

Secrets, Deceptions, and Lies

Red
Lace

Sandisiwe Gxaba

Red Lace by Sandisiwe Gxaba

Red Lace 1

CHUME TSHAWA-MNGUNI

I am not a spiritual person but from the minute I stepped into this house this hall specifically I felt this overwhelming dark aura. For the first time ever my spirit is not at peace being in this kind of place. I am not aware yet of what kind of place this is but I think I might have an idea of what it is. If it is not a wh*rehouse or a brothel then chances are it's a place where they keep up before they sell us to the highest bidder or something along those lines.

"When you are told to stand up straight and look ahead you do as told or else there will be hell to pay!" The old man before him says I look at the younger guy and then at the old man and nod my head. Like my father I am soft spoken but I possess my mother's fiery attitude and that always comes into play or works to my advantage. My twin sister calls me dangerous for possessing such qualities. Whatever place this is I won't survive it because my anxieties skyrocketed when this old man stood before me and made me tell him my name but somehow I found peace in the younger one's eyes. There was something calming about those hazel-brown eyes with this strange sparkle in them. It was just one look but it was enough to draw you in and drive you over the edge. I'd never experienced anything like it before his look alone erased everything I felt about this place and yes it was only for a split second but I felt something.

They walk to the end before coming to stand in the middle and facing us all approximately 20 girls are standing in line. Lord knows how the rest were abducted we are all terrified Siso had been holding my hand from the minute we got into this place but they separated us when we had to stand like this. Part of me is angry at her for putting us into this situation but a part of me cannot blame her because this could have happened to anyone with anyone. My sister must be panicking out of her mind right now.

"You will be taken to rooms to get cleaned up I want you all back here at" he pauses to look at the timepiece on his wrist "At 2:00 PM sharp anyone who is late will be punished" The old man says and then he and the young tail walk away.

Some women come and take two of us at a time up the stairs to separate rooms I am lucky when they put Siso and me in the same room. Siso hugs me tightly.

"Chume I'm so sorry. I had no idea that this would happen."

IYAZINKOSI ADAEGO IBRAHIM

"No! No daughter of mine is going to be taught how to pleasure a man! Over my dead body." Mom argues this time around raising her voice.

WAIT! What does mom mean when she says 'taught how to pleasure a man'? I have never been with a man before being my father's daughter didn't make things easy for men to even look in my direction. What are they talking about?

"This is not a request Isabelle I am telling you!" Daddy says never raising his voice at mom. Even though they are no longer married and are only co-parenting I know they love each other dearly. They have great respect for each other. Yes things didn't turn out as they had hoped but they love each other and will always look out for each other.

"I don't care whether it's a request or you telling me but the answer is NO! Adaego is going to start university this year and that's final. I've already spoken to the dean and she's been accepted." Mom says sternly dad chuckles he doesn't laugh much and right now I know that that chuckle is accompanied by something mom and I won't like.

"Isabelle my love when will you learn that you cannot do things without my knowledge? The so-called Dean you spoke to told me you enrolled Adae and I'm sorry but it's not going to happen. She has lessons in the dungeon scheduled for today at 1 pm" Dad says resting back on his chair proudly. Dungeon? What is dad talking about? We have a dungeon? Where? How do I not know about any of this? What are my parents talking about and why am I innit?

"You think I'd only talk to one Dean? You underestimate me Yemi. If you don't let my daughter go to university I will bring you and this empire down myself. You forget that I know all your dirtiest secrets. Never mind the fact that our children are immortals. How do you think the society would feel if that came out huh?"

Immortals? What does mom even mean?

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

I have seen pretty girls beautiful awe-striking women before but never have I ever seen something so pure delicate and innocent. Her eyes are an ocean of wonder that I find myself lost in them her skin golden and buttery without a single scratch or pimple on her pretty face. She has the innocence of an angel without sin looking at her face alone is enough to lead me to a cliff. How the hell did she end up in the clutches of our monsters? Who the hell captured this little dove? She won't survive here. She doesn't belong here! Wait am I feeling something? What is she doing to me?

For as long as I have known my uncle Okoye he has been heartless and as ruthless as can be. The only people he cares about are the people he has to care about that is his family and my siblings and that's only because he gets paid for it either than that he would probably feed us to the wolves or something. My uncle has no heart he has no feelings. I haven't quite seen him kill anyone but I have seen him give orders around the mansion he has no feelings. I haven't quite seen him kill

anyone but I have seen him give orders around the mansion I have heard stories about him and he is truly not one to be messed with. Okoye is a monster through and through I do not doubt that Nichume and the other two students in uniform will be put to work before the end of next week.

"We don't take children!" I remind uncle and he shrugs his shoulders.

"They are already here what do you suggest must happen?" Okoye asks as he leads us downstairs to the basement. This conversation is not going well and I just know that I won't achieve what I'm hoping to with him.

"Uncle my father has strict rules against children. I have a little sister that's probably their age. You have a daughter that's 14 they don't belong here!" I remind him because clearly he's forgotten.

"And those people you have mentioned know better than to just get into a stranger's car. Uber or not. Besides what the fuck do you care? You've never bothered about the young ones before do you like that girl?" Uncle asks and I scrunch my face up annoyed that he would even suggest that.

"I'm an immortal we don't have feelings!" I remind him and he chuckles.

"You grew up under your mother's care anything is possible. Your father fell for your mother so" He says with a shrug unbothered. I'm grateful when uncle Adiche comes towards us looking ready for war my guess is he heard about the young girls.

"Okoye what the fxck?! We don't take children!" Uncle Adiche says coming before us and shoving uncle Okoye. Unlike Okoye Adi actually has a heart. Now that doesn't mean he's different than Okoye no but at least Adi is considerate and much more caring. I believe that without him in my father's life and Okoye the mansions would be run in a sadistic manner because that is what he and my father are they seek pleasure in pain... much like myself.

Okoye chuckles unbothered "That's what the little prince just said." He says "Clearly he's been spending a lot of time with you because what is all this talk?" he opens the door to the weapons room. I am still unsure of why we are here or what business we have with the weapons.

"My father will not be happy about this!" I remind him especially because mom is around. She has a huge impact on how he runs things and he will do anything to make my mother happy even if it means going against the ways of the mansion.

"Your father lets me run this place how I see fit. Those 'children' are here now and there is nothing we can do about it. They have already seen this place and they know our faces letting them go now will pose a great risk to us the last thing we need are some rich kids' parents snooping around where they shouldn't!" Okoye says.

"They are children they don't belong here!" Adiche argues "You have a 14-year-old daughter a niece too you should try and put yourself in their parent's shoes." Okoye laughs at what Adi is saying I nod because I had told him the same thing.

“So you suddenly have morals and feelings of a parent imagine if we put ourselves in every parent’s shoes? This place wouldn’t even be running as it is.” Okoye argues annoyed and tired of this conversation.

“You need to set them free!” Adiche says to him I decide to stay out of their conversation with hopes that Adi will get through to this man.

Okoye turns annoyed "Okay. What do you both propose seeing that you are suddenly oh-so righteous with morals and feelings?" He asks. I look at uncle Adi expecting him to reason but even he doesn't say anything.

“They are children you can always let them go with a little threat. I’m sure they won’t risk it. Their parents wouldn’t risk it desperate parents will do anything to keep their children safe” I remind him and Okoye laughs into my face annoying me to the core.

"You cute if you think those girls would keep their mouths shut. They are staying here and that's final. They won't be initiated until they turn eighteen but until then they will learn the ways of the mansions and that is final!"

AKINTOYE SAMUEL DANIELS

“What do you think about the new girls?” Jane asks me as soon as the ladies have been returned to the rooms to get cleaned up.

“I thought Master was against school girls?” I ask Jane because as far as I remember we were not allowed to recruit school girls or even abduct them for the mansions.

She shrugs her shoulders as we walk out of the hall "You and me both but I guess things change. Did you see the cutie in a school blazer? With a body like hers? She will be initiated in by the next initiation gathering bet!" Jane says. I cringe at her confidence but when Jane has a hunch it's wise to trust her. She knows this place better than I do anyway.

"They were both cute" I comment even though I didn't see them as well as the others probably did.

"I'm talking about the one that grabbed Okoye's attention. It will be fun working with her she looks like a delicate flower. I can't wait to break her" Jane says with an evil chuckle I tend to forget that mistresses have no feelings. Immortals have no heart and I am reminded that every time Jane spots her new targets.

"Let's hope that she won't give you trouble roses are pretty and delicate but their stems sting like a bxtch!"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 2

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

I excuse myself to visit the dungeon here at the mansion Okoye will give me a headache! I walk into the dungeon and I find Akintoye busy training a recent initiate.

“Master” He says and I laugh he drops the whip and walks over to me. We fist bump greeting each other and shoulder bump.

“I am not your master! I remind him but he laughs at me.

“Oh but you are Prince” He says my name in the most sarcastic and condescending tone because he knows I hate that name.

“What's new with you? Are you ready to be initiated?” I ask him and he sighs before shaking his head no.

“I'm excited but I'm also scared. I figured I should come here and breathe” he says going back to pick up the whip I laugh at him.

“I wish I were you the queen wants me to be initiated next year. Imagine” I say and earn a laugh from him “Don't you dare!” I say knowing he wants to raise the fact that I'm my father and mother's son. “So what did I walk into?” I ask him and he shrugs.

“Well I'm not allowed to have sex so I can only settle for this. What's up with you?” He asks I let out a breath and take out a whip from the drawer.

“I met someone today” I start off and he laughs at me as if that's impossible.

“That's not possible you incapable of feelings” he reminds me a painful reminder. I would have believed it if I hadn't met her because now I can't stop thinking about her honey-gold flawless skin her big bold fiery but innocent eyes and those chubby-like cheeks.

“Then how is it that I can't stop thinking about her that's what I thought too. That's what I believe too but here I am going crazy unable to stop thinking about her. Her big bold eyes that soft voice like a fxcking melancholic song. I hate how she keeps invading my mind!” I explain to him I have never had to express myself like this before. It's all too strange. I don't like it.

“Wow you really have it bad. If I didn't know you I'd actually think you were human” he says and shoves me playfully. “Maybe it's not even that deep you probably just want to fxck her and keep it moving. You're an immortal you have no feelings whatsoever” he says and then he walks over to the slave tied up.

“You're probably right I need a distraction. Let me take over here while you gather the new slaves into the hall.” I remind him because it's 5 minutes to 2.

“You right get laid and forget about this chick”

NICHUME TSHAWA-MNGUNI

“Why are you doing this?” I ask one of the ladies that is supposed to help us get ready.

“Because we have no choice” The one with short hair responds I raise an eyebrow confused by her response “I was born here my mother was a slave. This place is the only one I know and there’s no leaving this place” She says.

“Have you ever tried?” I ask her and she shakes her head with visible fear on her face.

“Anyone that has ever tried leaving has never made it out of those doors. The punishment for trying to escape is being fucked by as many men as your age.” The other lady with long hair responds. I frown confused but also disgusted and scared.

“What do you mean?” Siso asks the ladies to expand.

“The last lady to try and escape here she was 19 years old. Master Okoye had 19 dungeon masters take turns with her.” The short-haired lady explains. They look young themselves probably between the ages of 18 and 21. They are lotioning our bodies with oils and making sure we look ‘presentable’ enough.

“What do you mean by dungeon master?” I ask curiously but most of all worried and scared anything that has a dungeon is never accompanied by something exciting or even good.

“You see the man that stood before you the one that made you look up at him?” Short hair asks and I nod “He’s the lead dungeon master. A dungeon master is a man that trains you on pleasuring men the correct way.” She explains but I’m having a hard time understanding what she means when she says ‘pleasuring men’. As if she can hear my thoughts she explains further “Dungeon Masters are men that teach you how to please men sexually. From giving blowjobs to moaning the right way coming on command and riding a d*ck in many ways that different men enjoy. They teach you how to carry yourself in the presence of men what to know when dealing with a certain man when to speak and when not to speak based on a man’s body language. They have what is called ‘c*ck beads’ as the name suggests there are beads planted under their c*ck skin. They usually have the biggest and thickest d*cks than all the men here. They are used to punish us when we rebel or act in some type of way that goes against our teachings.” The other one nods in agreement with her ‘sister’ Siso looks at me with concern but right now I am not concerned but angry that she got us into this. My sister is probably panicking thinking that we are mizing her when we are ouchea being taught about our new lives if they don’t get us out in time.

“The masters are going to love you” The one dressing me and fixing my hair says taking one last look at me in the mirror. All she did was tie it back into a neat bun because apparently there shouldn’t be any hair on our faces. These men need to see our faces without any distractions.

Imagine! At what point in life were women reduced to objects made to please men?

“Why?” I ask out of curiosity.

“Because you are a replica of Master Olayemi’s wife. She was just like you when she got here

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her eyes were innocent but full of wonder and she had this burning fire in her like you.” She says and I raise an eyebrow “I’m a good judge of character yeah sure you have a soft voice but you don’t bow down or conform you’re a fighter. If you want to survive here then I suggest you program yourself to submit else they will go harder on you during training.”

NTANDOYENKOSI ATHINI MNGUNI

I try to call my sister again but her phone doesn’t go through. It’s on voicemail now and I don’t know whether to call one of our guards to trace them or what. It’s now two o’clock and they are still not back if I call one of our guards then they are going to let dad know and that won’t end well. I try one more time and I still get her voicemail I try Sisonke and still nothing. I let out a sigh and make my way to find our brother hopefully he’ll know what to do.

I push the door open and I find my brother’s roommate sitting on his bed he has one leg flat on the bed while the other one is raised. He’s laying back with one hand behind his head and the other hand holding his phone probably chatting. Khanya is a good-looking specimen! It’s safe to say I have a crush on him my sister always drags me for it and fortunately our brother hasn’t noticed.

“Khanya where’s Yethu?” I ask Khanya who gives me one look before he returns his attention to his phone.

“Oh hello to you too Nkosi” Khanya says and I roll my eyes Lord knows I love it when he calls me Nkosi he’s the only one that calls me that. Unlike the rest of everyone in this school he calls my brother Ntando. Our full names are Ntandoyethu Bandile I am Ntandoyenkosi Athini and our sister is Nichume Siphosethu Tshawe Mnguni.

