involves you. The missing of those girls in Pretoria?

Me : Fuck!

Kgosi : This is perilous Nkwanyana, if they dig deeper you might go down. I think they should just drop this whole investigation.

Me : And what are we going to benefit from that? Do you remember the amount of money we spent on this program? This is not about us anymore Kgosi. What about the Ndlovus,

the Gcabas.....And your son? They all put their hard earned money on this program

Kgosi : Who the fuck cares? I'll pay them back.

Me : Kgosi, just leave it. The cops will find me eventually so why bother? I'll be dead by the time the cops find me anyway so leave the Italians to do their job.

Kgosi : You don't get it but it's okay I'll handle it. See you tomorrow

-He hung up -

25

SILUMKO

-I was sure that whenever Linile came to visit me at the hospital people hid their cell phones and wallets as soon as he walked in because they thought he was a hobo who came to rob them. That day he was a black denim jacket that had some paint stains on its back. He was wearing it with a black ripped jeans and under that jacket he was wearing a t-shirt that had holes like it was stabbed. On his feet it was an All Star that was meant to be white but because it belonged to Linile it was now splashed with Red and Green paint. Oh he had a new tattoo that looked like a flame that went all up his neck to his chin and his cheeks. I knew that soon it was going to go all over his entire face and we were not going to see his face anymore. That new tattoo scared the shit out of me -

Linile : When are you coming back home?

Me : Soon

Linile : I see.

Me : How are your babies?

Linile : Good, Mlwandle had a running stomach but he is fine now, I gave his mother some money to take him to a doctor.

-I noticed a fresh bruise on his left eye and I knew that Osama was the one who left it there-

Me : Really?

Linile : Yeah, as fucked up as I am but I'm still trying to be a better father for my children.

-He was really trying. Linile was growing fast and he was becoming taller like his father. He was becoming more and more like his father more than Melokuhle and Vunani did -

Me : And how are things between you and your father?

Linile : Same old, same old, he kicked me out of the house kwakhona but you know that's nothing new. I boyfriend yakho ayindiva ncam and I'm actually thinking of moving to Johannesburg.

Me : Intoni?

Linile : Ndinyanisile mama, I can't live like this anymore.

Me : You won't survive in Johannesburg Linile.

Linile : I will, I am a man now and I can take care of myself and my children.

Me : I won't allow that.

Linile : Uzawukwenza ntoni? Uzondivimba njani?

Me : How am I going to stop you since I'm useless with no legs? That's what you want to say, right?

Linile : Oh come on mama, stop putting words in my mouth. I never said anything like that

Me : But that's exactly what you meant. I know you!

Linile : Oh yes you do! Mama you seem to know everyone and everything except one person you are married to! Andiyazi noba bububhanxa okanye njee love is blinding you.

-Where does that come from? -

Me : What are you talking about?

-He chuckled -

Linile : Ilento qho ndithetha ngayo. Mama xa kuthethwa ngo Osama uvala indlebe, uzenze isdenge - This is exactly what I'm talking about. Mother, when we talk about Osama you don't hear anything, you act stupid -

Me : How dare you call my husband by name?

-He stood up -

Linile : Is Osama even his name? Because I don't know anymore but what I know is that your husband is not who you think he is. Your husband is a serial killer who killed a lot of people back in Pretoria 20 years ago. Your husband is a most wanted murderer!

-My breathing grew louder. My lips were quivering -

Me : Stop lying Linile

Linile : I wish I was lying

-He opened his backpack and took a file. He opened it -

Linile : Look at these newspapers. All these articles are talking about tata. Everyone thought he was dead but he showed up at his own funeral. Jonga apha, jonga umakhulu wakhe

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she had a heart attack on the day of that funeral when he saw Osama and she died right on the spot.

Me : Where did you get all this? This is not true

Linile : It doesn't matter where I got it. Mama jonga, see? These are all the people he killed. Tata owned a mortuary where he hid all the bodies.

Me : Linile please stop

Linile : Hhayi look at this one, Osama killed him and he buried him in his office, yoooo! i boyfriend yakho. Who does that?

Me : Stop!!!

-I screamed -

Linile : Fine but there is one more thing, his name is Osama Dlamini, not Nkwanyana.

-The room went dark and I fainted right in my hospital bed-

OSAMA

-Kgosi couldn't make it, excellent! I hated people who felt sorry for me -

Me : Talk to me Dr James

Dr James : Your results came back and they are exactly what I expected. Me Nkwanyana your lungs are....

Me : How much time do I have left?

Dr James : Every 2 days your lung loses a small piece of it and if you don't get treatment immediately then I'm afraid you won't see the end of next year.

-I swallowed the lump in my throat -

Dr James : Mr Nkwanyana you can still beat this disease. There is Dr Morris from the UK and she is good with this disease, yes she is very expensive but I'm sure you can afford her.

Me : I'm not going to waste my children's money on useless things. James, we can run away from cops, from crime and a whole lot of other shit but if there is one thing we can never run away from, it has to be death. I hope you get what I'm trying to say.

Dr James : Osama you are one of the strongest men I have ever met and I can assure you that if you can beat this disease you will live for a very long time.

-I stood up -

Me : I've lived for a long time and now it's my time to meet my maker. Thank you James

-I walked out and bumped into Linile in the parking lot. He was there to see Lumka -

Me : Wena come here!! Where is Vunani's car?

Linile : How am I supposed to know that?

Me : Linile, come here!

Linile : No Osama, I'm not your punching bag. You understand?

-He got inside some car that I didn't know -

Me : Linile!!

-He drove off -

Me : Fuck! - I muttered -

-I wanted to see Lumka but I wasn't in the mood so I decided to go back home. I got inside my car and I was about to start my engine when my phone rang. It was a private number, I hated private numbers but I answered anyway -

Me : Talk

"Skhulu it's me. We need to talk, it's urgent"

-There was only one person who still referred to me as "Skhulu"

-

26

OSAMA

-I got a call from the hospital -

Me : What do you mean she slipped back into a coma? She was fine!

Doctor : Yes she was fine but she had a severe panic attack and fell back into a coma.

Me : No no no you promised me that my wife would be home for New year's eve. You said she was doing fine and now you are telling me about stupid panic attacks? Does that make any sense to you?

Doctor : We are still running some tests to discover what went wrong.

Me : When did all this happen? After I left?

Doctor : After your son left Mr Nkwanyana.

Me : My son?

Doctor : Mr Linile Nkwanyana

Me : That son of a.... - I paused - Thank you Doctor.

-I hung up and looked for Linile all over the house-

Me : Melokuhle where is Linile?

Melokuhle : Is there a problem?

Me : Is that even a question? You know that Linile's middle name is fuckin PROBLEM!! Where is he?

Melokuhle : I don't know dad, he was here a few minutes ago and he asked if you were home.

Me : And?

Melokuhle : I told him no but as soon as your car drove in he disappeared.

Me : I hate that boy!

Melokuhle : Baba please don't say that.

-I walked out not even aware where I was going. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw Linile laying on the ground in the tennis courts. He was playing with a tennis racket, moving it around in the air. I walked to the tennis court and I sat down next to him. He continued playing with a racket like he wasn't even aware that I was there. I grabbed the rac from him and threw it away. He sighed -

Linile : Osama, what can I do for you?

-I shook my head in disbelief -

Me : What did you do to my wife?

Linile : Which one, Banele or my mother?

-I froze. He looked at me-

Linile : Which one, Osama?

Me : Banele is not my wife

-He chuckled -

Me : Who told you about Banele?

Linile : I was dating her daughter, remember?

Me : What?

Linile : Don't act like you didn't know baba when you knew very well. That's why you didn't want me to donate my blood to her because you are still angry at Banele for cheating on you with your best friend Ivan, you are still angry that Banele fell pregnant with Ivan's child.

-Linile shocked me. How did he know so much? -

Me : Who told you all this? Was it Mathada?

Linile : This is not about Celwenkosini's father, it's about you and your secrets. When were you planning to tell us about who you really are? Huh?

Me : I don't know what you are talking about.

Linile : You don't know or you don't want to talk about it?

-Silence -

Linile : Osama I know who you are

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I know who you killed, I know why you are here but I want to know why you did it.

-I swallowed roughly -

Me : That's none of your fuckin business.

-He let out a soft laugh -

Linile : From the moment I was born, the moment you held me in your arms I knew I had a fucked up father. Osama you might have fooled everyone else but not me. Mina ngakubona kudala ukuthi you are a devil in a suit.

-I glared at him and my hand met his neck. I strangled him and he laughed without even fighting me. I let go -

Linile : What? Are you going to kill me now? Do it. I always knew that one day one day you were going to kill everyone in this house because wena awuyena umuntu usislwane tata.

(I pressed my fist on the ground)

Linile : You don't know how hard it is having you as a father. Oh yes you might look at me and see a hobo but at least I'm not trying to pretend to be someone I'm not just to impress umama ka Yara okanye umama ka Mlwandle. My baby mamas know that I'm fucked up. They know that ngisigebengu who do heists and rob banks to take care of them and my children. They know that I'm a murderer who doesn't mind killing for what he wants. They know all that and they still chose to be with me. Nami ke I know who you are, I know that you are a serial killer but I still love you more than anybody else in this house. Osama look at this

-He sat up and took off his t-shirt -

Linile : I have your name on my skin. Look at this

-He had my name on his chest near his heart. That was major, I swallowed-

Linile : Do you see any other name on my body? No! Not even my own children. This shit is permanent and your name will live forever here

-He hit on the tattoo -

Me : Linile that is....

Linile : Do you see these flames on my neck? What do you think is my reason behind this ink?

Me : I don't know and I don't care!

Linile : Of course you don't because it's me who did this and not Melokuhle or Vunani.

-I stood up -

Linile : I told her everything. Mama deserved to know who she is married to

Me : Why Linile?

Linile : Because I wanted to, Osama Dlamini!

-For the first time his eyes flashed with anger. That boy was only 18, how come he behaved like that? I shook my head and walked away feeling defeated and drained. How did I hate someone who loved me that much? How was I supposed to reverse the anger I had towards Linile. One of the reasons why I hated him so much was because I saw a reflection of me in him and I couldn't stand that shit. I wanted my children to be better than me-

-I felt like I was carrying the entire world over my shoulders. I went back to the house and I found Melokuhle in his room looking at our picture that was on the side of the bed -

Me : You were 3 years old in that picture. That was our 3rd day here in the Eastern Cape

-He smiled -

Me : I remember that day very well. We went to look at the houses with an agent. I told you to choose a house for us

Melokuhle : You did? But I was so young Baba

Me : I know but I wanted you to choose the house. Each and every house you had something to say "Baba there is no swimming pool" "Baba the house is too small"

-We laughed -

Me : But eventually you liked this one. I don't know if you chose it because you liked it or you chose it because you couldn't wait for us to leave and go to the ice-cream shop.

-I laughed and Melokuhle was looking at me-

Melokuhle : Wait, I choose this house?

-I sighed -

Me : You did my boy. It's almost like the one we left in Pretoria but ah that one was like heaven. It had a huge game room and a beautiful golf course.

Melokuhle : Why did we leave Pretoria? Was it because mom died?

-I looked away-

Melokuhle : Baba I know that you don't want to talk about her and I respect that.... I'm sorry.

Me : It's time mfan'wam. It's time we spoke about your mother.

-He stood up quickly and I scratched my head -

Melokuhle : Are you serious?

Me : Melokuhle there is something that I should have told you a long time ago but I didn't want to because to me it didn't make sense.

Melokuhle : What didn't make sense?

Me : That you are not my biological son

-His head fell back and he let out a heavy sigh. -

Melokuhle : I knew it.

-I was shocked -

Me : What?

Melokuhle : I knew that you are not my biological father and we spoke about it with Linile and Vunani. Baba you love me too much, way too much and I just knew that there was more to it.

Me : You knew?

-I pulled him by his arm and we sat on his bed-

Melokuhle : I was just waiting for you to say it. What I want to know is what happened to my parents? Where did you find me? Because it's clear that whatever happened to them touched your heart so much that you are trying so much to close their gap in my life.

Me : Your parents are both alive.

-He closed his eyes -

Melokuhle : What did you say?

-I stood up and tucked my hands in my pockets -

Me : They are alive and they both know that you are staying with me.

Melokuhle : Ini? Ho.. How is that even possible? Are we related? Are you my father's brother?

Me : No we are not related. Your father was my best friend and that was all.

Melokuhle : I don't understand

-I looked at him and it was time I told him the truth and nothing but the truth. Tears streamed down his face as I told him the whole story. There was a long silence after that-

Me : Aren't you going to say anything?

Melokuhle : You killed people? You took me away from my parents?

Me : Melokuhle listen to me

Melokuhle : No, I don't want to listen to you. Why? Why did you take me away from my parents?

Me : Because you deserved more than Ivan could have offered you!

Melokuhle : You mean imali yegazi? Mr Nkwanyana you killed to have all this flashy lifestyle!

Me : Oh I'm Mr Nkwanyana now?

Melokuhle : Yes you are!

Me : Listen here! I did not kill to get all this. Everything I have I worked for it!

Melokuhle : Like hell you did!! Get out of my way!

Me : Where do you think you are going?

Melokuhle : Leave me alone!!

-He pushed me and he walked past me. I couldn't believe it. I knew that he would be angry but not like he did -

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OSAMA

The New Year's Eve

-I was slowly losing everything that I wanted in life and I didn't know who to blame for it. There was no way Silumko would still want to be with me after what Linile told her so my marriage was over, that I knew. Melokuhle has not been home for the past 2 days, my wife was in hospital, Linile was good as dead and Vunani was totally avoiding me, I'm sure he knew what was going on in that house and what kind of a fucked up father I was. -

-The sun has gone down and so is everything else. I checked the time and it was 21h00, 3 hours to the new year and there I was sitting outside my door sipping scotch, feeling miserable. -

"Bah?".

-I turned back to see Vunani standing behind with a suitcase -

Me : Nkwanyana

-He cleared his throat -

Vunani : I'm going to Gqeberha, Mkhuseleli is picking me up.

Me : I guess you are also leaving me now

Vunani : Baba that is not true, I'll be back tomorrow. I promise

Me : Ok

-A car hooted at the gate -

Vunani : Uncle Mkhuseleli is here. I need to go

Me : Call me when you get to Gqeberha

Vunani : I will and Baba please don't worry about bhuti Kuhle, he is fine. He is also in Gqeberha

-I sighed in relief -

Me : Thank you so much son

Vunani : It's okay Bah. I must go now

Me : Alright

-He walked away with his suitcase. He waited for the gate to open and he got inside the car. I finished my drink and pulled out my phone. I dialed -

Me : Do you still want to talk?

"Please. I'm still in the Eastern Cape"

Me : Let's meet in 3 hours. I'll send you the directions.

-I hung up and walked inside the house. I finished showering and got ready. I tied up my sneaker's laces and I looked at myself in the mirror. I lifted up the collar of my coat and walked out. I found Linile downstairs, he was drinking Coca cola from the bottle in front of an opened fridge. -

Me : What did your mother say about that shit?

-He closed the bottle and put it back in the fridge. He closed the fridge and licked his lips -

Linile : Oh you are here.

Me : Take that shit out of my fridge. Ubani onengqondo ongaphuza amathe akho?

-He took out the coca cola and put the bottle under his arm. I shook my head-

Linile : Where are you going namajazi amade?

-I looked at my coat and it was just above my knees. Linile Didn't know what he was talking about -

Me : Esibhedlela

Linile : Where is Vunani and Bhuti Kuhle?

Me : Out?

Linile : And wena when are you coming back? I thought we were going to cross night together

Me : Mxm

-I took my car keys and walked out. I drove to the hospital -

Nurse : Sir the visiting hours are over. Please come back tomorrow

Me : Do I look like a visitor to you?

Nurse : Mr Nkwanyana I.....

Me : Listen here, I don't need to make an appointment to see my wife!

Nurse : I understand that but...

.

Me : Shall we?

-She sighed -

Nurse : `Of course

-I followed her to see Lumka. It pained me to see my wife laying there unconscious for the second time and what pained me most was knowing that I was the reason she fell back into a coma that time around . I wanted her to be home. Lumka loved New year's eve more than Christmas so I knew how much she wanted to be home on that day.

Me : You know I was watching fireworks on my way here and I laughed thinking about how you love and hate them at the same time because they scare you

-I sat down and held her hand -

Me : Sweetheart I'm so sorry, I'm sorry that you are here and I'm sorry for not being honest with you.

-I sighed -

Me : Lumka I love you so much that sometimes there are things that I'm scared of telling you about because I don't know how

you are going to take them. I ask myself "What if I tell her and it breaks her heart?".. "What if I tell her and she leaves me?"
Lumka the truth is, you are my weakness. I love you so much that I can't sleep without you next to me, when I'm sleeping I want you close to me because I'm scared that when I wake up you might be gone, when you are sitting away from me I feel like you want to leave me and I get scared. I'm sure you sometimes wonder why I always want you next to me when we are eating

watching TV or doing any other things. That's because I'm scared of losing you. I've already lost so much and I even lost myself in the process. The night that man killed my mother changed everything

-My throat closed up -

Me : Sweetheart I need you to wake up, our children need you more than they need me. I know that after what Linile told you there's no way you are coming back to me and I thank God that I won't have to deal with the pain of losing another woman I love in my life because I'm already dying.

-I sniffed -

Me : I'm sick, Maka Linile. I'm really sick and I don't have much time left. I need you to wake up and take care of Vunani. Melokuhle is not my son sweetheart and I know that soon he will come to pack up his things and go to his parents... I'm sorry Lumka. Please come back home, our children will need you when I'm gone.

-I saw tears running through the corners of her eyes. She was listening all this time. I felt my own tears burning in my eyes and I quickly walked out -

-I stood on top of the building and I watched cars moving down on the road. Fresh air hit my face. I was busy smoking and I felt the smoke hitting my chest like a burning coal. I softly groaned in pain -

"Skhulu"

-I smiled and turned around. He took off his shades -

Me : Ey Jay!!

-He laughed and walked closer to me , I gave him my hand for a hand shake but he looked at my hand and pulled me to his shoulder for a hug -

Mjay : Osama I'm sorry, I'm sorry skhulu.

-I tapped his back -

Me : You know that me coming here wasn't going to be possible without your help so you are forgiven skhulu.

-I broke the hug-

Mjay : I know but I still can't forgive myself for trying to kill you, Osama. I had no choice, you know it. I had to protect myself because Ndlovu made it clear that he was going to the cops.

Me : A man must do what a man got to do. Smoke?

-He pulled one cigarette from the box and looked at it and back at me-

Me : Nkwanyana product, it's clean Jay. No poison

Mjay : The Dlamini boy took a cigarette from you and he died so what can I say?

-We laughed. We stood on top of the building and smoked while watching the fireworks in the sky-

Mjay : Happy new year skhulu

-I chuckled -

Me : There is nothing happy about this year.

Mjay : That's not true

Me : You have no idea, anyway tell me why are you here? What was so urgent?

-He signaled me to give him another cigarette -

Mjay : This is some great stuff.

Me : I know. We are the best

Mjay : Yah. There is...

- He lit a cigarette -

Mjay : There is a problem Osama

Me : A problem?

Mjay : In Pitori. Ivan's daughter is in hospital for a while now and they are running out of money to pay ama bill ase hosi. She is dying, she needs blood

-I went back to the conversation I had with Linile-

Me : Mjay, my son is not going to donate his blood to Ivan's daughter.

Mjay : Your son? I don't understand.

Me : Drop the act Jay, I know that the reason why you are here is because you heard that my son was in a relationship with Ivan's daughter and that his blood is a match so Ivan and his wife sent you here to try and convince me about....

Mjay : Osama I don't know what you're talking about.

-He cut me off -

Me : You know exactly what I'm talking about and you know what? I don't give a fuck about Ivan, Banele or their daughter!

Mjay : Now it makes sense. So your son who is the reason why she tried to kill herself is a match?

Me : You can't blame Linile for what Ivan's daughter did. Jay the girl was obsessed with Linile's dick.... I mean who travels from KZN to the Eastern Cape just for a dick?

Mjay : Osama, so your son's blood is a match and you didn't question that?

Me : Why would I bother myself questioning stupid shit when I have so much going on in my life?

Mjay : Why do you hate that girl so much? Skhulu u Ivan no Banele who fucked things up not that girl. That girl is innocent and she needs her father to save her life

Me : I don't give a shit about strangers Jay, especially Ivan's strangers!

Mjay : That girl is not a stranger, she is not Ivan's daughter. She is your daughter! Your own flesh and blood

-I tried to speak but I failed -

Me : Ut... uthini?

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OSAMA

-I literally went crazy after meeting with Mjay. I sat in my car and tried to remember everything that happened but I needed someone to confirm if what I had In mind was correct. I walked inside the house and I found Linile sleeping on the couch with his sneakers on. There were a lot of beer bottles on that floor, he definitely had his friends over. The time was 02h30am. I sat down next to him and I shook him gently -

Me : Nile?

-He was snoring -

Me : City? City please wake up

-He jumped and pulled out his gun -

Me : Hey hey easy

Linile : Jeez baba... - Sigh- you are back.

Me : Yes. Can we please talk?

-He rubbed his eyes -

Linile : Is this you?

Me : What?

Linile : Why are you so calm and not fighting like always?

Me : Linile look, this is serious.

-He suddenly looked nervous. He stood up -

Linile : Is it Mah? Is she dead?... Oh fuck Vunani!!!

-He yelled. I was confused -

Me : No no no listen, Linile....

Linile : I know she is dead. Vunani what have you done?

-He placed his arms over his head -

Me : Listen to me!!!!!!

-He lowered his hands-

Me : Your mother is doing fine. She is fine

-He sighed and sat down. He broke down in tears. I knew he was drunk, Linile never cried that much. I waited for him to stop crying and he finally did. He wiped his tears and picked a

bottle of beer. He searched for God knows what under it and he drank -

Linile : You know no one gives a shit Osama.

Me : Mhmm-mhmm

Linile : Yah.

-He drank his beer -

Linile : But you know what's funny?

Me : Yeah

-I could hear him talking but I wasn't listening to him -

Linile : It's funny how you all look at me as a fucked up person but I still saved each and every one of you in this house

Me : Yah

Linile : Yah. I always come through for each and every one of you but still no one has ever come through for me but it's fine.

-He took a sip of his beer -

Linile : We move

-Silence -

Linile : Do you want us to braai some meat?

-Silence -

Linile : Bah?

Me : What?

Linile : Meat?

Me : Yeah yeah of course.

Linile : Woza

Me : I'll follow you now

-He walked away. 30 minutes later I followed him to the braai area -

Me : What happened today? Where is Vunani?

Linile : I thought you were sober

Me : Linile I'm trying to put together everything that happened today and last night.

Linile : He is in Gqeberha with Kuhle. Why is Melokuhle refusing to come back here? Did you fight?

-If Vunani was in Gqeberha that would mean I wasn't crazy-

Me : So I did see Mjay today.

Linile : Who?

Me : Tell me more about that girlfriend of yours who tried to take her own life.

Linile : Which one is that? I have quite a number of girlfriends

-He looked at me like he was expecting me to say anything -

Me : Melu...Melukhanyo

Linile : Oh what about her?

Me : Do you have her pictures?

Linile : Why?

Me : I just want to see her. Please Linile

Linile :Oook.. Oh well....

-He took out his phone and showed me the pictures. Some were not meant for my eyes where my daughter was good as naked -

Me : Ok stop

Linile : It's not like you have never seen a naked woman before

Me : She is not a woman Linile.,she is a child! You are a child!
You two shouldn't even be having sex but that is something I
should have told you long ago. Uwu baba manje so...

_ I sighed _

Me : How did you two meet?

Linile : Through my friend Sakhumzi. He had a fake Twitter
account and he used my pictures. The lady saw my pictures and
she liked me a lot that Sakhumzi had no choice but to tell me
about her nami I found uba I like her too so ndatsho kuye

-My jaws tightened -

Me : Fuck - I muttered -

Linile : What?

Me : Nothing. Did you really love her?

Linile : I did but I knew it was never going to work because you and mama hate everything that I touch.

Me : That's not true.

Linile : It is Osama. You told me not to give her my blood even after I told you that she is dying

-Silence -

Linile : Admit it tata, you and mama hate every girl I date. You criticize them all

Me : Linile I....

Linile : No it's okay. I get it, nothing I do is ever enough. Every time it's Vunani this, Vunani that

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Melokuhle this, Melokuhle that. Where are they right now? Do you think I wanted to be here on New year's eve? No I didn't but I knew that since mama is in hospital you were going to be all alone so I stayed. You only came back now Baba, I should have left the moment I saw you leaving but I didn't. I stayed here hoping you would come back before midnight but you didn't kodwa angidiniwe. Do you think Vunani and Melokuhle would have done the same?

Me : Yes

Linile : Fine. Where are they right now? Why did they leave you? Ok u Vunani I know why he left. U Melokuhle? Why did he leave home? Did you fight?

Me : Just shut up Linile

-He chuckled -

Linile : You know, I actually can't wait to see the day when mama finds out that the reason she can never walk again is because of your precious Vunani?

Me : What?

-I felt a sharp pain in my head -

Linile : Happy New Year Osama

SILUMKO

-When I woke up I wished I didn't wake up. Osama was capable of many things but not murder. Why did it have to be him? A man that I loved so much killed his family and then he carried on with his life like nothing happened. Why? Why? Why? -

"Mrs Nkwanyana? Mrs Nkwanyana!"

Me : Huh?

-I snapped back into my senses -

Doctor : Are you okay?

Me : Yeah. Why wouldn't I be okay?

Doctor : You seem distracted but let's proceed.

Me : Proceed with what?

-He looked at me confused -

Doctor : Mrs Nkwanyana how many fingers am I holding?

Me : I don't have time for this nonsense

-I wanted to get out of that bed but then I remembered that I couldn't walk. I looked at the doctor -

Me : Ok fine - Sigh- you are holding 2 fingers.

Doctor : Perfect. We are done for the day, please get some rest.

Me : Thanks.

-He walked out and Zizo walked in -

Zizo : Mhmmmm yummy yummy doctor yummy.

-I was just staring into space -

Zizo : That is one hell of a hot lesbian doctor. Her wife is blessed

Me : What?