“You know I hate that where is Yethu?” I ask him again remembering the reason I was even here. My sister is probably in trouble and I’m here drooling over my crush.

“He’s in the field they have a match this Friday afternoon” he says and I walk out of the room closing the door behind me I hear him call out telling me I’m welcome. I run to the field and he’s there doing laps with the rest of the team I wait on the side until he sees me. he jogs over to me.

“What’s up Yenkosi? You hate coming to the field” he says and he’s right. I don’t play sports because for one I am lazy and I don’t get the concept behind the whole need to sweat. It’s dirty and disgusting for me.

“I don’t know if this is something to start worrying about yet but Sisonke and Chume left an hour and a half ago to go buy Kota’s in Braam and they are still not back yet. I’ve tried calling their phones and

they both go to voicemail. They were supposed to send their ETA the minute they got on the uber but nothing." I explain and he scratches his head.

"They probably ended up window shopping or something. You know your twin and clothes"

IYAZINKOSI ADAEGO IBRAHIM

A quick rundown our family is a strange family with weird practices. As I mentioned before my sister and I are treated like princesses while our brother is treated like the future King he is. By this I mean my sister and I are not exposed to the family business mom has done her level best to make sure that we are shielded from our father's business and hence we don't know anything about what happens in the business. The extents mom has gone through involves mom moving us to study in the states and only moving back home permanently when I was 11 Prince was 10 and Adelola was 7 years old. The only reason we even came back was because dad wanted to groom Prince for the family business. Said there were some things he needed to learn whilst he was still young things they have been so secretive about and hence I'm shaken that there's even such a thing as immortals.

"Adae what are you doing!" Dad says ripping the door open. I straighten looking straight up at him as if I haven't just been caught eavesdropping. One thing our father has instilled in us is to always stand tall no matter what and that's what I'm hoping will save me right now.

"What are immortals?" I ask him sternly he turns to give mom a look that I cannot see but judging by mom's face it's safe to assume that dad blames her for my eavesdropping. Dad turns back to look at me somewhat proud but also doesn't want to show it.

"Adae this is a private conversation between your mother and me!" Dad says and then he walks over to his small table and pours himself a drink.

"Dad what is mom talking about? Mom what do you mean we are immortals?" I ask posing the question to mom because clearly my father won't give me the answers I'm looking for.

"Adae honey-"

"No. Isabelle" Dad warns.

"Yemi she is 18. If she is old enough to learn how to be a mistress then she might as well learn the truth about who she is" Mom says and Dad looks at her he has a look I cannot read but judging by the look mom is giving him its safe to say that Ma'am understands the look all too well. Dad shakes his head and walks over to his chair and sits down. Mom takes a sit opposite him and I take that as an invitation to sit too.

"I hope you know what you are doing" Dad says to mom and then h returns his attention to his work. Mom lets out a sigh defeated.

"I am sure you know that your father's wealth is not pure and innocent. Everything we own and have is not from your regular hard work and all." Mom starts and Dad chuckles from behind his laptop. "You either let me tell our daughter or you do it" Mom says annoyed by my dad's sarcastic chuckle. "Look Adae our wealth our influence is not as pure as you may think it to be. Our money does not only come from the pharmacy and political influence. It also comes from drugs weapons and our ancestors." Dad says

To Be Continued

Red Lace 3

AKINTOYE SAMUEL DANIELS

I walk into the bedroom and the ladies have these white sheets wrapped around their bodies like a bedroom lamp in a rich man's bedroom the sheets are held together on their shoulders by a gold brooch. Even with the sheets covering their bodies you can still see the shapes of their hourglass bodies how thick and gifted in all the right places they both are. Is this how they became friends? Because of their good looks and their hourglass bodies? The two ladies stand in the middle of the room like two sacrificial lambs with visible fear on their innocent little faces. Anyone can tell that these two are underage one of them tries as best as she can to look brave but behind that mask she is as scared as a jack-rabbit that has heard the howl of a wolf. I would know because I have seen this look one too many times in the dungeon. It is not my duty to assure any of the two of them of anything.

"Is this the part where you rape us and then sell us to the highest bidder?" The one with rich golden skin that looks so clean you could almost eat her snarls. A sight for sore eyes and an attitude for days she will definitely be Jane's target.

"That would defeat the purpose now wouldn't it? We can't really sell something that's already broken" I tease but clearly the joke doesn't land. I don't talk much and yet this little princess has me saying more than a mouthful.

I clear my throat seeing that I've managed to quiet her down I then continue "Jane is going to have fun with you. Come on let's go ladies" I say and step aside so that they may lead the way out. One friend walks but the other stands still the one with a soft voice but a visible attitude remains. This is the part where I would be pinching my nose bridge if it were any other day.

"NO! We are not going anywhere with you" Little miss golden skin says. I roll my eyes not in the mood for this little game today is not the day. God cannot possibly be testing me like this right now.

“Chume you heard what the ladies said. We need to behave and not draw attention to ourselves. Please!” The not-so-innocent-looking but pretty friend pleads with her her voice is not as soft as the other one. I nod agreeing with the friend.

“Listen to your friend if you want your stay here to be smooth” I warn uninterested and not in the mood. Lord knows if I touched her I would probably stain her and rid her of all her innocence and purity. And I don’t mean it in a sexual manner but because her skin is just too flawless for me to touch her face so angelic that I’m worried I’d paint her with my sins if I ever touched her with these hands of mine.

“NO!” ‘Chume’ argues stubbornly I walk over to her and grab her arm pushing her forward I didn’t intend for things to get this far but she keeps pushing my buttons and today is just not the day a minute late and Okoye will not have mercy on me or them. “Don’t touch me! Leave me alone!” She fights and this time her little voice is not as low as before but now she’s loud and actually fighting me trying to scratch me with her one free hand.

“Stop fighting me or else I will hurt you!” I threaten but it falls on deaf ears I let go of her and pull out my gun. I would never shoot her it’s just to scare her a bit. “Stop fighting me” I say with my gun pointing at her friend she slowly lowers her hands and tries to pull herself out of my grip.

“Okay fine I’ll stop fighting” Chume says her tone as low as it was before. “Please just don’t hurt her I’m the one giving you problems. Not her.” She tries reasoning.

“Where’s the fun in that? Listen just cooperate and we won’t have any problems!” I say and she nods her innocent little head. I let go of her arm and she rubs the place where I had my hand around her arm. Looks like I’ve left her with a bruise. I didn’t think my grip on her arm was that tight but clearly I was wrong. “Now start walking!” I say to them and she gives me one last look before walking over to her friend.

This is going to be a long 3 months!

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

Is she immortal? Or at least half immortal? The only ones capable of this kind of possession are immortals and that is if they are aware of their power and know how to use it. Humans are incapable of this kind of power. I am an immortal I shouldn’t be this easily distracted. Akintoye needs to train her soon so that we know what we are dealing with.

“My Prince stop!” Someone interrupts and it’s only then do I realize that the poor girl is bloody and half-conscious. What have I done? How did I do this? Dad is going to kill me. This is the second time this is happening. I drop the rose whip out of my hand and onto the floor. I take a step back

"Her pulse is faint she's lost a lot of blood My Prince. We have to get a doctor in here." The dungeon master says and he rushes out I take a step back and sit on the floor looking at the naked woman I probably killed or almost killed with nothing but a whip.

"Adeyemi stand up!" Okoye says pulling me up "Get up you have to get cleaned up." He says pushing me towards the door the doctor walks in and I stop in my tracks.

"How bad is she?" Doctor asks and I shrug my shoulders.

"I was using a whip it was a whip with tassels" I explain to him it's the only whip that shouldn't be capable of causing this much damage to a person. Why is this happening to me? Why am I being punished? This is the second time this is happening in less than 2 years. She is the third girl to end up like this. The other two died

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this one can't die my father will kill me!

"You can't tell dad uncle!" I plead the minute we are out of sight from everyone. 'A prince never begs a prince never shows any form of weakness...' my father's words echo in my mind but I can't help it. Not this time around not when I know what is at stake. I have no reason this time around and father had warned me to stay away from the slaves and use the mistresses for my fetishes.

"Your father has to know it's the only way we will be able to figure out why you become this way how you black out and almost kill people nephew" Okoye says and I don't respond its no use trying to reason with him because nothing is going to come out of it. We walk into his office and he tells me to go clean up while he calls my father.

Here comes trouble!

IYAZINKOSI ADAEGO IBRAHIM

"Yemi" mom warns which tells me that there's something he's not telling me.

"As the head elder I have more influence because I am an immortal. Very few of us remain and if people were to get their hands on any of them or you guys it would be the end of us therefore we have to be protected at all costs. Immortals and half-immortals hold massive power and influence in getting what you want; hence I have never lost any business deals before or have ever been arrested ever since I took over from my father." Dad explains I raise an eyebrow beyond the word confused by this new information. "My father raised me as a human because he was unaware that I was immortal our forefathers and their forefathers made deals with immortals so that there would be peace and wealth. Immortals are like a genie in a bottle except we don't grant wishes. If you treat an immortal right; your life will go smoothly. Every ritual performed is for the greater good of the

mansions and the people that reside in the mansions. Rituals are performed so-" Dad is cut off by his cellphone ringing "I have to take this" He says answering his phone.

"Okoye talk to me" Dad says

"Oluwa it's the prince. He's had another incident" Uncle Okoye reports to my father the look on dad's face tells me that he knows exactly what Okoye is talking about. He removes his phone from the loudspeaker and places it on his ear. Mom and I look at each other and then at dad who looks frustrated.

"Mo wa lori ọna mi. Se omobirin na dara? (I'm on my way. Is the girl okay?)" Dad asks in Yoruba now I know my brother has messed up. Dad doesn't speak in Yoruba unless he's angry or he wants to throw someone off. My Yoruba is not that good but I can understand bits and pieces of it. He listens for a while nodding "Good. I'll be there in 10." He says and cuts the call.

"Iṣeṣe wo? Omobirin wo? Se Adeyemi dara?(What incident? What girl? Is Adeyemi okay?)" Mom asks with visible concern.

"It's nothing to concern yourself about I will take care of it" Dad says grabbing his important things off the table Mom also stands up.

"Adeyemi is my son and I demand to know what is going on with him! Is my son okay Olayemi?"

Mom asks but I'm more shocked by her calling him by his full name than the tone she is using with him.

"Ade we will continue this conversation later you can go to university"

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

I still remember the first time Adeyemi killed a girl it was at the beginning of last year. He was having what was meant to be harmless fun with one of the slaves from the mansion. He used a rose whip as the name suggests a rose whip is a whip with spikes just like a rose. Things were never supposed to get out of hand as they did but they did. Like me Adeyemi is a sadist through and through a Sadist is one who seeks pleasure that results from inflicting pain or humiliation or watching pain or humiliation inflicted on a submissive/slave. Unlike my son I was able to control myself at a young age. My practices have only ever put one person on a hospital bed and even so it never happened again. Adeyemi has these blackouts when he is punishing a slave or having fun with one he goes overboard it's not something that happens often it happens every once in a while.

Sometimes he has control and sometimes he loses it my brother has been studying Adeyemi's patterns with hopes to find answers about what is wrong with him.

"Olayemi!" Isabelle calls out as we walk out of the office.

"Not now my love" I warn but she grabs my arm making me stop.

“What is wrong with Adeyemi? What did Okoye mean?” Isabelle asks I pinch my nose bridge and let out an exasperated sigh. I turn to her and she lets go of my arm dropping her hand. Always submissive even after all these years. I cup her face “It’s nothing serious. Nothing to concern yourself about” I assure her but my wife is stubborn.

“That did not sound like nothing. What is this incident Yemi don’t lie to me” She says sternly she was always sexy when she got all serious and stern with me.

“Adeyemi gets blackouts that make him act violently with slaves and even go as far as killing them”

To Be Continued

Red Lace 4

NICHUME TSHAWE MNGUNI

We step into the hall we were in earlier and most of the girls are already sitting on the floor.

“Akin nice of you guys to finally join us” The old man from earlier says none of us dare to respond this man scares me. There’s something unsettling about him.

“When I got to the room the ladies were not done preparing the girls Master” Akin lies and I can’t control the shock. Why is he lying for us? He hates me doesn’t he? Why doesn’t he tell his master that I gave him trouble? Or maybe he doesn’t want to appear weak.

“Find them a place to sit” The master says and Akin sits us down in the front row in the middle I want to protest but I think against it. It was easier protesting when it was just him and us.

I risk a glance at my surroundings. The hall is like a big dome the walls that are visible are cream white there are stairs on my right that disappear all the way to the top with a gold rail and the floor we sit on has white and gray marble tiles that sparkle with the rays of the sun coming in from the window behind the people that stand before us. On my left there is a white double door with gold handles that leads to lord knows the walls are draped in cream and gold lacy curtains. In front of us there are floor-to-ceiling double doors with gold framing and gold round handles from where I am it’s safe to assume that it’s a backyard with beautiful green scenery. There are visible trees and multi-colored flowers on the sides of the grass. On a regular day this place would be a sanctuary but it’s not. I return my attention to the people before us. The scary man is about to speak when someone barges into the hall the man looks frantic as he whispers to this scary man. He excuses himself and another version of him takes over.

“My name is Adiche and I am dungeon master that was Okoye but he has something he has to take care of. You will address him and myself as ‘Master’. This here is your head Mistress Jane. You will address her as Madam Jane or Mistress or whatever she prefers.” Adiche explains.

"The rules are simple.

Rule No.1: Your purpose here is to serve your masters and mistresses and nobody else.

Rule No.2: Whenever you step into this hall you get into your submissive position Jane show the girls how" he says and Jane goes down on her knees sitting on her legs she places her palms flat on her thighs looking down. Where the hell are we? Christian Grey's dungeon?

"If you do not cooperate you will be punished severely!" he warns and we don't say anything.

"Rule No.3: You do not speak unless spoken to. You do not speak back to your masters or mistresses else you will be punished" He says he continues "Gatherings are important the only time you will be pardoned from participating is if you are gravely ill or gravely injured else no one is allowed to miss the gatherings.

Gatherings happen every Friday evening at 19:00 pm but you are all expected to be here at 19:30 pm and not a minute later.

Rule No.4: Nobody is allowed to leave these premises if you are caught trying to leave you will be punished.

Last but not least you will be given a mark that indicates that you belong here. You are not allowed to temper with the marks. For now you will be given a collar should you remove it. You will be punished and it won't be a kind punishment." Adiche explains. Where is my father when I need him? Jane steps up after Adiche moves to the side. Her robe is different than ours she looks like she shouldn't exist. Jane looks like a dream her skin is caramel without a single flaw on her. How can someone look this beautiful? Her beauty is mesmerizing she looks like a barbie doll but with caramel skin.

"My name is Jane. I am 16 years old; I was born and bred here in the mansion. I will be your coach I will be teaching you everything you will need to know about living in this house and serving your masters" she says I don't know if it's my imagination or what but she's looking at me as if she's talking to me.

"For the next couple of days I will be teaching you how to please different men based on their fantasies. The mansion is not a wh*rehouse! We do not have men that randomly come over for sexual favors. Everything here is done accordingly. Your sole purpose is to serve the masters according to their desires. Some of you are here of free will and some of you were taken and brought here against your will.

There are slaves and then there are mistresses. I am a mistress and you lot are what are known as slaves unless otherwise. A slave's duty is to obey their master or mistress's command at all times

else they are greatly punished. While a mistress is not that far from a slave our job is to please only the elders. Mistresses are allowed to move around the mansion as they please and we are allowed to leave the premises but with a guard on our side. You do not get promoted to be a mistress because all mistresses are special. Some of you may not know but there is something that separates you from the rest of the girls which is why after three months of lessons some of you will leave this mansion and move to the other you will be taught to be mistresses so that you are ready for your elders.

Elders are the founders the high-ranking men that we host here in the mansion. Now elders have access to whomever they want whenever they want. You DO NOT disobey an elder's command no matter what. You serve them as they please and you will always address them as Master and some prefer being called My Lord.

Below the elders we have what are known as Plebeians they rank lower than the elders. When dealing with Plebeians you also address them as Master but unlike the elders you also address them as Master but unlike the elders they cannot go above what you are able to take. With Plebeians you are then given the safe word "Red" once that word is spoken they will immediately stop but you are not to use the safe word unless necessary. By this I mean you are sick and unable to continue or they are doing to you what your training never covered.

And then we have what we call Dungeon masters. Their sole purpose is to train you guys in the dungeon on how to pleasure the masters accordingly. Now with DM's their sole purpose is to test your limits and train you to tolerate pain because best believe some men will test your limits. Also DM's are used to punish slaves when they have misbehaved so best you be on your best behavior. DM's are allowed to do as they please with you because they are training you to serve your purpose. Mistresses will undergo intense training.

And then we have the guards while they are no different from any of us. They are here to guard you and discipline you as is required of you all.

With each rank they wear jewelry that distinguishes them from the other ranks. An Elder has a Gold ring on their left middle finger with a square stagnant that has either a red ruby rock within its shape or a black ruby. Elders have 2 gold metal steel c*ck rings towards the tip of their c*cks and if you fail

to see the ring then their c*ck will be there to show you who you are dealing with. Some masters from afar instead of the c*ck ring have c*ck beads making their cocks look like lunch bar chocolates.

Plebeians wear a silver ring with a round stagnant. They have no jewels on their rings. They have one silver metal c*ck ring and they wear a silver chain around their necks.

Now Dungeon Masters have cock beads Ty please show the ladies your cock” she says and one of the guards walks over and he takes off his pants and shows us his manhood. It indeed has beads and it looks disgusting “Thank you and you may return to your post. As much as there is pleasure in those beads for us but they also bring about pain. Unbearable pain especially anally DM’s will be teaching you how to find pleasure in the pain and be able to cum willingly through the pain. The training will not be easy and it will not be pleasurable but you lot will push through and learn. They are told to train you in whatever way necessary until you are sharp and ready for initiation. If they need to use force or whip you into shape then that’s what they will do.”

She takes off her sheet and its falls to the floor with her brooch which makes a clanking sound as it hits the tiles. Just like her flawless face Jane’s petite body is just as flawless and mesmerizing. She has jewelry on her body but she somehow makes that jewelry look sexy! I never wanted a belly ring until I saw it on her. Her cookie is well-shaven without a single hair on it. She has a gold collar around her neck a gold bracelet and a gold anklet.

She starts off “now the reason I am naked is to show you what a mistress’s body looks like.” She says and turns around for all of us to see she has no visible tattoos but she has piercings on her nipples.

“As a mistress I wear a gold band on my right-hand middle finger” she says holding her hand up for us to see. “I have a tattoo of a whip on my wrist if I were to get captured or if anything were to happen to me outside these walls. This tattoo tells people where I belong and to whom I belong. I have a tongue piercing” she says and sticks her tongue out for us to see “the sole purpose of my tongue piercing is for the pleasure of giving men a blowjob and lastly I have a clit piercing” she says “and the nipple piecing’s are there for both pleasure and pain” she explains and then she sits on the chair behind her and parts her legs open for everyone to see. “This comes in handy for my pleasure and for sexual torture or punishment” she explains and then she closes her legs and stands up allowing one of the guards to drape her sheet around her.

“You will be initiated on the 3rd month of your time here. Because you are slaves you will be marked with a tattoo on your wrist which will look just like mine you will have a silver band on your left middle finger and lastly you will have a piercing on your tongue. Should you be initiated as a mistress you will then have a piercing on your clit and on your nipples. Tomorrow your training begins. Tonight make yourself used to your surroundings you can go out into the garden read take a tour around the house or get some rest because as of tomorrow the real work starts” It shocks me that a 16-year-old like herself is a mistress and she lives for this. She is very beautiful; I’m certain men fall at her feet. “May I ask?” one of the ladies says and Jane smiles I’m sure it’s one of the ones that came here willingly because I can’t imagine us who were abducted asking a question.

“Yes you may” Jane says.

“Why would we be punished? What are the punishable offenses?” the lady asks.

“If you look at a person you are not supposed to look at in the eyes

If you disobey orders

If you break the rules

If you do not submit accordingly

During training just because your master feels like it. There’s no one particular reason for punishment so hence I always advise newbies to submit willingly and follow the rules accordingly to avoid any kind of punishment because trust me the punishment is not nice. You may be on bed rest for an entire week if a DM went in too hard and even so you need to suck it up and do your duties at the Friday Gatherings and there they don’t care about your injuries as long as you please the men correctly.”

To Be Continued

Red Lace 5

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

“How many?” Isabelle asks as we get inside the car I keep quiet. “HOW MANY Yemi?” She asks raising her tone I’ll never get used to my wife raising her voice at me. Even after all these years I still see her as that sweet little submissive I met 19 years ago.

“2 three if we count this one too” I say

She lets out a breath “Two girls? Olayemi my son has killed two girls and you didn’t think to tell me?” She asks dramatically I roll my eyes. When Isabelle walked out on me and our marriage she gave up all access to the things that happen in the mansions. Yes she shows her face for initiation gatherings but it still doesn’t give her the right to know the things that happen in there.

“When you walked out on our marriage you lost all privilege of knowing the workings of the mansions” I say with a shrug.

“Workings-” she says with a chuckle it’s not a genuine one but an angry sarcastic chuckle she lets out a breath probably trying to calm herself down “My son has killed two girls and you have the nerve to tell me that its a working of the mansion are you hearing yourself? It’s my son

Olayemi! He is not the working of a mansion but my fucking son!" She says angrily her tone tells me that I should have thought my answer through first. What did she expect? That I would share such? I knew she would react this way.

"I knew you would react like this if I had told you. I did this for you and our son he begged me not to tell you" I say and she laughs hysterically she keeps clenching her hands balling them into fists and releasing them. Isabelle is not a violent person so this reaction is foreign to me.

"My son killed two girls at sixteen Olayemi and you saying you kept this from me for me? Are you hearing yourself? Does this make sense to you?"

"I walked him through it he's fine. He's coping." I say parking the car I'm about to unlock the door when she grabs my arm. I turn to look at her waiting for her to go off.

"Whatever you were doing with him here it's done. It's over!" She says and I laugh at her pulling my arm away from her grip.

"NO! Focus on the girls and let me focus on our son!" I say

"He blacks out! He needs therapy!" Isabelle argues and I laugh at her.

"You want to know what he really needs? He needs both of his parents back together. Our son is suffering from your irrational decisions! What did you think would happen huh? That you would walk out on our marriage and our bond without consequences? It doesn't work like that Isabelle. The ancestors are angry!"

"What do you mean this is my fault? Olayemi I was not going to stay with you after killing my father and my mother all for what? Because you can? Fxck your ancestors if they have a problem with me then tell them to deal with me head-on and leave my son out of it" she spits out angrily I look at her and she rips the door open walking out. What has happened to my wife since she left me? Isabelle would have jumped at the opportunity to get back with me to save our son but now she's willing to sacrifice herself to save him anything to stay away from me. I had hoped this would work.

NTANDOYENKOSI TSHAWÉ MNGUNI

I know my sister she loves shopping but she would never switch her phone off. Not with the family we come from. There's no way! She knows how paranoid our parents get. Just as we are standing like that my phone rings and it's our father the one person none of us can lie to because somehow he always finds out. I put the phone on speaker.

"Daddy" I answer.

"Hey princess how are you?" He asks and I look at Yethu who shrugs his shoulders.

"I'm good daddy how are you? What's up?" I ask him and he chuckles.

"Is everything okay princess?" He asks and I frown.

"Yes daddy why?" I ask him because why is this old man jumping to conclusions?

He lets out a laugh first "Because my angel when you are keeping something from me you are very quick to brush me off and your voice goes a little higher than normal. Where is Nichume why is her phone on voicemail?" so that's how he knows? Interesting. Now I need to learn how to lie better because what the hell is this?

I stammer and Yethu grabs my phone from my hands because he knows I suck at lying "Hey dad. Yethu here Chume went out with her friend to buy Kota's and their network is crappy."

Yethu explains and I let out a sigh of relief. Thank God for him because I was going to blab and tell him everything.

"I'm in Joburg I wanted to see you guys before I fly back home." Yethu and I look at each other.

"You're coming to school?" I ask him.

"Yes in fact I'm pulling up to your gate now. What time is Chume coming back?" Dad asks and Yethu shrugs he sold this lie so he might as well answer him.

"She should be on her way back with Sisonke" I say.

“Alright. I just parked the car now see you in a bit guys. Bye” Dad says and he cuts the call on us. FxCK!!! Where the hell are Nichume and Sisonke? I try their cells again and nothing still.

“Nothing?” Yethu asks and I nod.

“I can’t shake this feeling that something happened Nichume would never switch her phone off without saying something. If something happened to her then I’ll never forgive myself”

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

The door swings open and mom walks in I look at Okoye who looks just as shocked to see mom. Dad walks in right after her she walks over to me and I stand up meeting her halfway. She throws a slap on my cheek and then she pulls me into her arms in a warm embrace. This is strange mom has NEVER used violence on any of us this is new to me. Why did dad bring her here?

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sans-serif;color:#000000;background-color:transparent;font-weight:400;font-style:normal;font-variant:normal;text-decoration:none;vertical-align:baseline;white-space:pre;white-space:pre-wrap;">She breaks the hug and turns to look at Okoye “Okoye leave us!” she commands Okoye looks at dad who nods at him. “I want the truth” I look at dad “Don’t you dare look at him look at me!” She says and then she walks over to the table and stands in front of it leaning back on it with her legs crossed waiting for me to explain myself.

“Isabelle I have it under control. My brother is landing tonight with a solution” Dad says with hopes to calm her down but mom remains unmoved waiting for me to speak. Dad nods.

“When I turned ten years old dad had me trained. I’m a dominant sadist mom I enjoy torturing women. Last year I had my first blackout on my birthday I had a slave in the dungeon and I was whipping her with a rose whip when I blacked out and beat her with it and a braided whip half to death. She was declared to have sustained internal injuries and also lost a lot of blood from the rose whip. I didn’t know what I was doing until it was over by the time I regained consciousness she was dead” I explain I don’t risk looking at her because I know how disappointed she is in me right now how much she probably hates dad for getting me into this after she’s begged and pleaded with him multiple times not to get me into this life. “I called uncle Adiche and he took care of it but he told dad about it. It happened again towards the end of last year. I don’t know what triggers me mom and I know you are disappointed and ashamed to call me your son” I say with hopes she believes me and understands that I have no control over this. I also don’t know why I lose control. I know that this time around when I blacked out I was thinking of Chume but I can’t tell them that they won’t understand and if dad found out he’d probably lock me in a room with her and have me torture her.

“You are done with the mansion!” Mom says.

“No! You know what needs to be done Isabelle” Dad says.

“I will not get back with you Olayemi! You said Olamide has a solution let’s hope it works or else I am taking my children and we are all moving back to the UK!” Mom says wait dad told mom that I was sick because their marriage ended? What an opportunist. Uncle Olamide thinks this is happening because I was never initiated in time and he told dad this from the very first incident but because mom was so against it dad respected her.

“Over my dead body. If you take Adeyemi away from here this will only get worse what happens when he does this to someone that’s not from the mansions and he ends up in prison or even worse in the hands of our enemies then what? You can go back to the UK if you like but you are not taking my children anywhere!”

ADAEGO IYAZINKOSI IBRAHIM

I walk out of my father's office more confused than when this day started maybe I should go to the mansion if I want to learn anything about who my family is or who I am for that matter. As I am walking up the stairs to change I meet Lola walking down.

"And then where are you rushing to?" She asks I'm not sure if I should tell her. Lola is hot-headed she will start digging in places she shouldn't... or maybe I should tell her so that she can help me uncover the truth. She clicks her fingers in front of my face reminding me of her presence.

"Nothing I just have to rush somewhere. Aren't you supposed to be in school?" I ask her and she shakes her head no.

"They let us go early because the teachers were going to have a meeting and yada-yada. Now where are you going? Where are mom and dad?" She persists this is the one thing that makes us fight and she never lets things go.

"I'm going to town to meet my friend" I say with hopes that she buys what I'm selling.

"Do I look stupid to you? What are you up to? I'm coming with you!" She says and she also turns to go upstairs with me I raise my hands up in surrender and follow behind her. I change my shoes and wear leggings before we head out.

"What are we going to say to the guards? You can't drive." She reminds me I try to think for a second and come up with nothing. "See? You need me. Come let's go." She says and then she leads the way.