Zizo : That doctor who was here is a lesbian. She is new here and she is young and fuckin hot. Grrr!

Me : That's a woman?

Zizo : Yeah but you couldn't tell. Did you see the muscles? I'm sure Osama was like that growing up.

-I wasn't ready to speak about Osama-

Me : That's different

Zizo : No it isn't. I would let her fuck me

-I sighed -

Me : I'm sure you would

-Her face became blank. She cleared her throat -

Zizo : Friend, how are you feeling?

Me : Dead

Zizo : Silumko don't say that

Me : I don't want to go back home Zizo

Zizo : Osama is such a great husband chommi and he is going to take care of you. You need him and he needs you. You should have seen his face when he was looking at you laying in that bed unconsciously.

Me : I'm not ready to see Osama

Zizo : Fine, you can come and stay with me for as long as you want, only if Osama agrees.

Me : Osama and his children are doing fine without me

Zizo : You don't know that

Me : When was the last time he came here?

Zizo : Ummmmhm, 3 days ago? Yeah on New Year's eve

Me : So he was here?

Zizo : He came to see you almost everyday.

Me : I guess I wasn't dreaming. I just have to remember what he said to defend his actions.

Zizo : What are you talking about?

Me : There is a lot going on Zizo but I can't tell you about it.

Zizo : Silumko you are scaring me. Is everything alright?

Me : I don't know. I'm not going to lie to you, I really don't know.

-I closed my eyes and tears rolled down -

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OSAMA

Me : I need everything to be up and running in the next 4 days.
My wife is coming out

-Linile walked in after 2 days he dropped the bomb -

Me : Can we do this later? I need to take care of something
really important

-Linile sat on top of the counter. I hung up -

Me : Linile don't you think you have done enough damage to
this family? I mean telling your mother all the shit you told her
whilst she was in hospital fighting for her life was bad enough
and now to lie that Vunani is the reason she ended up in
hospital is whole different mess

Linile : So you think I lied? Baba why would I lie about something like that?

Me : I don't know, to ruin Vunani's life maybe?

Linile : 25 Dec, I saw your car passing by on the main road. You were driving on a high speed and I knew that something was wrong so I decided to follow you, I followed until a black SUV blocked your car.

Me : I'm not a child I know what happened that night. What I want to know is why are you lying about the accident? You know very well that Vunani did not cause that accident

Linile : Well he did. He called me right after the accident and he told me to come and help him because he was trapped inside the car. After I left you, I went to the accident scene. Mama wasn't wearing a seat belt and she was smelling of alcohol. She was badly injured but I knew she was going to survive but u Vunani? He was definitely going to get arrested so I told him to run and I took care of the rest. I took Vunani's car to a panel beat

-I was sweating. I was fuming -

Me : You left my wife to die alone?

Linile : I called an ambulance Baba. She didn't die

-I grabbed him off the counter. I wanted to kill him -

Me : You are the reason why Lumka is in hospital, not Vunani!!
You are the reason why Lumka can't walk anymore, not
Vunani!!!

Linile : If that's what you want to believe then so be it. I don't
give a damn anymore Osama

Me : I hate you Linile, I hate you with all of my.....

-My heart tightened. I couldn't breathe-

Me : Baba!!!

SILUMKO

Me : I want to see him now! Get me out of this bed!

Doctor : Mrs Nkwanyana please calm down

Me : I don't want to calm down, I want to see my husband!

2nd Doctor : Fine. I'll take you to your husband

Me : Thank you

-They got me ready and I went to see Osama. -

Me : No no, is he dead? He looks dead

-His skin was looking dry and he looked slim-

Doctor : Dr James will be here now. Please excuse me

-He walked out and I cried looking at Osama. Osama was fine the last time I saw him, how did he change so much? He looked like someone who had been sick for a while. I pushed my wheelchair closer to the bed and I held his hand-

Me : Baby what happened?

-I looked up at the roof -

Me : Please heavenly father, not my husband, not the father of my children . I know he is not perfect but I need you to save him. Khumkani yamakhumkani ndicela ungandishiyi bawo

-I prayed. Dr James walked in and I wiped my tears -

Me : What happened to my husband?

Dr James : Mrs Nkwanyana I need you to calm down.

Me : Why are you all telling me to calm down? Look at my husband Dr James! He is dying!

-He pulled out a chair and sat next to me -

Dr James : Osa... Mr Nkwanyana is going to be fine.

Me : What happened!?

-I yelled -

Dr James : I'll take it you don't know about his condition.

Me : Condition?

Dr James : Mr Nkwanyana is suffering from COPD

Me : COPD

Dr James : Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. It's an exposure to irritants that damage your lungs and airways

Me : Oh my God, Oh my God.

-I covered my face with my hands-

Dr James : It's still an early stage but it's.... It's escalating fast and that's why I recommend hospice care at this stage.

Me : How long has he been sick? When did he lose so much weight? I was admitted for just a few days and I woke up to see my husband looking like this?

Dr James : I can't really say but it has been a while. You see the problem with COPD is that some people may have it without even knowing that they have it.

Me : If you say you recommend hospice care does that mean he is dying in a few months?

-He swallowed -

Dr James : No no no but....

Me : Say it James, my husband is dying. He told me that he is dying, now I remember.

Dr James : There are great chances that Mr Nkwanyana could beat this. I told him about this new doctor in the UK who is very good with this disease without even a transplant but your husband refused refused to get help.

-I quickly wiped my tears -

Me : So there is someone who can help?

Dr James : Yes, you just need to convince your husband to go for it as soon as he wakes up.

Me : Ok ok ok. I will

Dr James : But that doctor doesn't come cheap.

Me : Money is not a problem

Dr James : Perfect. I'll give you more info as soon as you are ready

Me : Thank you so much Dr James

Dr James : You are welcome Mrs Nkwanyana

SILUMKO

-3 days later Osama was still in hospital. I got out of the hospital and I went back home -

Me : Linile, where are you going?

Linile : Oh I forgot to tell you

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baba bought a new house.

Me : What?

Linile : Yes, he wanted to make things easier for you since.....

Me : Since I can't walk

-I was shocked -

Me : Osama bought a new house?

Linile : A very beautiful house. It's a pity that we are moving to that house with heavy hearts

Me : Your father is going to be fine

Linile : Something is not right Mah. First it was you and now it's Baba? Who is going to be next? Me? Vunani?

Me : No one

Linile : What's wrong with him?

Me : He is going to be fine Linile

-I couldn't tell my children that their father was sick -

Linile : If you say so.

-Silence -

Linile : Mah I'm sorry for everything I did. I shouldn't have told you about Baba's past whilst you were still in hospital. I was just angry and I wasn't thinking

Me : I don't want to talk about it.

Linile : It's sad because I have to be a bearer for bad news

Me : What now?

Linile : Melokuhle almost left home

Me : Why?

Linile : It's not my place to tell you. We are home

-The gate opened and I saw a huge white house. -

Linile : Welcome home mama.

Me : It's beautiful

-Tears filled my eyes. Melokuhle and Vunani walked out of the house -

Me : My boys

-I whispered -

Linile : Come and help me here

-Vunani couldn't even look at me in the eyes. I think it was still going to take him some time to accept my situation. I really felt bad. They helped me into my wheelchair. -

Me : Thank you boys

Melokuhle : It's good to have you back.

Me : I missed you all.

-They smiled and Vunani looked away-

Me : Nani, please push mama.

Vunani : Mah?.

Melokuhle : Push the wheelchair.

-He shook his head and his eyes welled up with tears-

Vunani : I can't

-My heart broke. -

Linile : This one is weak. I'll push you Mah

-Linile and Melokuhle laughed. Vunani looked at me and he ran inside the house-

Me : Maybe I shouldn't have come back home

Melokuhle : No Mah, don't say that. Vunani is too sensitive but he will get used to this

Linile : Yeah Bhuti Kuhle is right. Let's go in

-Melokuhle was carrying my bags and Linile pushed me in. I looked around our little heaven and it seemed like it was going to be more easily moving around with my little ride -

-Melokuhle walked inside the bedroom while I was busy unpacking my clothes -

Melokuhle : Let me help you with that

Me : Thank you son

Melokuhle : Unjani u Mlwandle?

Me : He is doing fine. He will be fine

Melokuhle : That's good

Me : Out with it

Melokuhle : Mah?

Me : What's bothering you?

Melokuhle : Nothing you don't know

Me : Oh?

Melokuhle : I don't want us to fight

Me : That would be the first

Melokuhle : I trusted you Mah

Me : Melokuhle what are you talking about?

-He chuckled -

Melokuhle : You knew right?

Me : Knew what?

Melokuhle : Who your husband really is.

-I let out a sigh -

Me : This is not the time to judge your father

Melokuhle : Osama is not my father

Me : He is still your father. We are all shocked but everyone has a past, a dark past.

Melokuhle : Oh yes stealing me from my parents is dark

Me : What?

Melokuhle : Oh drop it Mah. You knew that Osama is not my biological father

Me : Intoni?

Melokuhle : So you are going to act shocked now? Mah, I saw your face when I showed you Singethiwe's picture and you weren't wor.....

- "Melokuhle is not my son, sweetheart" Melokuhle, is not my son "... I drifted away from the conversation when those words kept repeating themselves in my head -

Melokuhle : Mah!

Me : What did you say?

Melokuhle : You heard exactly what I said! Your legs are paralyzed not your head!

Me : Get out!

-He sat down -

Melokuhle : I'm sorry. I truly am sorry, I just don't know what to believe anymore. I don't even know how to feel. I'm angry but I don't know if I should be angry at my father or Ivan and Singethiwe

Me : Melokuhle, what happened while I was gone?

Melokuhle : I found out the truth. I always suspected that Bah was not my father, look at me mom, I'm different from Linile and Vunani. I don't even look like Baba.

Me : Who told you all this?

Melokuhle : That he is not my father?

Me : Yeah

Melokuhle : He did and I had to get hold of Singethiwe, my mother. She explained what happened 20 years ago

Me : Osama stole you?

Melokuhle : No, they had an agreement with my mother.

Me : How is your mother related to Osama?

Melokuhle : They aren't. Baba rescued us from a miserable life and he changed Singethiwe's life. Apparently bah is the one who raised me ever since I was a baby and it turned out that bah's best friend is my father. Ivan Ndlovu

Me : And?

Melokuhle : Singethiwe didn't tell me the whole story but what she told me was that she gave me to Bah because he wanted a better life for me, life that Ivan couldn't have given me.

Me : I don't understand

"He was probably 7 or 8 when his father Solomuzi Dlamini killed his mother. His mother was stabbed to death and her heart was given to a dog. His father forced him to watch everything and after that he ran away. He almost died but he was saved by the wolves. His only aim was to destroy the whole Dlamini clan after what happened to his mother. He then met Banele Dlamini and they had a relationship.

-Linile explained while leaning against the wall. I didn't even see him coming in -

Me : Banele Dlamini? Osama was in a relationship with his sister? That doesn't make sense. Linile, who told you all this nonsense?

Linile : Kgosi Mathada. I found something and that left him with no choice but to tell me everything he knew about my father because the information I found was way too deep and there was too much to lose so he had to tell me

Me : And how are you involved with Kgosi Mathada?

Linile : That I can't tell you.

Me : Kgosi told you that Osama had an affair with his sister?

Linile : They were married, Mah but that one is a long story.

Me : So Banele is the wife that Osama told me about? Oh my goodness

-My heart pounded fast -

Melokuhle : Baba has been through worse than I thought.
Damn!

Linile : He should have told bhuti, Imagine the weight he had carried on his own when he has family

Me : Oh my God Linile you slept with your sister.

"What?"

-They asked in unison. The look on their faces? I wanted to hide. Why did I have to deal with that on my own? I needed Osama more than I ever did before -

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SILUMKO

-I couldn't answer all the questions yesterday so I kicked them out of my room-

Me : Vunani come to my room. Thank you

-I hung up. Few minutes later Linile walked in instead of Vunani
-

Me : Not now Linile. Mr Mathada is coming here so I really need to get myself ready so can you interrogate me later. Please?

Linile : I'm not here to interrogate you, I just need to know if what you told me is true. That's all

Me : Yes it is.

-He sighed and rubbed his eyes -

Linile : I'm going to give her my blood Mah

-I tried to stand up. Fuck this bloody wheelchair! I banged it -

Me : You are not going to do that. Linile that girl is nothing to you and your father knows nothing about her!

Linile : Is that what you think?

Me : What?

Linile : Bah knows about her daughter, I'm sure he knows judging by his behavior on New Year's eve.

Me : Wenzeni?

Linile : He asked me a lot of questions about Melukhanyo, he even asked me to show him her pictures.

Me : What? Are you serious?

Linile : Yeah.

Me : But how?

Linile : Why are you worried about Bah finding out about his daughter?

Me : I asked you a question!! How did your father find out about that girl?

Linile : I don't know.

Me : Where was he on New Year's eve?

Linile : Not here. I was the only one here, Vunani and Melokuhle were in Gqeberha.

Me : Oh my goodness, who told him? When did he leave and when did he come back?

Linile : He left after 21h00 and he came back around 2, 3am.... I can't remember.

Me : Think Linile!

Linile : Why is this such a big deal? Mah, ubaba had a life before he met you. It's not like you two started dating in high school, he was way older when you met him so of course he had a child somewhere.