"Milowo we need you to drive us to our parents" Lola says to the guard at the door he looks at her and then at me.

"Your parents never mentioned anything about driving you to them" He says.

"Dad literally just called do you need me to call him to confirm?" I say waving my phone in his face but not enough for him to see properly. I'm literally using yesterday's phone call here.

"I don't think my father will appreciate being disturbed when he is with mom" Lola says and Milowo lets out a sigh and steps aside for us to go out. He opens the car doors for us and starts driving. We drive into what looks like a forest we normally see this road on our way home but I never imagined there was anything beyond the forest dad always said the road led to nowhere. As we are driving a big beautiful mansion comes into view Lola and I look at each other confused. He drives into the driveway of this overly protected mansion. He parks in front of the patio and gets out to open the doors for us I get out first and then Lola follows.

"Thank you" We say in unison and then we make our way up the stairs and onto the patio two guards stand outside.

"Princesses" One of the guards greets he looks uncertain of whether or not to let us in.

"Hello our father is expecting us. We are supposed to start our training as mistresses" I report hoping I sound and look convincing. My sister tries to mask her shock with confidence and for anyone that doesn't know her as well as I do it's easy to believe that she's in on this. The minute we walk into the mansion there's this dark heavy aura lingering in the air. Lola grabs my hand I'm assuming she feels it too.

"So you know your way princesses?" the guard asks.

"yes" Lola says quickly before I get the chance to respond. This place is bigger than our home. How have we never been here before? What is this place?

We stand in the middle of the beautiful foyer with its vintage design. Whoever designed this room knew exactly what they were doing! There's a set of stairs in front of us there's a closed white double door on our left and a passage on our right. We look at each other and go to our left. I look at my sister who nods that I should open the door. I do just that and twist the handle and the door swings open. I take a step inside the hall when this huge muscled man stands before me blocking my view. I can hear a woman speaking but I cannot see past his view.

"Who are you and what do you want?" The man before me asks his voice is bold but rough if I was not used to my father and now little brother I'd probably be shaking in my shoes. I look up at him putting on a brave face.

"My name is Adaego Ibrahim and this is my sister Adelola Ibrahim. We are here to begin our mistress training!"

To Be Continued

To be continued

Red Lace 6

ADAEGO IYAZINKOSI IBRAHIM

"Master would never allow his daughters to become mistresses let alone be taught here! Now who are you girls?" He asks in a more stern voice this time around.

"I am not going to stand here and try to prove myself to you! Let us in there!" I say folding my arms in front of me.

"You're cute but no! Unless you can prove that you are Master's daughters and he said you should come here then there's no way I am letting you in there!" this man says I raise an eyebrow at him annoyed.

"Who are you? What is your name?" Lola asks him he lets out a lazy chuckle.

"Akintoye why?" He asks.

"So that my father can fire you. In fact let me call him right now!" Lola says taking out her phone she starts dialing. My heart starts pounding Lola wouldn't be that stupid to call dad. Dad will kill us if he found us here. "I'm calling our father!"

"Put him on speaker will you!" Akintoye says unbothered and unthreatened by our presence. Something about him screams dominance he looks intimidating with his small eyes that look deep into your soul as if searching for your darkest secrets. He has this strange charm no man has ever had on me before is he also an immortal because there's no way a normal human could make me feel this way.

"Fine we're lying!" I blurt out and Lola shoots me a look as if I just confessed to betraying Jesus. It's not even that deep Akintoye also needs to stop looking at me like that.

"About which part exactly?" Akintoye asks folding his arms so casually in front of his chest leaning back on the door behind him with this cheeky smile. My gawd he looks like he just stepped out of a magazine photoshoot because there's no way a man can look this good so effortlessly.

"We are our father's daughter but he didn't send us here. We want to know what happens here since none of our parents will tell us what is going on!" I explain and he laughs at me I frown but he doesn't stop laughing. His laughter is kind of sexy it's those lazy laughs where he doesn't entirely break into a fit of laughter but it comes in intervals nice and slow but bold. I could listen to him all day!

"What is so funny?" Lola asks not hiding her annoyance at this whole interaction.

"Your sister" Akin says bringing me back to the situation before us why am I being laughed at? I don't tell jokes and I'm definitely not the funniest person there is he continues "If you have any questions about this place then ask your parents. You won't find what you are hoping for here. Now come let me drive you home and we can pretend this never happened because if your father finds out about you two coming here it won't end well for you both." Akintoye says pulling my sister and me by our upper arms and pushing us out of the front door.

"Leave us alone! We can walk on our own!" Lola argues and Akin drops his hands and gestures for us to get out. My sister is about to argue when I touch her arm she looks at me before walking out quietly.

"At least one of you listens"

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

"Sthandwa sam I just got to the kids' school" I report to my wife after having parked my car.

Ever since her late husband's accident Mihlali never relaxes when I travel or when anyone close to her travels because of her trauma. She could be at work having the busiest day but never not report when you leave a place and when you arrive at a place or else she will stress the entire day until she receives some form of safety assurance.

"Alright my love have you seen them? Are they okay?" she asks and I chuckle she laughs realizing what she just asked "Right you haven't seen them yet. I'll talk to you later?" She says and I smile.

"We'll talk later Sthandwa sam. I love you!" I say.

"I love you too" she says and I can hear the smile in her voice as she declares her love for me. I get off the car and make my way to the schoolyard.

I met Mihlali when I had just arrived in Cape Town I was with her mother to sign some documents as I was going to take over as the CEO. Mihlali walked in fiercely and confidently making it hard not to notice her. She was a splitting image of her mother and something about her commanded respect. The second time we met was at a gym and that's when she really took note of me she was in her yoga pants after having returned from the states for her grandfather's funeral. I had no intentions of falling for Mihlali in fact when I met her and her mother my plan was to get back what her father had taken from me.

I grew up in a comfortable environment things changed when I lost my parents and wound up in the care of Mihlali's biological father. He was supposed to help me deal with the trauma of losing my parents but instead he took advantage of a little boy and molested me in his hospital for children that experienced trauma. I managed to escape with my best friend Sipho Mbangi unlike me Sipho had a home to return to while I had no one. His father's helpers took care of us both and in the time we lived in his home I took an interest in computers. By the time I was 15 I could hack into any network and knew of all the best hackers there were but none of them came close to Lwando Mbana. I knew that if I wanted to get his attention I needed to do something big

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something he would notice and that's when it hit me for me to get his attention I needed to work smarter than he did. It took me months but I finally hacked into his system and he took note of me. Without knowledge of who I was Lwando Mbana blindly took me in and taught me everything he knew. He sent me to the best schools and the best places where I received the best training to become the next him.

Long story short before he died he sent me a contract to take over as the CEO of his IT companies and to take care of his family. I stepped up to the challenge with my own ulterior motives. I hated

Lunga Langa and I wanted him to pay death was too kind for him and because he was already dead the next best thing I had was his wife and daughter. The few interactions I had with Mihlali and her mother were enough to make me fold and realize that they were not Lunga Langa and they were actually nice people who like me suffered at the hands of Lunga.

Life has a funny way of turning out Mihlali and I dated for a while but things ended when she learned who I really was and for that while I believed that she and I were done for until she lost her late husband Bandile Tshawe while carrying their triplets. I never stayed too far from her I always stayed true to my promise of looking out for her even if it was at a distance but I was always there. The person responsible for Bandile's death paid for what she did when Mihlali couldn't get out of the hospital consumed by her grief I stepped in and gave her a speech that apparently changed her life and here we are 15 years later in love and raising our children together. From the minute I saw the triplets I knew that they would be the most important and most protected little things ever. The triplets were my do-over I wasn't a present father to my daughter Akhona but I tried to be there as best as I could for her and when the triplets arrived I knew I had to do better. I knew I had to be the father Akhona never had and I'd like to believe that I am crushing it.

I make my way to the security and one of them walks me to the principal's office. She allows me to take them as long as I will return them before curfew which is at 7 pm. I call Ntando and she answers saying she is on her way together with her brother. I sit in the office and chat with the principal asking about the kids' progress and I'm happy to hear that they are still doing well. They had them come in early to start the school year because of the syllabus they would be covering and because Nichume and her brother played sports. Athini was more into debate and speeches nothing to make her sweat or mess with her weight.

"Daddy" Athini says walking into the office. I get up and hug her as she throws herself into my arms.

"Hello my princess how are you?" I ask brushing her hair back.

"I'm good daddy I've missed you." She says and then pulls out I greet her brother in our secret handshake that ends up with a hug. You'd swear we didn't drop them off just 2 weeks back.

"uChume akakabuyi (Is Nichume still not back)?" I ask them and Thini shakes her head no.

"Where's the third one?" The principal asks.

"She's stuck in practice ma'am" Yethu responds.

"It's okay we'll see her later when I'm dropping these two off" I say and we head out. The minute we get to the car I turn to them.

"Uphi uNichume(Where is she)?" I ask them again and this time more sternly. While Yethu can lie with his mouth and be believable but he can't lie with his eyes and there's this thing he does with his fingers when he's telling a lie.

"She went with Sisonke to buy kota's in Braam but they are not back yet I tried calling them but none of their phones are going through" Thini responds with panic and worry now I know she's being honest.

"And when was the last time you spoke to any of them?" I ask her and she looks at her phone.

"It was around 12:30 when they left. They were supposed to be back at 1 pm 1:30 pm if there was any traffic on the road" she reports with her voice laced with fear she's even shaking. I pull her into my arms. "I'm sorry daddy I know we should have been honest with you but we were scared" she admits. I let out a sigh and pull her out of my arms.

"Why didn't you call your driver?" I ask while pressing my phone to try and track Nichume's phone.

"We didn't want you to know they used an uber but they never sent the details. They were supposed to send them as soon as they got inside the uber" Thini explains.

Nothing shows up when I try to track her phone her last known location is the school so whoever took them had something to disable any trackers from the minute they left the school. Whoever did this knew what he was doing because there's no way a person that works for uber would randomly have a device that disables phones. This situation poses the question am I dealing with one of my enemies or someone new?

"I'll find her okay" I say to the kids. The last thing I want is to worry and panic over nothing.

"Let's keep this from your mom for now until we know if she's really missing or not" I say to them and they nod. I text my men to search for her everywhere starting with the Kota place they went to.

"What if something happened to her?" Yethu asks

"Nothing happened to her" I say hoping I sound as assured as I think I do. The last thing I need is for them to panic in case there is nothing to panic about. I just need to stall for an hour until I know if my men have anything or not.

To Be Continued

Red Lace 7

ISABELLE ZIMASA IBRAHIM

All those years married to Olayemi I can't believe he still thinks he can lie to me. I know my husband he is a master manipulator and he will do or say just about anything to get his way. I can't believe he would use this to try and get me to get back into his life like that it's low even for him. I walk out of the office to call Olamide I know and trust that he of all of them will give me the solution to this.

"Sister-in-law" Olamide answers.

"Adeyemi what needs to be done for this to stop?" I ask him.

"He needs to be initiated into an elder. You were never supposed to stall he should have been initiated at 13. Tonight's the initiation dinner right?" Olamide confirms because he knows it's the first gathering of this year.

I swallow hard and audibly "Yes it is" I respond I never wanted my children to be exposed to this life. I had a plan the girls were supposed to know when they each turned 18 so that they can make a decision if they wanted any part of this lifestyle or not but now it seems as though I'll need to sit them down and tell them everything.

"I understand you didn't want this but it's the only way. Adeyemi started the process a long time ago and if he doesn't do this tonight lord knows how many bodies he'll have on his conscience" Olamide says and I let out a sigh.

"How were you able to avoid this?" I ask him because I know Olamide never wanted any part of this life.

"You can only run away from this for so long Isa. Unlike my brother I didn't start the rituals early I only transitioned when there was no longer running away from it. Adeyemi started at 10 Olayemi introduced him and performed the necessary rituals to prepare him for this. Last year he was supposed to be initiated stalling only made him worse." Olamide explains but even this is not enough to convince me. "I understand this thing of being an immortal still confuses you the way the Gods do things will never be as clear as how we would like them to be but I would never deceive you Isa. Adeyemi is my nephew and like you and his father I want him to get better. I want him to be normal if we stall any longer then he might just kill someone he loves or cares about" Olamide says.

"Immortals aren't capable of loving or caring" I remind him or at least it's what I was told.

"You love my brother and you're an immortal"

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

"Does mom have to be here?" I ask dad who looks at mom.

"How about you go home and teach the girls about this life Adeyemi has me. He is safe" Dad says in a pleading tone. A tone he only reserves for mom and the girls only. Mom looks at me I nod assuringly before she leaves us.

"I've done all I can to prepare you for this but I have to make you aware of what you are getting yourself into tonight. Being an elder is not a walk-in-the-park son it's even worse because you are an immortal elder. At 4 pm you will undergo the procedure. Tonight at the gathering you will be initiated with the rest of the DMs because your situation seems to be escalating and the more we stall the harder this becomes." Dad explains and I nod in acknowledgment of what he is saying to me right now.

"Unlike the DM's being initiated the pain will subside in an hour. You will need a blood cleansing after the ritual has been performed. You will need to sleep with a pure virgin of pure blood and a pure soul. Getting her pregnant shouldn't be difficult because you need to then use that child as a sacrifice to the ancestors in the next initiation gathering" Dad explains and somehow Chume manages to invade my mind not as some sacrifice because I cannot imagine putting her through such an ordeal. She is however the purest person I can think of her spirit burns with fire but most of all she brings about peace.

"And how are we going to get one of that nature?" I ask him.

"Okoye told me new people were recruited today we'll see what we can get out of the bunch" Dad says I look at him. "What?" he asks.

"Did Okoye also tell you that he got two students in school uniform? From Lola's school" I report it's the only way I can make sure that no harm comes to Chume and her friend I guess.

"Okoye took children from Lola's school?" Dad asks his tone angry and his body gestures ready for war.

"Not necessarily. There are two kids that were abducted from her school and brought here. They should be downstairs learning about the ways of the mansion as we speak" I say dad walks over to his office phone and dials for Okoye to come into the office this instant.

"Find Adiche he will prepare you for everything you need to know about tonight."

AKINTOYE SAMUEL DANIELS

When this day started I never imagined it would be as eventful as it's been I didn't think I'd be dealing with cheeky teenagers left-right and center. Why does God hate me on the one day I need him the most? After dropping off the girls I return to the mansion. Adaego and her sister are an interesting pair it was my first time meeting the princesses and I must say they are very good-looking. What Jane said about immortals she was right. Their beauty is not your normal beauty their

skin is flawless and their eyes are mesmerizing if you are not careful their beauty is that which should not exist. I don't think they are aware of the power they have.

I am in the procedure room with Adiche he is supposed to teach me about what I am about to undergo the pros and the cons of these beads.

"You cannot go through the procedure without me explaining what you would be putting yourself through." Adiche explains and I nod

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AD

"It's not going to be a walk in the park. Bead implants are painful and it takes a while for them to heal. A doctor will come into this room and they will sedate you so that it's not as painful. Here at the mansions we use metal beads in some places they use glass marble plastic wood and silicon. They will be inserting small beads or pearls under your penile skin. Your penile skin will be penetrated using an object with a sharp point and that object holding the bead will be pushed through and under your skin depending on where they cut you for insertions." He explains and I frown confused.

"I'll be cut?" I ask him genuinely concerned and he chuckles.

"Just a small hole it's needed so that the beads can go through as I said they will be pushed under your skin to all the right places. It is however up to you how many you want or how much your c*ck can hold." He says the last part laughing.

"I believe I'm gifted enough down there" I say and he laughs at me.

"Any medical procedure has its complications either soon or in the long run. Our doctors are well-trained to avoid any kind of complications but you also need to take care of yourself. I have had these longer than 20 years without any complications and that's because I listened when I was told to rest or clean the wound and so forth. It's the only way to get through this without you getting any infection or whatsoever. We have a trained qualified doctor here in the mansion available 24/7 should you experience any sort of pain or what may seem like an infection you go and see him immediately." Adiche says and I nod.

"Yes sir" I say. "May I ask?" Adiche nods " The two school girls what will happen with them?" He raises an eyebrow and I chuckle "I'm not asking in that manner I don't do kids. I'm just wondering what's going to happen to them one of them has had an attitude for days. Maybe a week with Jane to teach her submission" I suggest and Adiche cocks an eyebrow before laughing.

"Best she remembers where she is if she wants to survive this place. I'm assuming Master Olayemi will have them moved to the other mansion. They are too young to learn yet"

ISABELLE ZIMASA IBRAHIM

I make my way down the stairs I am about to walk out of the mansion when I see a face I recognize I stop in my tracks as they return the girls to their rooms.

"Jane" I say and she stops in her tracks and walks over to me.

"Yes Mrs. Ibrahim." She responds.

"That girl who is she?" I ask her pointing at the young-looking girl in front walking hand in hand with her friend. "Hair tied up into a high bun petite walking hand in hand with a caramel-skinned thick girl?" I describe I suck with descriptions so I hope she knows who I am referring to.

"Those are newbies they were brought in today. Poor things they trusted an uber driver on their way from school" Jane explains unbothered Jane is the true definition of what an immortal mistress should be. She has no ounce of human emotions she cares about nothing and no one. At only 16 she is already the headmistress of this mansion and knows all the tricks and trades a mistress should know.

"Did you say from school?" I ask her and she nods with a chuckle. I turn back on my heels and return to Olayemi's office.

"I thought you had gone home" Olayemi says the minute I walk in.

"I was going home until I saw children as young as our daughter. You said you were done you promised me Olayemi!"

Olayemi looks at me and sighs with defeat "That is what I am trying to solve right now" He says.

"We have a new guard that only started working here this week he was not aware that school kids were off limits. We are going to have the girls moved to Raymond's mansion because at this point returning them home is not an option" Okoye responds I look at my husband-by-law who rolls his eyes annoyed as though he has better things to do than entertain this.

"They are children! They belong with their parents I would have thought that having a daughter of your own would somewhat make you grow a heart you need to let them go. They go to the same school as your daughter!" I remind Okoye who shrugs.

"My daughter and yours know better than to get into an uber and not send the details before the uber leaves. These are rich kids letting them go is not an option. They will blab!" Okoye argues I look at Olayemi who doesn't respond. He knows that when Okoye and I start we won't stop because he and I never agree to anything.

"BOTH OF YOU JUST STOP!" Olayemi yells and hits his hand on the table making us both go silent. "I have a lot on my plate tonight my son gets initiated with little to no planning at all on my side. This matter will be dealt with after tonight. Until then the young girls will be moved to Raymond's mansion and no one will touch them until we know what to do with them. Okoye leave me with my wife." Olayemi says and Okoye shoots me one last look before he walks out. "I am still your master don't you ever forget that. This thing of you talking to me anyhow and raising your voice at me needs to stop. Are we clear?" He says and I raise an eyebrow at him. "Fine nothing the dungeon can't fix!"

"You are not going to hit and torture me Olayemi we are past that!" I say to him.

"Clearly you have forgotten your place Isabelle I will not have you speak to me anyhow! I am your master I will always be your master. You are tied to me! Now I will meet you in the dungeon. Do you object?"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 8

ISABELLE ZIMASA IBRAHIM

Olayemi has a hold over me or maybe that's just an excuse I use to try and escape the fact that I love him and I'll never stop loving him. I was only 23 when I met him; he was 35 years old but something about him made me forget why I was even in the mansion to begin with. His eyes captured me and drew me in from the very first moment I looked into them and when I moved into his house his actions and the way he was towards me made me see him in a different light. Olayemi is not a good man he never was but he is good for me or maybe that's just my addiction talking. I could have objected he's allowed me an environment where I am able to say no but I never do. Don't give me that look you also went on to have a second child with your deadbeat baby daddy. Olayemi and I never stopped seeing each other yes I tried to move on tried to see other people but I always kept coming back and he was always ready to take me back. Normal vanilla sex is not for me it's not what I want and normal men cannot satisfy me the way the father of my children does. How would you self-appointed psychologists diagnose me? I can assure you whatever diagnosis you've come up with I've already come up with myself.

"Strip!" Olayemi commands his voice ever so bold and confident his cologne matching his voice. He slowly circles me as I take off each item one by one his movements are those of a lion watching its prey before it captures it unexpectedly. Smooth and calculated quiet and steady. I hate to admit it but I enjoy it his look of hunger and lust is always enough to send me over the edge. I love the attention he gives me. How he never takes his eyes off me how he observes every inch of my body as if it's his first time seeing it how he knows just what his voice alone does to me.

"Yes Master" I say. He halts to a stop the minute I am left with my matching ruby-red lace underwear. He looks at me from head to toe his boner visible from his pants. I find myself biting my lower lip as I take in this sight of him. He takes two short steps and cups my chin making me look up at him. He has this burning look in his eyes a hunger of some sort. He lowers his hand wrapping it around my throat before he captures my lips into his kissing me for dear life. I cannot begin to explain the pool forming between my legs. He knows what he does to me but he enjoys torturing me like this. He breaks the kiss leaving me panting.

"You are mine Isabelle!"

He looks deep into my eyes and then looks between us I follow his eyes and I see the tent in his pants. I take it as an invitation to go down on my knees and pleasure him as I was taught 19 years ago. You'd think at 54 years Olayemi would look like a corpse but this man still looks as good and sexy as the first time I ever met him. The only difference between then and now is that his beard is gray unlike all those years ago. I guess it comes with being an immortal and the rituals performed the aging process is slower than the normal human aging process.

I take his pants off and then his briefs and he is left naked with his already erect dxck staring at my face. I swallow a bit before returning my eyes back up to his face he's looking down at me with anticipation of what is yet to happen.

I wrap my hand around his shaft always overlapping. I hear him let out a muffled breath before I start moving my hand up and down giving him a hand job. I bring my mouth closer to his crowned haven and let out a shaky breath as reality hits me. I will never get used to how majestic he looks how his crown sits perfectly below his head. I take his tip into my mouth and boy does this turn me on so badly. I lick his tip around the glans where his ring sits he lets out a choked groan when I lick one particular sport that looks like a line from his hole and down to the base of the mushroom head. This is what I love having him at my mercy and him enjoying being at my mercy.

"Fuck" He groans enjoying the feel of my warm tongue I circle his crown with my tongue before taking all of him inside my mouth. He lets out a shuddered breath I find myself wanting to smile triumphantly. I lick him from the base and all the way up to his tip while giving him a handjob.

Olayemi is big and he doesn't necessarily fit into my mouth my mouth alone cannot stretch enough to accommodate his size and his length as I take all of him inside of me. He hits that little dangling thing at the back of my throat making me gag and choke on him. It's not easy breathing with all of him inside of me hitting the back of my throat I do this thing I know he loves by swallowing with his tip sitting at the back of my throat. He grabs my hair tightly which tells me how well I'm doing and close to sending him over the edge he pushes me deeper making me gag unable to breathe properly as he fxcks my mouth in and out so that my saliva drips to the sides of my mouth. He pulls my head back giving me a breather my hands rest on his thighs for balance. I risk a glance up at him and he is naked on top too. He pushes himself back into my mouth feeling proud and confident after a while of pushing himself in and out he releases his precum inside my mouth the saltiness makes me want him more makes me want him inside of me. He pulls out giving me a moment to swallow I suck his balls giving him a sloppy wet hand job while I suck each one of his balls and lick him from the base up to his hole and back down to his balls. The groans leaving his lips make me want to touch myself but I know better than to pleasure myself before he does. He pulls my head back and then pulls me to stand up and face him his dick fully erect and very much big. My eyes betray me I am horny and very much excited to get on his dick. The thought alone excites me.

He grabs my neck but not with enough force to crush me he kisses me hard dirty and sloppy laying his claim on me. He doesn't need to say it because his kiss alone is evident in his claim on me. I am his. Always his.

He moves back and then turns us around so that the back of my legs are touching the bed he gently picks me up and places me on the bed. He doesn't break the kiss between us when he removes my

bra I arch my back up off the bed to help him out. He throws my bra to lord knows and breaks the kiss between us looking deep into my eyes.

"You are mine all of you!" He says and I nod looking up at him as he towers over me. "Say it!" He commands.

"I am yours. Only yours" I admit and earn his most charming smile that only I ever receive.

"You will never speak to me like that again Isabelle!" He commands I nod submissively and greedily grinding myself on him. He smiles proudly feeling the pool between my legs.

"Do you want me?" He asks and I nod "Say it!" He commands.

"Please Master" I beg like the horny little thing I am right now under him needing to be pleased.

"Tell me what you want Isabelle" He says kissing my neck with his hand resting on my boob squeezing it and playing with my nipple piercing. It feels good he twists and turns his thumb and index fingers around my nipple.

"I want you to fxck me Master" I say proudly I don't have time for any foreplay with how hungry and greedy I am right now. It's been an entire month since I last had him or sex in general.

"How do you want me to fuck you Isabelle give me details" he says I huff in frustration.

"No foreplay I want all of you. Balls slapping biting my nipple and grabbing and spanking my ass Master" I report submissively and respectfully

He traces wet kisses down my chest and to my boobs and then all the way down my stomach and to my coochie. I feel my heart literally beating on my clit in excitement and anticipation of what is yet to come. He holds my thighs apart and then places a kiss on my mound before he slowly flickers his tongue over my very bare clit I moan arching off the bed. He hasn't even done anything either than run his tongue over my clit and here I am greedy for more yearning to release all my juices into his mouth. his beard running over my folds only intensifies the craving I have for him increasing it by a hundred. I let out shallow breaths trying to compose myself but he makes it impossible with his tongue dancing on my sensitive clit ring making me feel things I can confidently say he is the only one capable of. I feel this sensation dragging from deep within clawing from deep inside of me seeking to be released and I cum apart letting out a breath.

"Good girl Mistress" He says proudly still between my legs. He brushes his thumb over my clit ring making me shudder I am still sensitive from coming apart. He flickers my clit ring with his finger before moving back and inserting himself all in one go. I cry out from both pain and pleasure. He hasn't stopped playing with my clit piercing as he starts to pound on me. He slowly moves back before slamming into me again slow and hard. He keeps mumbling incoherent groans with each stroke I have no control over the moans leaving my lips right now. The things he does to me!

"I love you Yemi" I admit it's not even the sex. I mean it it's more to myself than it is to him.

“Come home to me” He says with his raw and rough sex-dazed voice. I know it's a plea I know he means it because his eyes never lie to me. “Come back home Isabelle”

“Tell me you love me I need to hear it. I long to hear it” I beg him.

He cups the back of my neck looking at me with this intense sexy stare he lowers his face and kisses me hard. He breaks the kiss “I love you Isabelle. Always!”

NICHUME TSHAWÉ MNGUNI

I lay on the bed thinking about how stupid we were for just jumping into the uber without sending a screenshot to Ntando. It would narrow the search down and make things easier for dad when he finally notices we are missing. Tears roll down to my pillow as thoughts begin to invade my mind. What if they never find me? What if these people sell me? What if I never see my family again? If I got out would I ever be the same again? Oh God this is South Africa girls go missing every day and they are never found again until they are dead.

“Lord” I start off but the words get stuck in my throat “I pray every day I talk to you every day. I never miss a day I follow your word as well as I can. I try to live according to your commandments to my fullest ability. I've been cracking my skull trying to understand what I could have done to make you angry with me that you would throw me in here. You took my father and siblings before I was even born but still I remained unshaken I read your word loved you wholeheartedly and never questioned your ways but for the first time ever I need answers. You have put my family through enough how much more do we need to go through for you to give us a break? Honestly I am tired I am drained” My prayer is cut short when I hear the door opening but I don't dare turn to see who it is.

A male cologne fills the room it's a musky strong scent. It has to be expensive if it smells this good and it's this strong. The door closes and I don't hear any steps approaching me the person that entered stays in place quietly without a single breath. The only thing I can hear as I lay on this bed is my beating heart against my rib cage I'm sure even this person can hear it. It's definitely not the guy from earlier because his scent is a bit sweeter in a manly way and not as strong as this one.