Me : You have no idea what the hell you're talking about!!....
Vunani come here!!!!

-I screamed -

Linile : So what are you going to do now? Are you going to separate Baba from his daughter? Because that would be very unfair, mama. You are way better than that and you know it.

Me : Yes that's exactly what I'm going to.....

-Vunani walked in-

Me : What took you so long? Awuvanga ndikhwaza igama lakho? - Did you not hear me screaming your name? -

Vunani : I'm sorry mama

Me : Of course you are. Go to that bathroom and run me a bath. Now!

-He disappeared into the bathroom quickly -

Linile : Why are you so angry? We are just having a conversation and you don't have to take your anger out on Nani

Me : Get out!!!

-Vunani jumped out of the bathroom and tried to walk out with Linile -

Me : Vunani ucinga uba uyaphi? - Where do you think you are going? -

Vunani : I'm do.....

Me : Done ikaka!? Come back here

-I wheeled myself to the bathroom. I tasted water using my hand -

Me : Yiza apha

-He walked closer to me -

Me : Feel the water

-He put his hand on the water-

Me : Vunani anjani? - How is it? -

Vunani : Hot

Me : Hot? So mina ndis isbhanxa? - I'm stupid? -

-He shook his head -

Vunani : No

Me : The water is cold, Vunani!!!

-I yelled -

Vunani : I....

Me : Am I disappointment to you? What, are you embarrassed because your mother can't walk anymore and you can't even look her in the eyes? You can't even spend 1 minute with her because she disgusts you so much that undithelela amanzi abandayo because you can't wait to get out of my sight?

Vunani : That's not true mama

Me : What is true Vunani?

Vunani : I'm sorry.

Me : Fine. Go to the kitchen and ensure that all my veggies are ready for me to start cooking.

Vunani : Ok

Me : Help get to that chair in the shower.

Vunani : Angizwanga?

Me : I'll undress myself

-He let out a sigh of relief-

Me : I'll be done in 15 minutes ubuye

Vunani : I'll come back

-He pushed me in and helped me sit on a beautifully designed chair that was made for me in the shower and he walked out. I took off my robe and started showering -

-Few hours later Mr Kgosi Mathada came to see me -

Me : Mr Mathada please come in

Kgosi : Thank you

-He looked around and unbuttoned his jacket before he sat down and crossed his legs. Kgosi was a true gentleman -

Me : Thank you for coming. I really appreciate it

Kgosi : How are you holding up?

Me : I'm trying to get through each day. Sitting on this wheelchair is not easy

Kgosi : You are a retired nurse, is that correct?

Me : Yes

Kgosi : Then it can't be that much of a substandard

Me : I guess.

Kgosi : You called.

Me : I did. I need some information nge past yomyenami

Kgosi : What makes you think I'll give you that information?

-I swallowed -

Me : Because you... Kgosi I'm begging you.

Kgosi : I respect your husband Mrs Nkwanyana and what you are asking me to do now is impossible. Osama is your husband and if you need information then I suggest you wait for him to recover and get all the info that you need.

Me : Was he married to Banele?

Kgosi : I actually can't believe I came all the way here for this balderdash.

-He stood up -

Me : Ok ok please don't leave.

Kgosi : Your husband is dying in hospital and all you care about is what he did decades ago? Your husband needs help, not this.

-I sighed -

Me : Ok. I'm sorry, I just don't want to lose my husband

Kgosi : You are surely going to lose him if you keep digging up his past behind his back. Have a good day Mrs Nkwanyana

Me : Ok wait. You are not going to join us for lunch?

Kgosi : I'm afraid not. My wife is at the hotel, waiting for me.

-I almost rolled my eyes. Did that man go anywhere without his wife? Not that I was jealous but they were extra, honestly -

Me : Thank you for coming

Kgosi : And one more thing, I contacted the doctor from the UK, if Osama can't go to the UK then I'll bring the UK to him.

Me : Oh, you heard?

Kgosi : I spoke to him and he told me. See, if you sit down and talk to people without going behind their backs you get to know more. You should try it sometimes

-Arrogant son of a bitch -

Me : You can go now

-He walked out -

A WEEK LATER

SILUMKO

-Melokuhle was sitting on the couch, staring up at the roof. Linile's face was buried under his hands. Vunani was sitting on the carpet, his arms were wrapped around his knees and his head was pressed over his knees -

Me : Are you sure about this?

-I looked at Melokuhle and next to him he had his suitcase and his bags -

Melokuhle : Yes

-I turned to look at Linile and Vunani-

Me : Is this what you all want? After everything Osama did and you choose to do this?

Melokuhle : I understand that Baba didn't deserve to go through what he went through but he had a choice and he chose to kill. I can forgive a lot of things mama but the killing?

-He shook his head. He was speaking to me while staring up at the roof -

Me : I understand. I don't even know myself if I want to be here anymore, this is just not easy for all of us.

Melokuhle : You need to leave this house Mah because what if one day he wakes up one day and decides to kill all of us? That's possible. What Osama has is like iqunga and it can strike at any time mase elikhuphela kuthi.

-Linile removed his hands from his face-

Linile : U tata soze anzokalise i family yakhe - Dad would never harm his family -

Melokuhle : Nyani? Uyazi njani ngoba ngoba seloko uleqana no tata? - Really? How do you know because you are always running away from Dad? -

Linile : That's not true

Melokuhle : It's crazy because you are the one who told me to move carefully around Bah, you told me that we all need to be careful and ngoku undixelele uba utata will never harm his family. Ay insomi nyani.

Me : Pointing fingers at each other won't help with anything. Osama is coming home today and I don't think I'm ready to face him

-They all looked at me -

Me : If you boys feel that you are not going to be safe around your father then you all have my blessings to leave this house. Mna no Vunani will be staying with Zizo for a few days. Wena ke Linile no Melokuhle can book yourselves in a hotel until I find us a place.

Vunani : I can't come with you Mah.

Me : Then you are going to Gqeberha.

-Melokuhle and Linile looked at each other

-

Melokuhle : Why can't he come with us?

Me : No!!

-Gulps-

Linile : So you are all going to leave baba when he needs us the most?

-Linile sounded like someone who knew that Osama was sick -

Me : Linile please

Linile : No mah, you know exactly what Bah is going through. He is dy.... - He swallowed -

-Yes he knew. Kgosi must have told him -

Melokuhle : He killed people!!

Linile : But he is still my father.

-Melokuhle was fuming. He stood in front of Linile-

Melokuhle : He is a murderer!!

-He yelled and Linile just looked at him-

Me : Ok Melokuhle, that's enough. Sit down

-Melokuhle glared at Linile and sat down -

Me : Linile you do understand that no one is forcing you to leave your father's house

Advertisement

right?

Linile : Wow Mah, are you listening to yourself?

-Was I? Yes I was and I was very much aware of what I was saying. Osama was dying, he said he wouldn't undergo the operation for his lungs with the doctor from the UK but I knew

that Kgosi was going to convince him so the operation was the least of my worries, what scared me the most was that Osama was not scared of dying and he made it clear that when he dies he would die with me. I wasn't ready to leave my children. I've read a lot about husbands killing their wives then themselves so I was scared-

Me : Vunani come and help me pack my clothes.

-Linile shook his head and walked away -

Melokuhle : I'll help you Mah

Me : No, I want Vunani to do it.

Melokuhle : Oh. I see

-Few minutes later all our bags were in the garage and Vunani was packing them inside Melokuhle's car-

Me : Linile we are going now. Zizo will come to pick more of my clothes

-Linile was just staring at Melokuhle -

Me : We will speak about the rest over the phone.

Linile : Melokuhle,how old were you when Bah moved here with you? 1? 2?

-Silence-

Linile : You can't even remember? Alright.

Melokuhle : City you don't have to stay here.

-Linile shook his head-

Linile : So you are all leaving because you are scared of baba? A man who would die for each and every one of you here? A man who raised Melokuhle?

Melokuhle : No one forced Osama to raise me

Linile : But he did and he raised you much better than he did to the rest of us. Wena you got everything, the companies are registered under your name, you went to good schools, baba gave you everything Melokuhle. It's sad because you are going back to your father now, u tata obengayazi noba uyatya okanye unxiba ntoni. Ivan is lucky neh? Ukhuliselwe unyana, jonga ngoku uyidyani. Osama made you, the very same Osama that you are scared of today, the very same Osama who raised a son of the man who almost killed him.

Melokuhle : Ivan did what?

Linile : Oh, you think your father is innocent?

Me : Linile, stop with all this nonsense.

Melokuhle : Tell him mama. Yazi u City acts like he is forced to stay here and he is trying to make all of us guilty for leaving. Nile you don't have to stay here!

Linile : No, your father shouldn't have tried to kill our father by leaving him inside a burning mortuary.

"What?"

Linile : Hambani. You can all go and I will stay with my father until he takes his last breath

Melokuhle : Linile what are you saying?

Linile : Go Melokuhle. Our father is dying from lung disease because of your father, our very own father took care of you with damaged lungs but today you have the audacity yokusixelela uba uyamoyika and you are going to stay with the man who is the reason why our father is in hospital, the man

who is the reason why Vunani and I might be fatherless in the next few months.

-Linile broke down in tears -

Vunani : Melokuhle's father did what?

-Vunani asked while walking in and he seemed so angry -

OSAMA

Dr James : Mr Nkwanyana I think it's too soon for you to go home.

Me : I wasn't supposed to be here in the first place.

Dr James : Osama this is a bad idea.

Me : Life was never a good idea from the very beginning.

-I zipped up my tracksuit jacket-

Dr James : Ok fine. Who is picking you up?

-I looked at him lost. I really had no one to pick me up -

Me : Please call Melokuhle and tell him to pick me up

Dr James : Ok

-He dialed Melokuhle's number -

Dr James : It's a voicemail

Me : Try Linile

-He called Linile while I was busy fixing my sneakers. I stood up-

Me : And?

Dr James : No answer

Me : Fine, let me call my wife

-I called Lumka but it took me straight to voicemail. I kept trying and it was time to accept that after everything that happened before I ended up in hospital the truth was I had no family to go back to anymore -

Me : I'll call a ride

Dr James : I'll take you home.

Me : No I'll be fine

-I can never fully describe how broken I felt. I ordered a ride and I walked out. I had a lot in my mind and the ride home felt short -

Driver : We have reached the end of your destination sir

Me : What?

Driver : I mean we have arrived

-I lifted my head and realized that I was at the wrong house.
We were at my old house -

Me : Look, I made a mistake. This is a wrong house

Driver : It's okay sir I understand.

-He must have seen how stressed I was. He drove to my new house. There wasn't even a single car parked there. They were gone. I sighed -

Driver : Sir are you okay?

Me : Do you want to come in and have some drinks?

-He looked at me confused -

Driver : Sir?

Me : I'll pay you whatever amount you want.just come in.

Driver : Oook

-We got out of the car. -

Me : You see, I bought this house for my wife.

Driver : I have never seen a beautiful home like this.

Me : It is beautiful but without my family it's not even a home.

Driver : I'm so sorry.

-I looked at him -

Me : Are you not going to ask me where my family is?

-I sat on the steps when I felt myself running out of energy before I could even reach the door. The Uber driver sat next to me-

Driver : No

Me : Why?

Driver : Because I see that you are not ready to talk about whatever that is bothering you.

-I swallowed the lump in my throat -

Me : I don't know what to do anymore. I guess there is only way out but first I need to see my daughter

Driver : You have a daughter?

Me : Yes

-I took out my phone and dialed -

Driver : Can I look around while you....

Me : Yeah sure

-The phone was ringing. I watched the driver walking away. I couldn't even remember his name-

"Hello"

Me : Ivan Ndlovu.

-Silence -

Me : Hello?

Ivan : Where did you get my number?

Me : That's a very stupid question Ivan. Look, we need to talk.

Ivan : Talk about what?

Me : You know exactly what I'm talking about. I need my daughter

Ivan : What?

Me : How long were you planning to keep my daughter away from me?

Ivan : Banele tried to reach out but as always, you weren't interested.

Me : Now I'm interested. I want to save my daughter, I know I'm a match and she needs blood.

-I stood up and I tried to unlock my house door using my thumb but the access denied. I looked around with my phone still in my ear and when I looked back at the door, it slid open. The Uber driver came back-

Me : This shit is crazy. Come in

Ivan : What?

Me : No, I'm talking to somebody else. Ivan give me my daughter and I'll give you your son if he is not already there.

-We walked in and the house was dark -

Driver : What is going on here?

-The lights came on. Lumka and my boys were standing in front of me holding a cake and balloons. I wasn't expecting that -

Me : Ndlovu can we do this later?

Ivan : There is nothing to talk about Osama, your daughter is dead.

-I dropped my phone on the floor. My body heated up-

Melokuhle : Surprise!

Silumko : Welcome back home babah

-I looked at them and they had no idea what was going on.

Ivan's words were still ringing in my ears-

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Linile : Vunani,take this cake from Mah.

-Vunani took the cake from Lumka and that's when I noticed that Linile and Melokuhle were holding each of Lumka's arms to help her stand. They placed her in a wheelchair. I don't know what hurt me the most between seeing Lumka in that wheelchair knowing that Vunani was the reason she was sitting there or the call I ended with Ivan a few minutes ago. I was going through hell and I had to pretend like everything was fine to my family because I thought that was the best thing to do after everything we've been through -

Melokuhle : Baba you don't seem happy, is everything okay?
Are you alright?

-I cleared my throat -

Me : Yeah yeah, I'm fine. I'm just - sigh -. Sthandwa sami

-I bent down in front of Lumka's wheelchair and kissed her cheek -

Me : Thank you. Thanks to all of you, I really thought it was over ngalomndeni.

-Linile picked up my phone from the floor and gave it to me -

Me : I missed you so much sweetheart

Silumko : I missed you too

-Her eyes filled up with tears. I pressed my lips on hers and she broke down in tears with our still pressed together -

Me : Lumka I'm sorry, I'm so sorry sweetheart.

-She buried her face in my neck and I brushed her hair. I've really hurt that woman. There was silence in the house and

when I looked around my boys and the Uber driver were not in the house anymore -

Silumko : I cooked

-She laughed with tears running down her cheeks-

Me : You did?

-I asked while wiping her tears -

Silumko : Mhmm-mhmm, Vunani helped. Welcome back home baby

-I sighed-

Me : I was supposed to welcome you back home Lumka, to our new home.

-She looked deeply into my eyes. I looked away -

Silumko : Are you sure you're alright?

-I stood up and pushed her wheelchair -

Me : Yes, please show me around your house Mrs Nkwanyana.

-She laughed. I had to change the subject fast-

Silumko : But you bought this house so I'm sure you know every corner.

-A lot was happening in my head. How did my daughter die?
When did she die? Should I blame Linile for her death? Should I
blame myself? -

Silumko : Osama watch out!

-I snapped back into the real world as I almost hit the wheelchair on the wall-

Me : Sweetheart I'm sorry.

-She looked up at me-

Silumko : Are you worried about me?

Me : What?

-She shook her head and pointed the way -

Silumko : The boy you came with, what's his name?

Me : I didn't get his name... I forgot it. He is an Uber driver.

Silumko : That's weird.

Me : I forgot his name Lumka!

-I snapped and there was silence. I tried to push the wheelchair but it jammed-

Me : What now?

Silumko : Utheni u Dr James?

Me : I'm fine Lumka, Dr James said I'm fine.

Silumko : Fine. Let's go and eat

Me : I'm sorry I snapped, I'm just tired.

Silumko : Fine let's go and eat so that you can rest.

-I couldn't argue with that. We went to eat and we found the boys already eating with the Uber driver -

Melokuhle : Sorry but we couldn't wait.

Silumko : It's okay. Please dish up for us

-Linile tried to stand up -

Silumko : No sit Linile. Vunani will do it

Linile : I don't mind rea....

Silumko : I said Vunani will do it.

-Linile looked at me and he sat down -

Silumko : Thank you Vunani

-We were all confused -

Silumko : So what's your name?

Driver : Oh me, my name is Mxolisi Dlamini.

-I heard gulps and my family looked at me. I didn't know he was a Dlamini and for the first time I didn't care if someone was a Dlamini or not-

Me : What?

Silumko : No nothing

-I shook my head. Clearly my family was scared of me -

Me : I'll eat tomorrow. Melokuhle please transfer R10 000 to my driver, I've wasted too much of his time already

-I stood up and drank water. Mxolisi looked at me shocked -

Mxolisi : Sir I understand that you said you were going to pay me but R10 000 is a lot of money

Me : Money is not an issue. We die and leave this shit behind

-Gulps again-

Me : Please excuse me, I need to take a shower

-I went to the bathroom and I spent almost 15 minutes listening to Ivan's voice in my head. I hit my head on the wall in frustration-

SILUMKO

-I couldn't eat anymore, I was wondering what Osama was up to up there. Was he going to kill Mxolisi for being a Dlamini? That's what he did, right? Killing every Dlamini -

Melokuhle : I've transferred you the money. Please confirm

-He showed Mxolisi something on the phone and after that Mxolisi received a message on his phone. He looked shocked-

Mxolisi : Got it. But I still think this is a lot of money. I don't deserve it

Me : Mxolisi, don't worry about the money. Please finish eating and go before it gets late

Mxolisi : Yes I really need to get going mam.

-He stood up -

Me : Thank you for bringing my husband home

Mxolisi : It's only a pleasure. Thank you very much sengathi u Nkulunkulu engimukhonzayo engaba ukukhanya kini nonke. God bless you all indeed

Linile : Siyabonga mfo wakuthi.

-Mxolisi walked away and Linile walked him out -

Me : Goodnight Melokuhle. Vunani take me to my room

Melokuhle : I'll do it Mah, he is still eating.

Me : Food will have to wait. Vunani?

-He swallowed roughly while looking at Melokuhle and stood up. He pushed me to my bedroom and he left me by the door -

Me : Thank you. Goodnight

Vunani : Goodnight Mah

-I pushed the door and found Osama standing by the window smoking. He never smoked inside our bedroom, that was the first time. -

Me : Mntuwam?

-I expected him to turn around and looked at me but he didn't -

Osama : You know, I was supposed to be the one who fuck them all up. I was supposed to kill everyone, even Gatsheni's wives kwa Nongoma. Kwakufanele ngibulale ngisho intuthwane enyathela emagcekeni akhona but I didn't and now what?

-My heart started racing. I should have left that house. I should have left Osama -

Silumko : Why are you talking about killing?

Osama : And then I was going to kill Banele and her whole family in front of Ivan and after that I was going to kill him... Slow painful death.

-The more he opened his mouth the more I realized that everything I heard was true about him. Osama was a serial killer and he wasn't ashamed about it. Oh and yes him and Banele were really married -

Me : No, you know what? I'll sleep in the guest room

Osama : I wanted to kill all of them and I had everything planned out but guess what? They are the ones who killed me and they killed me more than once

-He laughed and threw the cigarette out of the window and pulled out another cigarette-

Me : Osama, stop. You shouldn't even be smoking. You heard Dr James

Osama : There is nothing to save anymore sweetheart

-He scooped me from my wheelchair and he placed me on the bed. He might have lost weight but he still picked me up like I was nothing. He started undressing me-

Me : What do you mean there is nothing to save anymore?

Osama : Nothing

Me : Osama I..... - sigh - you know what? Forget it.

-And he did. There was so much I wanted to speak about with Osama but I was nervous, I didn't want to push his wrong buttons so I decided to leave everything. Something happened that night, something that had never happened in almost 18 years of our marriage. There was a huge gap between Osama and I in bed. He slept with his back facing me and I couldn't help myself from crying -

-That night he couldn't sleep he was tossing and turning but he kept his distance from me. I cried until the medication kicked in and I drifted into sleep -

OSAMA

-I checked on Lumka and she was fast asleep. I got out of bed and walked out of the bedroom. I grabbed a bottle of whiskey on my way to the study room. The study room was still a mess. I placed the bottle on the table and I removed the tile that was in the middle of the floor. There was a hole covered with a carpet there. I buried my hand inside the hole and I took out my knife, I brushed it on my hand and put it back in. I took out my gun and looked at it. I cocked it and pointed it at my head. I sighed and took my bottle of whiskey. I sat down and leaned against the wall holding a gun in my hand -

Me : Everything always comes to an end eventually.

-I said to myself. I lifted my eyes as the door opened and she got in. My eyes dropped again. I wasn't ready to tell Lumka

what I was going through. I always wanted to deal with my shit alone-

Silumko : You are doing it again? I forgot that whenever things don't work out for you, you choose to die. When my mother refused to take the lobola money I found you with that gun, when your business was slow and money was not coming in the way you wanted , I found you with that gun. Osama, you don't have patience, you are selfish.

Osama : I can't take the pain anymore

Silumko : Osama, you are stronger than that!! You went to hell and grabbed the key from the devil and you walked out so why are you allowing this small thing to control your emotions?

Me : How long am I going to continue taking these pills and these injections? For the rest of my life? I can't.

-I had to lie. I actually wasn't worried about my health but the death of my daughter hit me so hard that I didn't even want to live anymore. -

Silumko : You heard the doctor, there are good chances of you beating this thing. There is a doctor in the UK, you just have to go for the operation, Please baby.

Osama : No my lungs are shutting down and I'm going to die anyway so why wait for stupid operations?

Silumko : Because you are a father and your children need you. Because you are Osama Dlamini, you are undefeated and you never back down!!!

-She wheeled her wheelchair closer to me and took the gun away from me"

Silumko : You don't expect me to raise our children alone. Osama, you know how bad Linile is and I can't handle that boy

on my own. You are my husband and I need you, I need you to be fine. Please fight

Me : I don't want to fight anymore. My fight ends here

Silumko : No please don't say that.

Me : The children are going to be fine Lumka. You can handle them

Silumko : While sitting on this chair? Really?

-She shook her head -

Silumko : Linile? Oh sure maybe I can handle him because he is just like you

when he hates, he acts on it. He is very honest with his feelings. He may be slow when he speaks and looks calm all the time but it's very easy to verify his emotions kodwa u Vunani yena?

-She pulled out a face -

Silumko : That son of yours is evil Osama, intliziyo yakhe imdaka. He doesn't need a sword or a gun to kill because he kills with his heart and with the look in his eyes. Vunani smiles more than anyone else in this house but what he has here

-She pointed at her heart -

Silumko : What he has here is dark and brutal. When he has a problem with someone he bottles up his emotions, he is like a ticking bomb.

Me : That is not true

Silumko : You don't know your children. Osama, you begged me to give you children and I did, now you want to leave me with those children that I didn't even ask for? Yazi wena no Melokuhle ndindwebe ncam. I raised Melokuhle but guess what? He can't wait to go and meet his parents, he wants to leave this house. Nawe jonga ngoku, I gave you children but

guess what? You are choosing death instead of helping me raise your children, children that might turn out to be just like you one day!

-Those words cut deep. I swallowed-

Me : So you really heard me when I told you about Melokuhle?

Silumko : I did. I heard everything and yazi uba yini endingayiqondiyo? Uba after everything you went through, everything you survived, you just want to end your life with just one bullet in your head? - Chuckles- Crazy.

-Lumka was so calm during that conversation-

Me : Lumka you don't get it. This is not about anyone else but me. The children are going to be fine, you are going to be fine and everyone else is going to be fine. Millions of children are growing up without fathers and I was one of those children. I grew up alone, I raised myself. I had nothing and no one!!

-I stood up as my body started heating up due to anger. The talk about fathers and families always made me sick -

Me : I don't understand why you are making this so difficult because you know very well that my days are numbered anyway.

Silumko : No, not when you choose to go for the operation.

Me : I don't need that stupid operation Lumka. Listen, listen to me uyabona Lumka if I don't die now, you better believe me that a lot of people are going to die and you don't want that.

-She quickly looked up at me-

Silumko : Osama you can't go around killing everyone, it needs to stop or you will end up killing your own daughter without even knowing.

-She froze after saying that -

Me : Daughter?

Silumko : No, What I meant is you will end up killing your own people....your own family.

Me : You said DAUGHTER! I heard you Lumka!

-I snapped. Lumka knew all that time that I had a daughter and she chose to keep such important information away from me? I was so enraged -

Me : Who told you about my daughter? How long have you known about her?

Silumko : No no, Osama wait.

-Her body wracked with an onslaught of sobs and tears-

Me : Don't fuckin do that! Don't fuckin do that Silumko!!

Silumko : I'm so sorry

Me : Sorry!!!?

-I yelled-

Silumko : I only found out about her yesterday.

Me : You really think I'm stupid huh? I'll tell you exactly when you found out about her. You found out about my daughter when she was admitted at your hospital, you were still working there. Don't even try to deny that!

-She cried like a little baby and I wanted to blow up her brains-

Me : Talk woman!!!

Silumko : Osama I'm sorry. Please don't kill me

-I swallowed. Did she just beg me not to kill her? Those were words stung-

Me : I'll never kill you sweetheart. Lumka why? Why didn't you tell me about my daughter the moment you found out about her?

Silumko : Oh please Osama it's not like you told me everything. You didn't tell me about Banele, you didn't tell me about your past! You didn't tell me about the damn scars on your arms! You didn't tell me about your real surname and you lied about Melokuhle!!

-Oh shit she knew almost everything. I sat down and sigh-

Silumko : Osama, everything I did, everything I do is to protect my family. We all have secrets in this house but the truth is, we do things behind each other's backs to protect each other. Am I wrong?

-Silence -

Silumko : I just want you to be honest with me. I don't want any secrets between you and I anymore. The two of us need to stick together and protect our children. Don't tell me about dying Osama

-I remained silent -

Silumko : There is something else that I need to tell you.

Me : What?

-She was probably going to tell me about the death of my daughter. I braced myself -

Silumko : But before I tell you I need you to promise me that it will stay between us.

-Now I was confused -

Me : Lumka what's going on?

-She looked at me and slowly stood up -

Me : What the fu.....

Silumko : There is nothing wrong with my legs, I can walk.

-I was dumbstruck -

Me : Wait, wait, you can walk?

-She walked to the door and locked it before she kneeled next to me -

Me : Lumka you can walk!

Silumko : But you do understand that I could have died from that accident?

Me : Lumka when the fuck did you become this person who lie so much? You faked the whole paralysis? Damn Lumka!