As I am laying there listening to my heart beating almost out of my chest I am overcome by this overwhelming fear that makes my heart beat faster and causes me to sweat. My chest feels hot I feel nauseated and suddenly this room feels small. Where is he? Why is he quiet? What is he going to do to me? My siblings and I were born premature and unlike the other two I was diagnosed with bronchopulmonary dysplasia which is a form of chronic lung disease that affects newborns causing them to need some form of oxygen therapy. I spent three months in the hospital getting treated for it. Later I was diagnosed with asthma the slightest panic or anxiety attack is enough to trigger my asthma.

“Breathe Nichume” I whisper to myself trying to lower my heartbeat I cannot afford an attack now of all times. I don’t want to die in this place. My chest starts closing in on me the burning sensation only increases making it harder to breathe or even allowing some form of oxygen into my mouth.

“Are you okay?” The person asks Oh my God he’s right behind me. I feel the bed moving meaning he’s just sat down. The person touches my shoulder my attack only spikes up. At this point no air is coming into my mouth and into my lungs I can’t breathe not even short breaths.

“I’m not going to hurt you” The man says turning me to look at him there are tears in my eyes so his face is blurry. “Chume talk to me. What’s wrong?” He asks his voice is kind and gentle it’s soothing and he sounds more caring than the man from earlier on. How does he know my name?

“As-th-ma” I say with short breaths in between.

“You have asthma?” He asks wow. He’s caring and stupid. He helps me sit up and rushes to open the window as if that’s supposed to do something for me. He talks to someone and then comes to sit next to me.

“Chume it’s okay. Someone is bringing an asthma pump for you” He says if I was in a safer environment I’d probably be appreciative of him but it’s kind of hard to appreciate the same person working for your capturers. I hear the door opening.

“Chume what’s wrong?” That’s definitely Sonke I touch my heart and gesture with my hands that I can’t breathe “She’s having an attack. She has a pump inside the blazer she was wearing”

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

The first time I ever experienced fear was the first time I killed a slave and even so it was nothing compared to what happened to Chume today. Witnessing her have an attack unable to breathe because of me because of my presence in her room was a scary experience. I never want to feel that kind of fear again. Father would call it a weakness. We managed to get her the pump she needed and finally she was able to breathe again.

“You may all be excused” I say and everyone except the friend head for the door. I look at this girl.

“You triggered her attack I am not leaving her with you!” The friend says bravely and proudly. I’m shaken that she even has the nerve to speak to me. I got the impression that she was scared of me. I stand up and stare her down “Return to your quarters before I have someone take you to the dungeon to teach you a lesson” I say looking deep into her eyes she looks down submissively and nods her head before turning on her heels and walking away. I turn back to look at Chume who looks at me with fear in her eyes. So innocent.

“What are you going to do with me?” She asks her voice is shaky but she tries to show bravery. I walk closer to the bed and she moves back pressing her back against the pillows and trying to make herself appear smaller. There’s fear in her eyes just like when she was having an attack.

“Nothing I needed to see you” I admit honestly. After going through the surgery I needed to see her. Thanks to my being an Immortal; 30 minutes was all I needed for me to heal from the pain of the surgery. As I had hoped seeing her face was enough to bring me this sense of calm like everything will go well tonight. She looks at me confused she’s about to speak when someone swings her door open.

“Master Master Okoye wants to see you now. He says you need to arrange for the girls to be transported to Master Raymond’s mansion” The guard reports I nod. He closes the door leaving me with Chume the innocent angel with mesmerizing eyes.

“I have to go” I say I stretch my hand towards her to cup her face but she backs away from me. I let out a sigh and then head out.

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

After 2 hours of searching the most my guys got was a number plate but no last known location either than Braamfontein. The number plate was traced to a dead person without a known home address. The time is now 17:00 pm and the kids are done eating not even shopping was enough to get their minds off of their sister missing. It’s official she is missing. The mere thought of never finding her is enough to scare me what do I tell her mother? How do I find her? Where do I even start looking for her in this big city?

We park in front of their school I turn the engine off and turn to the kids.

“Your sister and her friend are officially missing. My men have searched each and everywhere possible without any lead. The most we got was a number plate and even that leads to nowhere.”

Thini starts sobbing silently her silent sobs turn into loud sobs. I pull her into my arms.

“It’s all my fault. I should have gone with them. She didn’t want to go but we forced her” She says crying in between. I brush her back.

“It’s not your fault. You have no control over what happens. This could have happened whether you were with her or not. I will find your sister and bring her home!” I promise even though I am not certain of my promise but I will say anything just so that my daughter could stop crying. “I need you two to go back to school and continue as you normally would. I need you to report to your matron what happened okay?” I say to her she pulls out of my chest.

“They’ll just call the cops the cops won’t know what to do dad. They won’t start looking until 24 hours have passed and by then she could be dead.” Yethu says angrily gritting his teeth and holding back tears.

“It’s standard protocol. I won’t stop looking for your sister but I need you to work with me here okay” I say to them and they nod. “Now I need you guys to go back to school while I call your mother” I say and they nod. I get out of the car and so do they. We walk to the boot and I give each of them their

paper bags we share hugs before they go inside the school. I'm standing there watching them when my phone rings it's an unknown number. I answer.

"Daddy" She starts off.

"Chume is that you?" I ask.

"Yes daddy it's me. We don't have enough time we were abducted by an uber driver who took us to this big house. I don't know where we are but there are a lot of trees around us. The people here said there is a gathering happening tonight there are a lot of girls dressed in sheets with piercings and a whip tattoo on the inside of their wrists called mistresses." she explains as fast as she can.

"Daddy please find us and get us out of here. I have to go" she says cutting the call before I could ask any questions.

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

I search my pockets to make a phone call but they are empty shit! I rush back to Chume's bedroom and push the door open she turns to look at me confused. I look around the room and I see my phone sitting on the bed right where I left it.

"Did you call anyone?" I ask walking towards her she sits up and moves back with fear in her eyes.

"No" she says hugging her legs. I look into her eyes but she doesn't falter one bit. She looks like she's being honest.

"Did you call anyone?" I ask this time louder with hopes to scare her and hopefully get a different response. She shakes her head no.

"I swear I didn't touch your phone" she says innocently as if ready to cry. I grab my phone and unlock it there's nothing suspicious about my phone. Maybe she didn't call anyone.

To Be Continued

Red Lace 9

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

"Word has it the girls are being looked for." A guard reports.

"What girls?" I ask just to be certain we are on the same page.

"The school girls. Apparently some guys were sniffing around Braam with the girl's pictures you need to move them before the gathering tonight Master" He reports I squeeze my phone in my hand trying to think of the next best option. We can't send them to Raymond's mansion because that means the airports are busy. What would dad do?

"Okay do this find out for me who is searching for the girls. I'll figure out where to move them." I say to him.

"It's some man named Khayaletu Mnguni. Apparently he's a big thing around here. He's the yellowbone's father" He reports it takes a moment for it to register who he is referring to. It can't be Chume.

"The name sound's familiar I just don't know where I've heard it from"

"Apparently he runs Mbana inc. That big tech company" He says and I click my fingers.

"Of course he's some tech nerd. There's nothing to be worried about but to be safe we'll move the girls through the tunnels" I Check my watch and the time is 5:30 pm it's already busy in the mansion people are preparing for the gathering. "Let's move them now to the Okuje's mansion. I'll talk to my father while you move them" I say to him and then make my way to dad's office but he's not there. I try to call him and he answers.

"This had better be important" He answers.

"A man named Khayaletu Mnguni is looking for the girls. Apparently he is the other one's father. Word has it he turned Braam upside down trying to find them. We can no longer move them to Raymond I said the guards should move them to Okuje in case we have spies tonight" I report.

"Seems like you have things handled but don't underestimate Khayaletu Mnguni he and I did our training together once. He's good he won't stop until he finds her" Dad says.

"So what do you suggest we do?" I ask him.

"Let me handle him focus on getting those girls out of the country because as long as they are here he won't stop looking for them. He's a resourceful guy you and your uncle have gotten us into shit! The last thing we need is Khaya Mnguni snooping around here!" Dad says and cuts the call on me leaving me speechless. I make my way to Chume's room I need her to tell me everything about her father. I swing the door open and she jumps in shock turning to look at me.

"Who is your father?" I ask her and she looks at me shocked.

"Khayaletu Mnguni why?" She asks with her eyebrows fringed with confusion.

"Who is he? I need you to tell me everything about him. Who does he know? Who does he work with? Who is he connected to?"

NICHUME TSHAWA MNGUNI

The minute he walks out I let out a breath I didn't know I was holding in. I hope and pray that my father was able to use the number to track me or at least find something about where I am. I am started when this guy walks into my room again I look at him as he asks me about my father. I love how he thinks he can get information about my father out of me.

"Why?" I ask him crossing my arms trying to appear as confident as possible.

"I'll be asking the questions here not the other way around!" He says angrily he looks worried if he's even capable of such emotion because all I have seen on his face is anger and confusion when he looks at me.

"Why do you want to know about my father?" I ask him folding my arms in front of my chest he chuckles but it's not a genuine laugh. He's trying to be intimidating and sadly it's working because I'm scared right now.

"Master the vans are ready."

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

I can play this one of two ways find Ibrahim and confront him or play it smart and act a fool but the more I stall the more I could be putting her in danger. Ibrahim is the only one I know to be

dealing with the way Nichume described. I insert the call recording into my laptop and listen to it again the fear and panic in her voice are worrisome. I need to find her soon. I call my wife.

"Sthandwa sam" She answers ever so loving.

"I won't be coming home today" I say.

"What do you mean Khaya is it one of the kids?" She asks I let out a sigh.

"Where are you right now?" I ask her.

"I'm home. Khaya what's going on?" She asks annoyed by my micromanaging tone.

"I'll call Biko and get back to you okay" I say

"Khaya don't you dare hang up-" She's cut off when I drop the call on her to call her brother if she's home then it means she's alone. I call Biko who answers after a while.

"What's up?" He answers.

"I need you to go to Mhlahli she's home alone

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AD

" I say to him.

"Yeah cause you're not around what's going on?" Biko asks.

"Nichume is missing she called me and she told me how she was abducted by an uber driver. She told me the kind of place she was held in. I need you to go and visit her and let her know everything will be okay I am handling it. I don't want her coming to Joburg Biko" I say strictly and he chuckles at the last part.

"Her daughter is missing and you think there's a chance in hell she's going to stay in Cape Town? You're ambitious. Just find her and bring her home! Are the others okay?" Biko asks I can hear the concern in his voice but I need him to focus on the task at hand.

"I will bring her home. Take care of your sister for me and tell her I love her" I say and drop the call. Now to find Olayemi Ibrahim. It's about time he and I reunited.

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

Isabelle looks at me waiting for answers I pinch my nose bridge trying to think of a way out of this. Okoye and his boys have fucked up and returning that child is no longer an option. Going to war with Khayaletu is the last thing we need.

"Okoye and his boys have just started a war with Khayaletu Mnguni" I say to my wife getting off the bed. I don't need to tell her who Khaya is Isabelle used to be a cop so she knows him or knows about his dealings. Khaya and I trained together for about two years back in the days he's strong and quite smart. He is not to be underestimated. Unlike others my charms or manipulations don't work on him I don't know how he does it because he's not an Immortal.

"What do you mean? Why would they start a war with Khaya?" She asks confused.

"One of the school girls they took is Khaya's daughter. We need to prepare for the gathering" I say handing her the clothes that are on the floor.

"Why not just return the girls and avoid war? You know he is not going to stop until he has her I've told you time and time again to only take in the girls that have nowhere to go with nothing to lose. I've warned you countless times but nope you just had to do things your own way!" She says annoyed and dressing up angrily.

"I need you to go home prepare Adaego. She will attend the gathering with you if you still have time you can tell her about who she is." I say and then kiss her forehead before walking out of the room. I scroll through my phone and find Khaya's number.

"Mr. Mnguni" I say the minute he answers my call.

"Ibrahim To what do I owe a call from you?" He asks.

"Word on the street has it your daughter has gone missing" I say.

"How is that your business?" He asks.

"It's my business because you are snooping around my turf. How can I help old friend?" I ask him I need him to trust me. It's the only way to blindside him.

"Maybe I can take you up on that invitation to one of your gatherings you are hosting one tonight right?" he asks and I roll my eyes.

"I'd have assumed a man looking for his daughter wouldn't have time for pleasure" I say.

"I don't but hey doesn't hurt to look. You have more connections than I do. Maybe one of your men might be able to help me with finding her" He says.

"Are you implying that I took your daughter?" I ask him challengingly.

"Did you take her?" He asks and I chuckle.

"You are welcome to come to the gathering feel free to dress up formally. This is one of those special ones so get a masquerade mask for your outfit" I suggest.

"Will do I look forward to seeing you again old friend." He says and drops the call on me.

FXCK!!!

NICHUME TSHAWÉ MNGUNI

"After you little dove" The guy says standing aside to let me through. I don't understand why I suddenly have a pet name from him. I'd have assumed the one from earlier would give me one considering I got on his last nerve. Why did he choose little dove? It doesn't make any sense.

"What's going on?" I ask him "Where are going? Are you going to kill me? Where is my friend?" I ask him.

"Your voice is sweet and all but I'm not trying to get used to it. Now shut up and walk" He says there's that anger from that old man from earlier. I snap my mouth closed and walk towards the door as told. When we reach the passage there are two men behind Sonke leading her towards me. I thought I would see more girls but it looks like it's just her and I being moved. We head down the stairs it's not the same stairs we used when we were going to the hall. When we step outside we are in what looks like a backyard it's busy with people going up and down I'm assuming they are preparing for the 'gathering' that's going to happen here tonight. They push us towards a garage where there is a black Mercedes Viano with tinted windows. The guard opens the sliding door.

"Get in" The guy from my room says I look at him and shake my head no "I do not have time for your drama" He says grabbing my arm and pushing me into the car Sonke also gets in and slides closer to me.

"Where are they taking us?" She whispers to me and I shrug. I'm as clueless as she is haibo.

"Both of you shut up!" 'Master' says I wonder if that's his name or if it's a sign of respect as they have been doing with the other older men. I'm about to talk back when he sits in front of us with a gun pointed at us. Another guard comes in beside him holding his own gun sitting opposite Sonke. We both snap our mouths shut out of fear of being killed.

“Drive to Okuje’s mansion. Use the tunnels!” Is my father coming? Why are they moving us and only us so suddenly? If I didn’t know any better I would say they were scared or worried but none of them are showing any emotion of such so why are we being moved then?