Silumko : You are not answering my question

Me : You lied to us!!

-I tried to stand up but she pulled me back down -

Silumko : Sit down, Osama. You know if nje bendibhubhile kweya accident, I was going to come back and tell you to blame yourself for my death.

-I raised my brow-

Silumko : No don't do that. I was actually planning to make you suffer when I came back from that hospital, I was going to make

you hate me for sitting on that wheelchair but then I realized that after everything you've been through you don't deserve what I was planning to do to you kodwa if things were different wena no Vunani were going to pay for putting on that chair.

-I rubbed my face, I couldn't believe that Lumka knew the whole time that Vunani caused that accident -

Me : So you know it was Vunani?

Silumko : You know how many times I told you not to buy Vunani a car because Vunani is young, reckless and he doesn't have a license but no, you still went ahead and bought it for him. Osama I might have drank that night of the accident but I wasn't drunk to a point that I wasn't even aware of what I was doing. I remember everything, I remember myself sitting with Mark Dlamini, I remember how the accident happened, I remember Vunani calling Linile, I remember how he was crying, how he was begging me to wake up and I remember how everything went blank after they left me all alone at the accident scene.

Me : Lumka I'm sorry. I'm really sorry sweetheart

Silumko : I don't want Vunani on a steering wheel ever again and the only way he is going to stay away from cars is him seeing me struggling on that wheelchair.

Me : I understand

-I pulled her into my arms and squeezed her -

Me : I'm sorry.

-Silence -

Me : So you were with Mark that night?

-She tried to pull away but I held her tightly -

Silumko : I....

Me : It's okay.

-She let out a sigh -

Silumko : Osama please don't leave me

-I slowly broke the hug -

Me : I don't know. My daughter is.... My daughter is dead
Lumka.

Silumko : What? What do you mean she is dead? How?

-She looked broken. I pulled her back into my arms-

Me : I don't know but she is dead. What I know is that if I don't
die then a lot of people are going to die, I'll have to kill to make
myself feel better because what I feel inside is..... - Sigh- Lumka

someone has to die but the big question now is who is it going to be, me or them?

-Lumka pulled away from me. She stood up and sat on her wheelchair -

Silumko : I'm not losing you Osama so kill whomever you have to kill.

-I didn't expect to hear that from her. What happened to Lumka? When did she become so cold? But damn I loved that side of her. I watched her unlocking the door and heading out with her wheelchair. You see right there? Right there I knew that I wedded my type -

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SILUMKO

SUNDAY MORNING

-Melokuhle knocked in our bedroom -

Me : Osama?

-I shook him -

Osama : Mhmmm

Me : Open the door for Melokuhle

Osama : What?

Me : He is knocking, Go.

-He cursed and got up -

Me : It's Sunday for God's sake Osama fix your language

-He laughed opening the door. His phone vibrated with a message -

Osama : Yah. What the heck do you want Melo?

-I checked the message -

IT'S YOUR DAUGHTER'S FUNERAL AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN CALL .
I HOPE YOU AND YOUR WIFE ARE PROUD.

-The message read. I quickly deleted it and tossed the phone under the pillow. The message was from Banele-

Me : Kuhle is everything okay?

Melokuhle : Morning mah, yes I'm okay. Mxolisi is here

Me : Mxolisi?

Osama : Yeah, can you believe that?

-Melokuhle laughed--

Melokuhle : You won't believe why he is here

Me : Why?

-Melokuhle laughed so hard. Osama and I looked at each other

-

Osama : Talk Melo

Melokuhle : He is taking us to church, apparently it's his way of saying thank you for the money you gave him baba.

Me : Oh my goodness, that is... Wow. Church?

Osama : Mxm, Bullshit.

-Osama got back in bed and he covered his face with a duvet.
That man hated church more than anything -

Melokuhle : Bah wake up

-Melokuhle laughed -

Osama : Go back there and tell him we don't do that here.

Me : Osama that is awful

Osama : Awful, my foot. Since when do you go to church Lumka?

Me : There is nothing wrong with going to church.

Osama : What do you even mean?

Me : Melokuhle, please tell Linile and Vunani to get ready for church. We are not going to disappoint Mxolisi. Also you Kuhle, please get ready.

Melokuhle : But Mah....

Me : Nothing

Melokuhle : And Baba?

-Osama lifted his head and looked at Melokuhle. I had no idea what he did or said to him but Melokuhle laughed and Osama went back to sleep -

Melokuhle : Fine, I'll go.

-Melokuhle walked out -

Me : So you are not going Osama?

-Silence -

Me : Fine. We will go

-I got out of bed and got ready for church. When I came back from the bathroom Osama was still in bed. He wasn't going -

Me : Please prepare something for lunch. You know your boys will be dying of hunger when we come back

-Silence -

Me : Hheyake

-I pulled the duvet and he laughed -

Osama : Fine, I'll cook sweetheart

Me : You better

-He watched me getting dressed -

Osama : I still can't believe you lied to me.

Me : About my legs?

Osama : Yah

Me : Yeah I did.

-We laughed -

Osama : But sweetheart we need to tell the boys. This thing is eating Nani

Me : No, it's still too soon. I'll probably tell them after 3 months

Osama : 3 months? Lumka that's a very long time

Me : He needs to learn from his mistakes. Where is his car?

Osama : Linile took it somewhere

Me : Uyabona loyo yena he needs punishment

Osama : I bet you will punish him.... Where is my phone?

-My throat closed up-

Me : I don't know

Osama : I wanted to take a picture of you

-I laughed -

Me : You have more than enough pictures of me in your phone.

Osama : Oh here it is. Say sneeze

-I laughed -

Me : That's not what they say. Bring that phone here, I'll take a selfie.

-I snatched his phone and I took one selfie-

Me : Mhmmmm I think I love your camera

Osama : It's clean, yeah?

Me : It is, I think I'll take it to church with me.... For pictures when we come back. You see that new park? I want to take some pictures there in my wheelchair

-He laughed -

Osama : You think sitting on that wheelchair is a joke wena

-We laughed -

Me : So is that a yes?

Osama : Yeah whatever but please answer my calls, I don't care whether you'll be at church or not but I need my calls answered Mrs Nkwanyana.

Me : Yes sir

-He laughed. Got you-

Osama : And when any man asks for your number give them mine and I'll fuck them up.

-I laughed out loud -

Me : Please sleep

Osama : I mean it Lumka

Me : I'm going to church Osama

Osama : So only females go to church?

-We laughed -

Me : We are gone. Bye

-I kissed him and grabbed my wheelchair -

Osama : Leave that thing

Me : Not anytime soon baby. Love you bye

-I wheeled myself out -

OSAMA

-I got up and followed Lumka. When I got outside Mxolisi was leaning against his car. The gospel song that was playing in his car pissed me off-

Me : Turn off that shit

-He looked terrified and the music turned off immediately -

Mxolisi : I'm really sorry sir

Me : Why are you here? Who told you that my family goes to church?

-The fear in his eyes was unmatched -

Mxolisi : I thought I....

Me : You thought what, Mxolisi?

"Osama please tell your son to wear something suitable for church"

-I turned around and I saw Lumka and Linile -

Me : Linile that jacket is old

Linile : No way, I've never worn this one.

Silumko : We are going to church Linile

-Linile shook his head and went inside the house -

Silumko : Unfortunately my husband won't be joining us today
Mxolisi

Mxolisi : Oh why?

-I glared at him and he swallowed -

Silumko : He clearly has nothing to be grateful for

-She laughed-

Me : I don't do church Lumka, you should know that by now.

-I walked away -

Silumko : We are taking your car

Me : Whatever sweetheart

-She laughed--

Mxolisi : Sir can we please talk in private?

-I stopped and turned around -

Me : No. Just make sure that my family gets back here immediately after church

Mxolisi : Yes sir

-After a few minutes I heard cars driving off. I had breakfast and I went to my study. I opened the drawer and took out another

cell phone. I shouldn't have given Silumko my phone, I needed important numbers on that phone. I lit my cigarette and switched on the phone. I went through my contacts and luckily I found his number. I dialed -

Me : Ivan

Ivan : Osama what do you want?

Me : You can't just tell me that my daughter is dead and expect everything to go on as normal.

Ivan : Are you serious,Nkwanyana?

Me : How did she die?

Ivan : You don't want to know

-I clenched my teeth-

Me : When is her funeral? When did she die?

Ivan : Her funeral is over. Bye Osama

Me : Ivan wait! Ivan?

Ivan : You took everything from me, everything. What more do you want from me?

Me : I want to see her grave, please Ndlovu.

Ivan : No! You took my son! You killed my wife and guess what?
Now I just buried my daughter

-I banged the table and stood up -

Me : Ey ey she was not your daughter!!

Ivan : Of course she wasn't mine! You took my son!! And I'm glad that you paid for it.

Me : What do you mean I paid for it?

-He laughed -

Me : Ivan did you kill my daughter?

Ivan : What if I did Dlamini? Uzokwenzani?

Me : Ivan did you kill my daughter?

Ivan : Yes I did. Now what?

-I removed the phone from my ear and I dropped it on the floor and smashed it. I groaned in pain -

Me : Ahhhhhhhhh!!!!

-I thought I knew what pain was but what I felt after that call was beyond pain. I opened a bottle of whiskey and I sat down. I looked at the bottle but instead of drinking I broke the bottle and pressed my hand over a broken piece of glass. I pressed harder and harder until I saw blood -

-Few hours later -

-Lumka walked inside and she found me packing -

Silumko : I thought you said you would cook..... Osama, what are you doing?

Me : Give me my phone.

-She handed me my phone. She looked puzzled -

Silumko : Where are you going?

Me : I'm taking Melokuhle back to his parents

-I tossed my phone in my pocket -

Silumko : Intoni?

Me : I don't want him here anymore

-She closed the door and stood up from her wheelchair -

Silumko : What do you mean?

Me : I don't want him here anymore.

Silumko : Osama....

-She grabbed my bag and she took out my clothes. Her eyes were wide open -

Silumko : What is this?

Me : Leave my bag Silumko.

Silumko : Where are you going with these guns and this knife?

Me : I told you that I'm taking Melokuhle back to his parents

Silumko : With guns and a knife?

Me : Yes

Silumko : Osama.....

Me : I'm going to kill Melokuhle right in front of his father and after that I'm going to kill Ivan. Are you happy now?

-Tears rolled down her face faster than lightning -

Silumko : Please don't do that, not our Melokuhle. Not him!

Me : Yes him!!!

-I yelled -

Silumko : Osama can we talk about this? What happened?

Me : Shit happened as always!

-I packed back my clothes and my gloves -

Silumko : Oh yhini Osama please don't do it. I'm begging you

-She kneeled down and hugged my legs -

Me : Please let me go

-She shook her head and wiped her tears -

Silumko : Not Melokuhle, please Osama. You can't do it!

Me : It's too late. I'm going to kill them just like I killed your Mark Dlamini!

Silumko : You did what?

Me : You heard me.

-She screamed crying. I pulled away from her and took my bag.
I walked out -

Me : Melokuhle!!!

"Osama please don't do it"

-That was Silumko and I didn't even look at her -

Silumko : Melokuhle come here

don't go with him.

-Linile, Vunani and Melokuhle looked so shocked and they were looking at Silumko. I turned around. Oh she wasn't using her wheelchair, that's why? -

Linile : You can walk?

Me : Melokuhle you and I are going now

Silumko : No you are not!

-Silumko jumped into the middle of Melokuhle and I. She pushed Melokuhle -

Silumko : Melokuhle go to your room and lock the door! Run!!

Me : Don't do it Melokuhle.

Linile : What the hell is going on here?

Silumko : Run Melokuhle!!!

-I was about to grab Melokuhle but he got away and he ran towards his room. I tried to follow him but Linile and Silumko grabbed me -

Silumko : If you want to kill Melokuhle then you have to start with me. Ndibulale Osama! Kill me!!!

Vunani : What's going on here?

-There was noise in the house. They were talking at the same time-

Me : Let me go

Silumko : No!!

Me : Silumko, if you don't let me go now, I will do something so bad.

Silumko : Do it! Kill us!

-I roughly pulled away from them -

Me : Fuck off man!!!! Nxi!

-I walked out to the garage and I got inside my car. I drove out the gate before it was fully opened and I heard it smashing my car but I drove off anyway. My phone rang, it was Kgosi-

Me : This is not the good time

Kgosi : It is. I dropped the investigation but it was already too late, the cops are onto you.

Me : What?

Kgosi : Skip the fuckin country Osama!

Me : No

Kgosi : No? Ey! The Italians.....

Me : I don't care what those motherfuckers did.

Kgosi : Osama listen to me. Where are you? Please tell me you are not driving

Me : I am.

Kgosi : I....

-I hung up and accelerated the speed. My chest was burning, the pain was getting stronger. I saw a car that was on the side of the road and I passed by but when I realized it was Mxolisi's car I reversed.-

Me : What are you doing here?

-He was under his car. He got out -

Mxolisi : Oh Mr Nkwanyana sir

Me : I need a favor

Mxolisi : My car broke down

Me : I see that, look I want you to drive me to Pretoria.

Mxolisi : Pretoria? Sir I'm sorry but I can't. My mother is sick and I need to get home

Me : Dammit!

Mxolisi : I'm really sorry I can't help.

Me : What's wrong with your mother?

Mxolisi : She got asthma. I need to call someone to come and help me with this car but my battery is dead

-I handed him my phone -

Mxolisi : Thank you so much

Me : You only have 2 minutes to make that call.

-He quickly dialed and he made that call. I opened my bag-

Mxolisi : Thank you so much sir. They are coming

Me : Good. Here

Mxolisi : Why are you giving me money?

Me : R1 200 is not money but it will help you with something.

-He shook his head and I swear I saw tears in his eyes -

Me : Don't thank me

-I started the engine and I drove off but I saw him waving
stopping me-

Me : What the fuck does he want now?

-I stopped the car and he ran to my car -

Mxolisi : Can I ask you something?

Me : I don't have time for bullshit

Mxolisi : Ok. Mark 1 verse 15, The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news. Pray Mr Nkwanyana, I'm begging you.

Me : And that's bullshit.

-I drove off -

-Maybe driving to Pretoria was a bad idea but I continued driving and out of the blue I heard sirens-

Me : What the fuck is going on?

-It was the police. I accelerated and they did the same. I changed lanes and they did the same -

Me : Fuck! Fuck!

-I rubbed my forehead and hit the accelerator even more but I realized that they were really after me so I lowered my speed and when I lifted my eyes there were about 12 police cars blocking my way. I checked my rear view mirror and my side mirrors and I saw 6 police cars that were following me. I stopped the engine and let out a sigh. That was my dead end. I looked around and all cops were on standby with all their guns pointing at my car, some were kneeling down while pointing their guns at me. I felt tears burning in my eyes, death was better than jail. I always knew that the day I went to jail I was never going to get out after everything I did in my life and after the life I had created for myself I wasn't ready to go to jail. I thought of my wife and my boys and my throat tightened -

"Osama Dlamini you are surrounded, please step out of your car with your hands in the air -

-They called out from the siren speaker-

-I lit my cigarette and smoked. One of my hands was holding a steering wheel and I tightened my grip looking around at all those cops. I suddenly remembered Mxolisi's words. "Pray Osama" -

Me : What do they say when they pray?

-I whispered to myself and I sighed-

"Osama I'm going to count up to 10 and if you don't get out we will shoot. Get out of the car with your hands where I can see them. 10,9"

-I pressed my head on a steering wheel and prayed silently. I lifted my head up again-

"4,3..."

-I unlocked the doors and lowered my window. I threw out the cigarette and got out of the car with my hands up -

Me : I am not Osama Dlamini

-One cop chuckled -

Cop : Do you think we have time for bullshit? Do you know how hard we've been looking for you Dlamini? And you think we have time for bullshit?

-He asked while searching me -

Cop : Huh?

Me : No

-He looked around at all those other police-

Cop : Let's get to it! Search his car.. Now! Now!

-He ordered them while clapping his hands. There were guns at the back of the car that I was using that day and I knew they would open the boot first but No the idiots didn't, they started inside the car-

"Is this your license?"

-One of the cops asked. I turned my face to their direction-

Me : Everything inside that car is mine.

Cop : Detective can we talk?

Detective : What's wrong now?

Cop : There is something you need to see

-They distance themselves from me. What the heck was going on? What was wrong with my license? That license was legit -

Detective : Ok everyone, abort the search!

-He screamed to his minions and they stopped searching my car -

Detective : Who are you?

-I looked around. Who the fuck was he talking to?

Detective : I'm talking to you

Me : My name is Osama Nkwanyana

-They looked at each other -

Detective : Do you know Osama Dlamini?

-I swallowed -

Me : No

Cop 2 : Ey ey Detective Nkembane, this is Osama Dlamini! Don't you see him?

Detective : Are you Osama Dlamini?

Me : No

Cop 2 : It's him!! Uyaziphika. He has been running away from the police! He changed his surname Nkembane, don't let him fool you!

Me : Why would I only change my last name if I was running away from the cops? Don't be stupid constable.

-They looked at each other again. Detective Nkembane cleared his throat -

Detective : We got a wrong lead. Here is your license, you are free to go.

-I was looking straight into his eyes as I took my license. I could not believe they were actually falling for it, no there was no freaking way. I made my way back to my car and as I walked I was expecting them to stop me when they all actually realized that I was definitely who they were looking for. I got inside my car and I started my car. I drove off without them stopping me -

-When I was 2 hours away from where I left the police the adrenaline kicked in, I couldn't drive, my body was shaking. I knew I had dodged another bullet but how? What happened back there was hell of impossible. Nothing like that ever happened, where police let a criminal get away just because of the difference in surnames? Impossible!-

Me : What the fuck happened there?

-I asked myself while parking my car on the side of the road. I got out and the place was very quiet. I placed my hands at the back of my head and I paced around -

Me : How the hell did I get away from that?

-I sat down. A strange thing happened, when I rested my right hand on the ground I felt something in my hand. I looked closely and it was a small maroon book, it looked old and had some burnt marks. I dusted it and It was written "New Testament" -

Me : What on earth is this now?

-I read the first page that opened -

Me : Mark 1:15. The time has come....

-I paused when I realized those were the same words Mxolisi Dlamini mentioned to me. I quickly closed the small book-

SILUMKO

-Melokuhle has been in his bedroom since Osama left. Linile, Vunani and I were sitting silently in the living room. Vunani kept stealing glances at my legs, I was sure that he couldn't believe that I could actually walk. Linile was staring at his phone like he was expecting a call. I didn't cook that day, I didn't have the strength and the good thing is no one seemed to be talking about food so we all had no appetite -

Vunani : Are you going to tell me when you started walking?

Me : Are you ready to talk about the night you crashed into my car?

-Gulps -

Me : Get out of my face, both of you.

-They looked at each other and they both stood up and went to their bedrooms. When the clock hit midnight I kneeled down and prayed for Osama. My mother used to say the midnight prayer was always powerful. While I was praying I heard the door unlocking. I lifted my head and I spotted the green light on the door, someone was getting in. I stood up quickly -

Me : Osama is that you?

-The door slid opened and he walked in. He looked so drained -

Me : Osama!

-I hugged him. -

Osama : Sweetheart why aren't you sleeping?

Me : Without you?

-I shook my head -

Me : I thought you w.... I thought you were in Pretoria.

Osama : No

-In his hand there was a small book-

Me : What is that?

Osama : Nothing. Come here

-He picked me up and walked with me to our bedroom. He placed me in bed and threw the small book on the couch-

Me : Osama what happened?

-He ignored me. He took off all of his clothes and without showering, he got inside the duvet and he slept with his back facing me. I shifted closer to him and I held him tightly. There

was silence, only the loud sound of his heart beat. Something definitely went wrong where he was but he was not in Pretoria, that I knew judging by how early he came back. He turned and faced me. He wrapped my leg around me and he pulled me onto his chest. -

-I poked my finger in his nose and he didn't move, he was sleeping. I got up and tiptoed towards the couch. I picked up the small book and I looked closely. It was a small old Bible. Where did Osama get that? I looked at him sleeping on the bed.
-

Osama : No no no no

Me : Osama?

-He kept moving while he was busy saying countless No's -

Me : Osama!

-I jumped back into bed and I shook him. He was dreaming. He opened his eyes -

Me : Osama, wake up. You are dreaming

-He looked all around the house -

Osama : Where is Mxolisi?

-I was confused -

Me : What?

-How does someone dream a few minutes after falling asleep?
That was rather strange -

Osama : Forget it.

-He got up -

Me : Where are you going?

-He walked to the door but he stumbled a few times. He balanced his hand on the wall. Was he drunk? -

Me : Osama what's going on?

-I was no longer confused but scared -

Osama : I need water

Me : Ok ok. Come here

-I pulled him by his arm and helped him to bed -

Me : I'll get water for you.

-I headed to the door but I stopped when his phone rang. He didn't even look at it-

Me : Who is calling you at this time?

-He covered his face with his hands -

Osama : Please get me some water Lumka.

Me : Fine

-I looked at his phone before I walked out -

OSAMA

-I just had the weirdest dream. I dreamt of myself wearing a white suit, walking up the mountain but I couldn't get to the top, I kept falling back and Mxolisi was busy calling me to come up. My phone rang again but I was too tired to pick it up. It kept ringing and I finally answered -

Me : Kgosi

Kgosi : Are you in jail?

Me : No, home.

Kgosi : I'm glad you took my advice. Stay home, Osama, there are cops looking for you.

Me : They found me but I don't know how I got away.

Kgosi : You got away?

Me : It's a long

Advertisement

crazy story. Let's talk when the sun comes out

-I hung up and placed my phone next to me but it rang again. -

Me : Let's talk some other time Mathada

"So they didn't find you?"

-That wasn't Kgosi's voice. I looked at my phone screen. Lumka walked back in -

Me : Ivan?

Silumko : What?

-I shook my head -

Ivan : You might have gotten away yet again but I will make sure that the next time they get their hands on you they lock you up and throw away the key

-I stood up -

Me : It was you.

Ivan : Yes it was me

-I got out and Lumka tried to stop me. I signaled her that I was fine. I headed to the study-

Me : Ivan I always win, you should know that by now.

-He laughed. He was drunk, Ivan was once my best friend and I knew him well when he was drunk -

Ivan : Win? Just because you got out of a burning mortuary now you think that you always win?

Me : You killed my daughter!

Ivan : You killed my wife!

Me : You took Banele from me

Ivan : You took my son!.... Dlamini I never wronged you but you always did. I was living under your wing for years and years. You punished me for not being in my son's life for only 3 years and you punished me for that, you forced me to marry Banele!

Me : Don't act like you never loved Banele, you always did and you used every chance you got to tell me how it was a bad idea to be with her.

Ivan : Was I wrong?

Me : Of course you were wrong!

Ivan : How? When you almost killed her and her family? How was I wrong? Osama you did exactly what I knew you would do! Destroy everything you touch!

-Silence. He had me there -

Ivan : It is my time now, my time to destroy you! With all the information I have and the information I have already given to the police, you are going to rot in jail and then I will come in and destroy your whole family, your wife, your sons!

Me : You wouldn't dare

Ivan : I'm not the same Ivan you knew. You changed me Osama

-I believed that statement. Ivan killed my daughter for fuck sakes so of course he had changed -

Me : What do you want? Name your prize

Ivan : So you think money can undo all the mess you did in my life?

Me : Things don't have to be like this between us.

Ivan : Look who's talking? Osama you have no idea what you are talking about! You know nothing!

Me : I know you are struggling financially so let me help you.

Ivan : For what in return?

Me : You let me go

Ivan : I want 40 million rands.

Me : Consider it done

Ivan : And I want my son back

-I swallowed -

Me : Yeah fine

Ivan : I'm giving you 2 days

Me : 2 days?

Ivan : 2

Me : But Ivan, that is..... Hello?

-He hung up on me -

Me : Dammit!

"Who was that?"

-I lifted my eyes and Lumka was at the doorstep -

Me : Ivan, he wants Melokuhle back.

Silumko : No, that's not going to happen.

Me : He is not ours,Lumka. This day was going to come sooner or later

Silumko : No Osama!

Me : Yes! If we don't let go of that boy then my life will be over.

Silumko : What does Ivan have on you?

Me : A lot sweetheart and after this we are skipping the country

Silumko : What?

Me : We have no choice

Silumko : Hhayi Osama, u Vunani is going to matric this year, we can't just move to another country.

Me : Sweetheart, I know that but trust me, I will make a plan for Vunani.

Silumko : No you won't!

Me : Silumko we are moving and that is final!

-She sighed-

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3 DAYS LATER

OSAMA

Me : I need to get to Pretoria immediately, Kgosi. I was supposed to meet with Ivan yesterday

Kgosi : My wife and I are out of the country.

Me : Fuck!

Kgosi : Book a flight

Me : The flight will only be available tomorrow night.

Kgosi : Ivan will have to wait

Me : I guess. Thanks for nothing

-I hung up. My family was staring at me -

Me : Melo it's time my boy

Melokuhle : But you know it's not over for me and this family

Me : I don't know

-The possibility was, I was never going to see Melokuhle again after everything I did to Ivan. Melokuhle was happy about going and the truth was that boy was no longer comfortable in my house -

Melokuhle : You have my word

Me : We are leaving tomorrow night.

Linile : You will give him the money?

-I looked at Melokuhle -

Me : Yes

-Linile shook his head and walked away. He wasn't happy about the money I was going to give to Ivan. Silumko was very quiet, her heart was bleeding and I understood. She loved Melokuhle like her own-

Melokuhle : Mah I'll come and visit every week

Silumko : If you say so

Me : Sweetheart you need to understand that....

Silumko : I understand. I need to go and buy some stationary for Vunani

Me : Stationary? Haibo Lumka we spoke about that

Silumko : No we didn't, I listened to you while you were telling me what you have decided about our lives.

Melokuhle : Mah nikhuluma ngani?

Silumko : Tell your children what you have decided Osama

-I looked at each of them -

Me : We are moving to Canada

"What!?"

-They all stood up with their eyes wide open -

Me : Yeah get your passports ready. I need to see Dr James

-I kissed Lumka and walked out. Before an hour I was in the doctor's room-

Dr James : You are leaving?

Me : Yes

Dr James : Mr Nkwanyana you cannot do that, not in your condition.