-God please tell me dad is on his way to save us I’ll never doubt you again if you get us out of this.

To Be Continued

Red Lace 10

NICHUME TSHAWA MNGUNI

Once again they have separated me from Sonke. We are in this new mansion and the design is no different except this one is smaller. I cannot speak much about the people here because I haven’t had any run-ins with any of them. I don’t know what to expect in this place how do I get ahold of my father now? Adeyemi walks into my room I finally heard his name when the mansion’s owner greeted him when we walked into this new place. Let’s call him Ade for short. “Little Dove” He says I shoot him a look and then return my attention to outside. “You not dead at least appreciate that” He says and I still don’t pay him no mind. “I come in peace and I bring an offering” He says placing an inhaler beside me. I don’t respond out of anger but I lowkey appreciate the gesture.

“How long are you planning to keep me alive before you kill me?” I ask him and he chuckles.

“We don’t kill slaves or mistresses unless they prove to be unworthy of living. You are pretty innocent strong-willed and interesting not to mention the obvious but you have a sexy body. Men would pay millions for you” he says and I find myself shivering from the icy cold tone in his voice. Did he not just offer me an inhaler? Why is he suddenly cold? Wait did he just say he was going to sell me? I cannot be sold humans are not meant to be sold!

“I’m not some prize possession you can just sell to anyone I’m a human being. I have feelings and emotions. You don’t put a price on a person!” I spit out angrily still not looking at him.

He lets out a chuckle very calm and unbothered by my outburst and says “and that’s exactly why it’s so easy to put a price on you because you are human. Maybe if you were an immortal you wouldn’t be so bothered by all of this and we wouldn’t have to sell you to the highest bidder” I am shocked by how nonchalant he is right now so shocked that I find myself turning to look at him.

“And what is an immortal how does a person become one?” I ask curiously and am also slightly intrigued. This is new information. The only immortals I know are vampires shoot me.

He laughs at me it’s the first time I’m hearing him laugh and his laugh is sexy nothing like I have ever heard before. In his moment of laughter I see just how good-looking he is when he’s not angry and frowning.

“You do not become an immortal you are born one!” He leaves me with that. I pace up and down the room trying to figure out a way to either get out of here or reach my dad again.

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

I could go with someone but I don’t want to put their lives at more risk Nichume’s call was a great risk on its own. My daughter was quite brave for that if I’m going to get them out alive then

I'm going to need to play this safely to ensure they both come home safely and without harm. I need to find a way to outsmart Olayemi.

"Let me go with you" Shadow insists he got the name because he is slick! He knows how to stay in the shadows undetected.

"I don't want to risk their lives what happens if you get caught? They move them and we never find them again." I say and he shakes his head no.

"What happens if you get captured and we never see you again?"

Boss you need me there to scout that place and any activity happening around the place. Let me come with you!" Shadow persists I take a moment to consider what his saying before nodding slightly. I have my doubts about going there with someone I can't risk my daughter's life.

"Fine but if you are coming with me then you are going to have to follow instructions and go according to the plan!" I warn and he nods quickly "Shadow I know you the best and you think you know everything but this is my daughter we are talking about I need you to follow instructions to the tea. Do not deviate from the plan!" I warn and he nods.

"Yeah I hear you. Now have they sent the coordinates to the place?" Shadow asks and I shake my head no he continues "Do you trust that this man is going to pull through? I mean if he is what you say he is"

"He'll send them to me!"

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

"Are the girls at the mansion?" I ask Okoye and he nods.

"They've been delivered safely" Okoye responds "Again I apologize Oluwa for my men fcking things up. I still don't understand why we are letting Khaya into our space and not just killing him" Okoye says angrily and annoyed. My friend and I don't always see eye-to-eye when it comes to such things.

"Killing a man like Khaya will start a war we are not ready for just like me Khaya is well connected" I explain to him while typing out a message to Khaya with our location I know it's a risk.

"Then let's send him a message tonight the Prince needs to make a sacrifice tonight so why not use the friend of the daughter as a message? We do that then he stops looking" Okoye suggests one thing about my friend is he never thinks about the long-term effects of his decisions.

"We kill the friend then Khaya never stops snooping I told him we didn't have these girls around here and I wish to keep it that way. Adeyemi will get another slave to sacrifice. The girls should be going through tests right now to see their purity and everything. I'm sure we can get one that is of pure blood" I explain and Okoye looks at me in disbelief I know he thinks I'm using emotions but I'm really just thinking about the safety of the mansions. Having Khaya snooping around will make a lot of our people nervous and the thing about nervous people they mess shxt up which is the last thing we need right now.

"Fine Oluwa as you wish!"

ISABELLE ZIMASA IBRAHIM

On my way home I make a quick stop at a cafe outside of our residential area where I will be meeting up with Kwanda. If Olayemi won't do anything to release those girls then I'll just have to go behind his back.

"You said it was important" Kwanda says the minute she sits down. I nod and lean in closer to her.

"Someone at the mansion fucked up and captured Khayaletu Mnguni's daughter" Kwanda gasps in shock unable to control her reaction I nod my head.

"Why would your husband want to start a war with Khaya? I'm doing my best at the station to make sure the things that happen at these mansions do not trace back to him and my husband" Kwanda says with panic and concern I get where she is coming from and really I feel the same as she does.

"I know

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I know. We need to work together to make sure that those girls don't leave the country else it will be hard to find them after. Olayemi doesn't trust me enough to let me in on his dealings and that's why I came to you" I explain pleadingly.

"Zimasa the last time we went against your husband I almost lost my child. I'm all for helping you out and everything but haven't you noticed that there's no way you and I can take down your husband without risking losing our children"

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

"Sthandwa sam" I answer Mhlabi's call as I am leaving my apartment. I've been ignoring her calls ever since we last spoke.

"Khaya you can't just ignore my calls like that! Have you any idea how worried I was? Khaya Nichume is missing she's been abducted and you think now is the perfect time to disappear on me? Don't you ever send my brother to come and try to manage me! I am coming to Joburg first thing tomorrow morning and I'm not asking you for permission!" she says and she drops the call on me I let out a sigh and send her a text message because clearly we are done talking.

"STHANDWA SAM I KNOW YOU ARE ANGRY BUT MOST OF ALL HURT AND SCARED FOR OUR DAUGHTER. I AM TOO BUT YOU KNOW ME I WOULD NEVER LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO HER I WILL NOT REST UNTIL WE GET HER BACK HOME AND SAFE. WITH THAT BEING SAID I AM BEGGING AND PLEADING WITH YOU LET ME SEARCH FOR HER AND FIND HER. IF BY THE END OF THIS WEEK I HAVE NOTHING SOLID TO REPORT THEN FINE YOU CAN START LOOKING FOR HER YOURSELF BUT PLEASE HLALI LET ME DO THIS MY OWN WAY. I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!" I click send and then wait for a response but I don't get any. I let out a sigh and then drive off to the location the map has pinged. Shadow is already there scouting the place I have an earpiece on to listen to him telling me the number of guards outside the place the people that have arrived and everything. Luckily Shadow is multilingual compared to me he knows and understands Yoruba hence he is the perfect man for this.

"I need you to gate crash into that place and get inside the mansions and find out everything you can about them" I say to him and then switch off the earpiece.

I drive into the yard and show my ID card and digital invitation before I am let in the security used here is quite impressive. You need to have an electronic invitation with a QR code for scanning before access can be granted. These people have gone to extra lengths to make sure

that they protect this place from the outside world. I look at my phone and as expected there is no signal here. I park my car and set up gadgets that will bypass whatever device killing the signal. I look at my phone again and the signal is back. I get out of the car and put on a masquerade mask making my way to the door when I get to the door they have to scan my ID and another invitation QR code before they can let me in. Someone walks over to me taking off his mask and it's only then do I recognize the person. Its Okoye Olayemi's side kick.

"Mr. Mnguni we weren't sure you would join us. Good to have you here" Okoye says even behind his thick accent and fake smile I know he doesn't trust me.

"Thank you for the invitation. I trust that your *Master* has told you about what exactly brings me here today." I say with a straight face taking my mask off so that he can see the seriousness of my face.

"I know you are welcome to look around until you find whatever you are hoping to find. I must warn you if you are not a fan of our..." he pauses and waves his hand around "practices then tonight is not the finest of days to visit us. All the best with finding your daughter" he says hailing over some younger guy to come to us "This is Akintoye he will be your guide around this place anything you need tonight you let him know"

AKINTOYE SAMUEL DANIELS

This Khaya guy is intimidating his level of intimidation is that of Olayemi. He has these icy cold eyes that bore into your soul to find out your deepest darkest secrets. As we make our way around the mansion room by room he's asking questions about Chume and her friend but I know better than to give him the answers he's wishing for. By the time we return to the hall people are taking their seats in order to begin the festivities of the night. The ladies and mistresses join us after a while for their initiation. Unlike us they are pierced right in front of all of us they are stamped with the lining of the whip as they will get their real tattoos tomorrow and lastly they are given collars that show that they are either a mistress or a slave. All the new dungeons' masters are initiated and welcomed into the society. Lastly the elders are initiated into their eldership with their own markings as elders.

"Tonight is a special night my son gets to be initiated into the elder he was always meant to be." Olayemi says proudly raising his glass "The rituals have long started now he just needs to seal the deal and make a worthy sacrifice to the ancestors and our Gods" he says with the utmost pride in his voice. Adeyemi stands up and walks into the center of the hall awaiting his slave to complete the rituals. A slave with a cape covering her face is then dragged into the center of the circle "Son you know what you need to do" Olayemi says and sits down.

We all wait in anticipation the mistresses chant something incoherent and the fires on the walls light up with crackling sounds. Adeyemi stands before the slave and places his hand on her cheek looking deep into her eyes and whispers something to her she doesn't fight anymore and instead she willingly takes her robe off and it's only then do I see that it's the girl that was with Chume my eyes involuntarily find Khaya and I see him watching curiously. Is this a test? What are the masters up to?

Adeyemi takes her virginity and then he slits her throat people cheer happily with what has just happened. This world is not for those faint at heart. More festivities continue and then people are pardoned for a break. I see Master Olayemi Okoye and Adeyemi rush out of the room to probably the office.

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

I don't know what sick game Olayemi is playing is he trying to send me a message? Is he deliberately starting a war? What does he want? I step out of the hall and into the foyer if Sisonke was just killed that means Nichume is not far from here. How do I tell my daughter that he friend was killed right in front of me and I couldn't do anything about it? Yes if it was Nichume I would have risked my cover I would have risked it all for her but it wasn't her.

"I am Zimasa you don't know me but I know you and I know your wife." A woman's voice says standing behind me "Don't turn or you'll draw attention. I have slipped a note into your blazer those are the coordinates of where you will find your daughter! Hurry they are moving her tonight." She says and I hear her heels clicking away from me who could have managed to slip something into my pockets without me knowing or even feeling them? I turn around and there are a lot of mistresses with capes over their heads. How does she know my wife? I make my way out of the doors while searching in my pockets there's a paper. I get into my car and open the paper while dialing Shadow's number.

"Boss" He answers.

"I have some coordinates on where you can search I've sent them to you right now" I say to him. "Uhm yeah boss. That's not going to work I was just there now at that mansion and she was not there"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 11

3 YEARS LATER

AGAEGO IYAZINKOSI IBRAHIM

I get off him and pull the blanket over my body placing one leg over the blanket and laying myself on his bare chest. He brushes my hair and places a kiss on my forehead Akin never fails to make me fall for him. Yes he's been in and out of the country under my father's orders but he always makes time for me and he's always there for me when I need him most. We've been together for about two and a half years now or rather we've been secretly seeing each other for that long without my father's knowledge... I hope.

"I have to go" Akin says removing me from his chest by sliding out of the bed.

"Why? You said you were free for the rest of the day" I remind him not wanting to let him go.

"I know my love but remember your father and brother are bringing back Nichume today. I have to be there and you have to wash and get ready to meet your future husband" Akin says making me roll my eyes with annoyance. He kisses my forehead before going to the bathroom. I take my phone and check my messages and it's one from dad - 'CALL ME WHEN YOU SEE THIS!' I lock my screen and head to shower with Akin. He has his back facing me when I get inside the shower behind him I hug him from behind. Akin is a gorgeous man he is the epitome of sexy! Everything about him is mesmerizing I could have let him go but I couldn't not after our first encounter and how gentle and rough he was when he was teaching me how to pleasure a man.

I run my hands down from his broad chest and all the way to his chiseled packs it should be illegal for a man to be this well-toned. His packs are evidence enough that he frequents the gym and he never misses a session. What a gorgeous beast! My hands roam his body until I touch his beaded haven I feel him getting a little excited in my hands.

“You going to make me late” he says touching my hands.

I kiss his back “I’m sure Nichume can wait 5 more minutes” I suggest turning him around. He shivers when I get on my knees and wrap my fingers around his Lunch bar I bring my lips closer to his haven and he lets out a pained groan pushing my head to his magnificent pipe. I move my tongue around his head before taking all of him in. His groans are my weakness they are like music to my ears. Listening to Akin groaning when I blow him will give you that same feeling you get when you listen to The Weeknd sing about s*x he has a way of making you wet with nothing but the sound of his groans. I take the moment to pleasure myself while I pleasure his yumminess with my mouth and my hands. He pulls me up and pushes me against the wall before he places his hand on my throat and kisses me dirty; he doesn’t stop there his free hand goes between us and he rubs me between my legs making me pool even worse.

“Akin...” I whimper as I feel my knees getting weaker and unable to carry me. My husband had better be as skilled as this man is right now else I’m gonna cheat on him with Akin!

“Tell me what you want lyazi” He says it’s what he calls me and I couldn’t have it any other way.

“Don’t stop” I beg like a starving dog.

“Talk to me lyazi what do you want?” He commands; somehow that makes me want him even more. It makes me wetter and only increases my need for him.

“Fxck me Akin; fxck me hard!”

ADELOLA PRINCESS IBRAHIM

“Still no word from your sister?” Mom asks walking into the lounge I shake my head no. I don’t know at which point my sister became the rebellious one and I the good child but I hate it. Ever since Adae became a mistress and started messing with Akintoye she hasn’t been our parent’s favorite child. She’s become rebellious and normally I would be proud of her for finally growing up but her growth is messing with my life. I’ve unintentionally become the favorite and I don’t like it. Because of her behavior I’m now not allowed to start university this year because according to dad university turns you into a rebel.