Me : That's why I'm here, I want to know if I am fit to fly.

Dr James : Flying is the least of my concerns but your health? In a foreign country?

Me : Don't worry about my health Drew

-He looked at me with his brow raised. It was the first time I referred to him with his name -

Dr James : What if you get there and things get worse?

Me : I would rather die knowing that my family is somewhere safe.

-Gulps -

Dr James : Fine, I'll run the test. Let's start with the X ray

Me : I actually feel much better today, I've never experienced any pain or short breath.

-I said while taking off my t-shirt-

Dr James : I'm happy to hear that, however I still recommend that you do the operation before you move to Canada. Do it for your family at least

Me : Mhmmmm

Dr James : I'm serious, Nkwanyana.

Me : Don't worry about my family Dr James, when I leave this world a lot of doors will open for them.

-He frowned -

Dr James : I see. Breathe in and out

-I did -

Dr James : Again

-I did. He looked confused-

Dr James : Very strange... Let's run the x-ray.

Me : Sure

-After the X-ray process I sat down and messaged Kgosi about Canada while waiting for Dr James.

Dr James : Are you on some medication?

Me : Uh-huh

-I responded with my eyes on my phone -

Dr James : Are you sure?

-I lifted my eyes -

Dr James : Because whatever medication you are taking is doing wonders on your lungs. I've never seen anything like this

-I placed my phone on the table and stood up -

Me : What?

Dr James : Look at this

-He showed me the x-ray picture -

Dr James : Your lungs are healing, this is absolutely amazing.
What did you take Osama?

Me : Nothing

-He shook his head -

Dr James : There is no way. That's why you refused to go for the operation, because you knew that someone was going to help you.

Me : What are you talking about?

Dr James : Look at this

-He showed me the last X-ray graphic results of my last appointment and the one for that day. The difference was huge

-

Me : I don't understand.

Dr James : I'm sure you do. Osama do you know how many lives you could save if you could just tell us what you took for your lungs to heal?

-Dr James was pushing me to tell him what helped me but I also didn't know what helped me so his fussing got a little too much as he called other doctors. I wore my t-shirt and I left, they tried to stop me but no, I couldn't stand that chaos especially since I didn't know how to answer all their questions. I was so lost.

What was going on with my life? -

-I drove back to my house and I was driving, I saw this old lady and she stopped my car using her walking stick. I stopped the car next to her and I lowered the window -

Me : Ninjani muntu omdala?

Gogo : I'm fine my son, where are you going this side?

-I looked where she was pointing and back at her. I was going in the right direction.... Ok wait, why did she sound like she knew me and where I was going to? -

Me : My home is this side gogoh. Get in the car I'll give you a lift

-She smiled -

Gogo : No, you left the church behind. Get out of your car and I'll show you where it is

Me : But I'm not going to church

Gogo : You are, come out.

-I got so confused but I got out of the car anyway -

Gogo : See, there is the church, with a white cross on the roof.

Me : But I don't go t.... Ok Gogo I don't know who you think I am but I'm definitely not who you think I am. Mina ngu Osama

Gogo : Hosanna? That is a beautiful name.

Me : Not Hosanna, Osama.

Gogo : Hosanna, go my son and thank him for all he has done for you but before you go let me tell you a secret. You see God? God is always close to those who do the worst in this world.

Me : But how can God be close to those who sin?

Gogo : Because why would he bother about people who have already chosen him as the lord and savior? He knows that those who had chosen him are already under his wing but those who sin? Mhmmmm he is always close to them because he can't wait for the day they finally seek for him and when that day come he wants them to find him already closer to them because at the end of the day God wants to see all of us in his Kingdom because in his eyes no one is better than the other. We are just people who came to earth and chose different ways to live our lives.

-I don't normally give strangers too much of time but I listened to that Gogo telling me a fairytale in broad daylight for the whole 2 minutes of my life -

Me : God must be a real cool man, I guess. Bye Gogo

Gogo : Ok let me come with you

-I opened for her and we both got in. I only drove a short distance and she hit my steering wheel with her walking stick -

Gogo : Kanti awenzi ilivesi?

Me : What?

Gogo : To church. Where do you think you are going? I told you that you left the church behind

Me : And I told you that I wasn't going to church.

Gogo : Ok. Take me to church

Me : I don't think I want to do that

Gogo : But you insisted on giving me a lift home.

Me : Yes home, not church and I didn't insist.

Gogo : Church is my home. Take me home Hosanna

Me : But.... - I sighed - fine

-She took out her glasses and wiped them before she put them back. I made a u turn and drove to church. She smiled as I parked my car and I shook my head. I got out of the car and opened a door for her -

Gogo : It's open, great!

Me : Yes, great.

-I headed back in the car -

Gogo : You are coming in with me

Me : No I'm not.

Gogo : Who do you think you are? You talk back?

Me : No, who do you think you are, forcing me to go in?

Gogo : I can't see clearly anymore. Help me in

Me : Usile wena salukazi

Gogo : I am serious. See? My glasses are broken

Me : Don't worry, I'll give you money to buy new ones

-I got inside my car and started the engine. She sat down on the ground and I turned it off -

Me : What the fuck is wrong with this Gogo?

-I started my car and drove off that time. I was hoping that when she saw me leaving she was going to go in on her own but no, she remained seated on the ground. I stopped by the gate-

Me : Nxi

-I got out of the car and walked back to her. -

Me : Come

-I helped her up and wrapped her arm around my neck. We headed to the church door and we got in -

Gogo : God bless you Hosanna.

Me : Can I go now?

Gogo : No, wait for me. Sit here, I'll be back now

Me : No I'll stand.

-She walked towards the door that was in the front. It seemed like there was another room there, probably the pastor's room

-

Me : Oh so you can see now?

-She laughed -

Gogo : Here I can.

-She disappeared into that room and I sighed. I looked around and there were big candles there. I kept looking at my watch and went back to the door where Gogo disappeared to. 10 minutes later Gogo was still there. I sat down for another 10 minutes but still nothing. I decided to go in and to my surprise the room was empty

Gogo wasn't there. There was another door open and it was the door to the way out. It was opened. I checked outside, she

wasn't there so I went back to my car. When I was about to open and get inside the car, I stopped and I found myself going back to the church. I sat down on the bench for a few minutes and I went to the front. I lit a candle-

Me : This one is for you, my daughter. Mlwandle, may your soul rest in peace my princess.

-I lit another one -

Me : Mama, I still remember and your love will keep burning like this candle. Phumula, Mlwandle, makhanda kanqayi, mthayi kansele. Zikode!

-I moved to the next one -

Me : MaDlamini, may your soul continue to rest in peace Sibalukhulu.

-I lit all the rest of the candles -

Me : For all the lives of the Dlamini I took. I really had no choice, if you want someone to blame for all the shit I did, blame Solomuzi Dlamini.

-The moment I said his name, I felt my arms burning. I felt so angry and for the first time in my life I kneeled down and cried out loud as the night of my mother's death came back all over again. When I stood up I felt relieved like there was a huge burden that was removed from my shoulders -

"Osama it's all over now"

-Someone said behind me. I slowly turned around. It was Mxolisi Dlamini -

Me : What are you doing here?

-He shook his head -

Mxolisi : The Dlamini's destroyed you and repaired you. May God bless you

-He turned around and walked away leaving me dumbstruck -

OSAMA

The Following Night

-Melokuhle was waiting for me and we were ready to go -

Me : Sweetheart I know how important Melokuhle is to you and I promise you that he will come and visit.

Silumko : I'm not worried about Melokuhle. We spoke yesterday and he assured me that he will come every week. It's you I'm worried about

Me : Me?

Silumko : Yes Osama. We can't just move to Canada, what about your health?

-I smiled -

Me : I'm fine now. I will be fine

Silumko : You suffer from some dangerous lung disease

Me : I am but I'm recovering. You will see

Silumko : No you are not. How? when you don't even want to go for the operation?

Me : I don't need an operation

-I smiled and she lifted my head -

Silumko : What happened to you Osama? You look different

Me : Different?

Silumko : Yeah, better than you have ever since I met you.

Me : I know. I feel better

Silumko : What happened?

Me : I was saved

Silumko : Saved?

Me : I'll tell you one day. We need to go, our flight is leaving in the next hour

Silumko : Can we talk about everything and this whole Canada thing when you come back?

Me : Are you worried about Vunani?

Silumko : I do baby. He is doing matric this year

Me : Then we don't have to go . I'll speak to Kgosi and see what we can do

-She smiled -

Silumko : Wait here

Me : Why?

-She laughed -

Silumko : Wait

-She opened a drawer and took out a box. -

Silumko : This is the gift I bought for you on your birthday but I couldn't give it to you

-I took the box and opened it. It was a beautiful watch and a necktie. I smiled -

Me : You didn't have to

Silumko : I had to. Everyone needs a gift for their birthday

-I placed down the box and cupped her face -

Me : Lumka you are the best gift that was ever given to me

-Tears rolled down her cheeks -

Silumko : I love you

Me : And I love you more, more than you love me but not more than God ever loved me.

-She laughed -

Silumko : What?

-I shook my head. Her eyes searched all over my face -

Me : Nothing

Silumko : No, you said God.

Me : I did

-I kissed her lips gently and I pulled away. -

Me : You are light in the dark, you know that.

Silumko : Osama you are scaring me

Me : If I don't make it back alive, always remember that I loved you and please take care our boys

-Her eyes screamed fear-

Me : Ah sweetheart don't be scared. You have God behind you and he will carry you when I'm no longer here to carry you

-I kissed her forehead and took my watch -

Silumko : Osama no, please don't go.

Me : I have to do this.

-I walked out as fast as I could. Her loud scream broke my heart, I was expecting her to follow me but she didn't. -

Me : Let's go Melokuhle

-Linile and Vunani stood up -

Linile : We are coming with you Baba

-I shook my head -

Me : No, take care of your mother....oh and Linile please bring your children home.

Linile : Are you serious?

Me : Yes

-I walked out and Melokuhle stayed behind with them. He was saying his goodbye. The Uber that was taking us to the airport arrived and Melokuhle was still inside. I called him and he came out with his suitcase. He sat at the back with me and the car drove off. There was silence in the car, only Melokuhle's sound

of sniffing. He was resting his head on his lap and he kept wiping his tears on his lap. I placed my hand on his shoulder-

Me : You still have a father in me and a home where you left. All you left still belongs to you, always.

-He lifted his head and hugged me tightly -

Melokuhle : I love you so much baba

Me : Always Melo. I'll always love you son

*****'

-Ivan sent me a location where we were going to meet. The possibility was he was planning something, I knew how much Ivan hated me and he was never going to let it slide so deep down I knew that maybe I was not going to go back home alive. When we arrived at the airport we took Uber to the location Ivan sent and we found a car parked there. I paid the Uber

driver and we got out of the car. I looked all over the place and it was dark and quiet -

Melokuhle : Do you think that is his car?

Me : Yes

Melokuhle : Ok, let's go

-We took a few steps and the car door opened. A man got out of the car, it was Ivan Dalukhanyo Ndlovu. -

Ivan : The mighty Osama Dlamini

Me : Skhulu

-We greeted each other from a distance -

Ivan : Skhulu sami, you made it.

Me : Yes, with your boy and your money.

-Melokuhle looked at me. Ivan was standing far and so was I
and Melokuhle-

Ivan : I see my boy but where is the money?

Me : Here

-I lifted two bags full of money -

Ivan : Good, open them.

-I went down and opened the bags and suddenly there was
light coming from the street light that was next to us. I looked
up at the light and I closed my eyes when the light blinded me -

Ivan : Is it real?

Me : I don't walk around with fake money Ndlovu

Ivan : Great. Leave it there and go away

Me : Skhulu

-I looked at Melokuhle and I pulled him to a big fatherly hug. -

Me : Take care of yourself son

Melokuhle : Do the same baba. I love you

Me : I love you too mfan'wam

-I pulled away and walked away -

Ivan : Osama!

-I stopped walking and my heart started pounding. I knew he had a gun pointing at me. I raised my hands and turned around with my head down-

Me : Things don't have to end like this skhulu

Ivan : I think this is the best way to end things

Melokuhle : Baba!

-I quickly lifted my head. There was a girl in a white dress standing next to Ivan. I walked past Melokuhle and headed straight to them. I stopped when I got close to them.-

Ivan : Osama meet your daughter

Me : What?

-My heart skipped. I was dreaming, that wasn't happening, that wasn't happening. The girl walked closer to me and Melokuhle walked past me going to Ivan. My eyes were glued to the girl and I saw a female version of Vunani. It was her, my baby. I hugged her and spun her around. -

Melukhanyo : Baba!

-She whispered and tears ran down my face. When I finally put her down I saw Ivan and Melokuhle hugging. We all stopped and looked at each other -

Me : You know Ndlovu, I thought this was my New Beginning to the end.

-I said while walking closer to Ivan. We met halfway -

Ivan : No it wasn't Sibalukhulu

-I gave him my hand and he slowly gave me his. That motherfucker didn't trust me, not that I trusted him either. We shook hands -

Ivan : Thank you for raising my son.

Me : Thank you for raising my daughter.

Ivan : Let's go and get some drinks to celebrate

Me : No let's hit the road to the nearest church.

Ivan : What?

.....**THE END**.....

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