“Hey sis” Adae says walking into the house without a care in the world. I shoot her a look.

“Mom and dad have been calling you I have been calling you!” I scold angrily.

“I was at the mansion in the dungeon. I’m here now you ready to go?” She asks again without a care in the world. She is driving me to my first mistress lesson. She and Jane will be teaching me just about everything that I need to know about this world. I can’t say I am excited.

“You are aware that you are an Immortal right?” Jane asks and I shake my head no because what the hell is that? Am I a vampire? Does this mean I don’t die?

“What is an Immortal? Does this mean I live forever?” I ask and they laugh at me. I stare at them blankly because I feel like my questions are valid.

“Immortals are people with special powers. We have the power of persuasion we have the ability to make a man fall at our feet we don’t age as quickly as normal humans do and we heal quicker than the average human being. Immortals existed before time humans used to use us to do their bidding for them but now we are equals to humans because they came to understand that they need to treat us right if they wish to progress in life. Kinda like a genie except we don’t grant wishes but we can persuade compel and convince humans to do as we please.” Adaego explains for once I am speechless and my mind is scrambled right now. “I’m sure you’ve always wondered why dad is over 50 and yet he doesn’t look a day over 30?” She asks and I shrug

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I’ve always assumed he had good genes that’s all. “Lola you are smarter than the average human being don’t you remember how quickly you healed when you broke your arm three years ago? It all comes with being an Immortal.” she says and it all suddenly comes back to me. I never quite wondered but now everything suddenly makes sense.

“And why is it important for me to learn how to have s*x?” I spit out it’s not even curiosity because I am not attracted to men I have no intentions of being with a man.

“Because a happy man is a fool” Adae says “Happy men talk they spill secrets. That comes in handy during the gatherings. That’s how dad’s businesses are still standing to date”

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

“The rate at which we are losing girls is not normal people are not receiving their packages!” I say the minute Okoye walks in followed by Adiche and Adeyemi.

“Oluwa I’ve begged you and pleaded with you to let me kill this Khaya and get it over with” Okoye says feeling a little triggered happy... as usual.

“If you morons hadn’t fxcked up three years ago with those girls none of this would have happened. You started the war the minute you took Khayaletu’s daughter and sent her across the continent without informing me!” I yell angrily and they all go silent. Adeyemi seems to undermine my leadership he makes decisions with Okoye and then comes crying back to me needing me to clean

up their mess. It's been three years and Khaya hasn't stopped looking for his daughter. He has made it his life's mission to intercept my business. The first year was hectic we couldn't move around drugs and when we used mistresses to do our work they would go missing or we would receive their body parts with a message telling us to bring back Nichume. Adeyemi thinks I haven't noticed but I know he has taken a liking to her and that's the only reason we haven't returned the girl. We've lost 10 mistresses over the past three years and 20 slaves because of his obsession with this girl. If I didn't understand how he feels then I would have long killed this girl but that's how I fell for his mother I allowed a woman to make me weak and now my workers have lost all respect for me. "Adeyemi you are going to drive into town today and you will drop that little b*tch off in the middle of the cbd!" I instruct and see him clenching his fingers and his jaw at me for calling that little girl that has brought nothing but trouble into our mansions a bxtch.

"We've come this far dad" he argues

"We have lost too many girls people are starting to question my rule. We are not having this discussion. You are taking her to the cbd and she will find her way home!" I say to him he's about to argue but instead he storms out.

"Bring me Akintoye!"

NICHUME TSHAWWE MNGUNI

It's been three years since everything happened. It's been three years since I got abducted three years since I lost my family and my friend. Every day I miss them I haven't lost hope that my father will find me and take me home. I have been moved to about 5 or 6 mansions over the last three years because my father hasn't stopped looking for me. Adeyemi visits the mansion with his father and uncles every once a month to ensure I am still a virgin. Word has it his father wants to sell me so that I can stop being their problem We moved from one African country to the next until we were back in Nigeria by we I mean Akintoye and I. He was assigned to me a day or two after my arrival in Nigeria. Despite him being the man he is and my trainer he's not the worst person in this place. After my friend was killed my world literally came crashing down on me I won't lie he was unbearable for a while but I realized that if I wanted to live then I had to suck it up and focus on trying to get out of that place. Three months down the line I was initiated and stamped but I still haven't been penetrated because they don't want my eligible buyer to have something ruined. Akintoye keeps me posted with everything that happens or the little he thinks I should know from the outside. At least I got to finish my matric despite everything they have taught me in one of their schools so I guess that's something positive about this place. My constant moving from one place to another made me realize just how powerful these men are we moved from one African country to the next without being detected and my whip tattoo has gotten me in and out of harm's way. I remember this one incident in school last

year where some boys tried to get all fresh with me one look at my tattoo and they let me go. Don't even ask where my assigned guard was because I also have no idea. Life in the mansions has both been pleasant and unpleasant let's see what the SA mansions have for me.

I'm sitting on the bed in my bedroom when Adeyemi walks in I look at him shocked. He's grown taller since the last time I saw him and I won't lie over the last three years he's done nothing but look good and sexy. Doesn't change my hate for him but I can appreciate a good-looking person.

"What are you doing here?" I ask him and he chuckles.

"It's been three years why don't you forgive?" He says locking the door.

"Get out or I will scream!" I threaten he laughs at me.

"You going home I'm thinking of leaving you with a parting gift!"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 12

NICHUME TSHAWA MNGUNI

Having lived in this environment I have become a stranger to fear and panic attacks but looking at the man that killed my best friend walking closer to me I can hear my heart beating heavily in my chest almost painfully against my rib cage. I am overcome with this overwhelming fear and anger he took away my best friend from me and now he wants to take away my womanhood because what else does he mean when he speaks of leaving me with a parting gift? He removes something from his back pocket and throws it on the bed. The handcuffs land right in front of my feet.

"Put these on I don't want you to go around saying I raped you" he says I look at the shiny handcuffs sitting on my bed and then look up at him blankly.

"As long as I don't consent to it it's rape!" I spit out angrily at him.

"If I do it I'm only going to hurt you little dove. You've spent three years here you should know how we do things here. This is not a request put those on little dove!" Adeyemi says I still don't budge. He walks over to me and grabs me by the back of my neck pulling my face closer to his staring right into my eyes "put the damn handcuffs on!" he commands and I find myself grabbing the cuffs from the bed and putting them on. He smiles proudly and takes a step back from me. He strips out of his clothes "You know Nichume; from the minute I laid my eyes on you something in me sparked. I have never had a woman make me feel something like that before more especially a human being of all things but you came in here with those big brown innocent eyes and made me go against everything I believe in." He chuckles but it's not out of happiness or excitement there's an underlying tone of anger behind his chuckle. His eyes bore right into my soul and I feel this strange warmth some kind of assurance that I am safe. "Immortals cannot be compelled and yet I find myself compelled by you Nichume" He explains but I am only confused and have no words I am calm and at peace with him being this close to me. He kneels on the bed left in nothing but his briefs he cups the back of my head and looks into my eyes my mouth parts involuntarily to which he takes that as some kind of invitation to kiss me. His lips are soft as he takes my mouth into his his kiss alone is soft and unrushed which is something I never imagined he of all people capable of and his hand massages my scalp so gently before he lays me back like the most delicate thing he has ever touched on the bed. My senses are

aware of what is happening my brain is alert and yet I can't stop him I don't want to stop him because all of this feels right.

"You are mine Nichume always!" He claims and for some reason I find myself nodding to what he is saying. He removes my sheet swiftly exposing my nakedness to him he holds my hands up above my head before he commands me to "Keep them like this" he says and I nod keeping my hands over my head.

NTANDOYENKOSI ATHINI MNGUNI

Life without my sister hasn't been the same. I miss her every day. The first year was the hardest considering she and I were roommates having to get used to living without her was nothing but a nightmare not that things are any better now but the pain has decreased I guess. That year she disappeared a few days later dad found her body remains with her things but after some tests we found out it wasn't her which was good news but with her having disappeared we have had to live with the possibility of her being tortured or even worse dead in a country where nobody could bring her back to us. Her disappearance hit our family very hard and badly I think mom took her disappearance the worst because this wasn't the first time she lost a child. Seeing her go through all those emotions where some days were better than others and some were worse was heartbreaking it made me realize that maybe you never get over the death of a child and losing Nichume only brought back that kind of pain. It did cause some kind of rift between her and dad. Dad blamed himself for losing her and mom blamed him too for a while. I don't know how my brother and I managed to pass that year or the following years but we made it and next month we are starting university. It's bittersweet because I never imagined I'd have to start my university without her. We are back in Joburg to fetch our statements before I return to Cape Town and leave Yethu here. I will be studying computer science at UCT and Yethu will be studying business at Wits Nichume would have probably applied for language or something to do with literature or creative arts.

I walk into the school compound with Yethu and we make our way to the office when Khanya walks over to us I want to turn around or hide in a big fat hole anything to get away from him.

"Yethu" Khanya greets my brother with a fist bump and a shoulder bump.

"We made it!" Yethu says as they break their little bromance.

"When is registration?" Khanya asks completely ignoring my presence.

"I'll leave you guys to it" I say trying as best as I can to get away from them.

Khanya was there for me when my sister went missing we became more than just friends and last year I lost my virginity to him during our matric dance. Things between us only changed when we received our acceptance letters from universities. Khanya is originally from Joburg and I am originally from Cape Town unfortunately I never applied to study at Wits because I had no intentions of staying in Joburg after what happened to Chume. I'm safer in Cape Town and Durban than I am here. Unfortunately Khanya couldn't see reason and by the time he realized or rather was willing to understand I had decided to just call it quits because it was never going to work out. I haven't seen or spoken to him since the day we finished writing and I called it quits.

"Ntando" Simmy greets me with a warm embrace she and I became very close. A lot of people befriended me out of pity but very few of them were genuine and Simmy is one of the few. "You look gorgeous! Your pictures don't do you any justice ma'am" She says breaking the hug.

"Hello Simmy. You look just as good friend are you excited about university?" I ask her and she shrugs.

"We'll just have to wait and see what Cape Town has for me. I'm moving into res month end." She says and I chuckle at the look on her face. She seems stressed and worried.

"Look UCT is literally opposite UDubs we will see each other all the time and you are going to love CT!" I say to her and she rolls her eyes at me.

"Nkosi can we talk hi Simmy hi Simmy"

-Here we go

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

It was not my intention to compel Nichume into sleeping with me I've always imagined it would consensual and she would give herself willingly to me but Nichume has a smart mouth. After all these years she still hates me and hasn't moved on from what happened with her friend. I have no regrets about the turn of events that night but I do however hate that it made Nichume hate me. I would have hoped that after some time she would have gotten over everything but nope she still hates me for it and had I not compelled her she wouldn't be breathing this heavily and at my mercy. I don't do Vanilla I have never been a fan of pleasuring a woman and yet I find myself wanting to taste Nichume's oceans. As compelled she keeps her hands above her head waiting in anticipation. I run my fingers on the side of her stomach she gasps but not in shock but waitingly like a sacrificial lamb waiting for its slaughter. Her body is so clean and so pure you could literally taste the honey of her skin tone. She has all the right markings but even if they don't take away her innocence and purity Nichume is paralyzingly beautiful and innocent looking. Everything about her is pure.

I hover over her for a minute just admiring her innocent beauty My little dove. I kiss her again and she moans in my mouth. I move from her lips and down to her neck I kiss her on her neck and nibble on her neck marking my territory. She moves almost impatiently underneath me with excitement. I move from her neck and down to her breasts. Her nipples are erect with excitement yes she was compelled to do as I say but having her this hot and excited for me only excites me down there. I take her other nipple between my index finger and thumb twisting and teasing her nipple ring I earn a moan of excitement from her. I bite her nipple ring and slightly pull it making her gasp arching her back off the bed. I don't think I have ever had a girl this excited to be with me. I let go of her ring with my teeth and she lets out a breath. I move from one boob to her next nipple and lick her erect nipple I run the tip of my tongue around her nipple with the ring and earn another yelp of excitement slipping out between her half-parted lips. "Please" she pleads her short breath s*x voice sounds enticing. My erection is itching to be freed out of my briefs so that it can get into her warm haven but I have to prepare her first I have to ready her before I can penetrate her. Another foreign concept!

"What are you doing to me Nichume?" I groan as I kiss my way down to her stomach with my hands cupping her boobs and squeezing them. Her boobs fill up my hands as if they were made especially for me. I massage her boobs while I make my way down to her perfectly shaved and clean haven. She smells amazing and I know she tastes just as good if not more than my expectations. I take a second to just appreciate how clean her cookie is it's thick but her lips are tiny and perfect. Her clit ring shines from between her lips I let go of one boob and part her lips with my fingers to reveal her pea size with a ring on it. I let out a strained curse how can someone be so perfect that even her clit is perfect?

"You are mine Nichume!" I lay my claim on her it's more of a reminder to myself than it is to her. She may not know it yet but she will never give herself over to anyone else except myself unless a ritual of separation is performed. When we sleep together and I plant my seed inside her everything will be officiated.

I am laying between her legs with my fingers holding her lips apart giving me full access to her crowned pea. I flick the tip of my tongue over her crown she lets out a whimper of pleasure. I smile proudly I continue this notion moving the tip of my tongue around her crown teasingly. If her body reaction is anything right now it's proof that she is enjoying what I am doing to her and

I haven't even done much. I lightly poke at her pea with my tongue and she jerks her body off the bed with a pleasurable moan. I've found her weakness. The best part about exploring with Nichume is that I know she has never experienced any of this before she is a stranger to being pleased and her training did not entail her being pleased but her pleasuring.

"Oooh Yesss" She cries out in pleasure and that only drives me to keep going. Her moans are music to my ears I think I may have just found my new favorite sound. She's not loud her voice is as soft as the first time I ever heard her speak and her moans are true to her voice. It's like the words just slip right out of her lips unintentionally. I wrap my mouth around her crown pea and I suck and lick on it making her move her legs impatiently trying to close her legs I hold her open and bare to me as I take my precious time to pleasure her. I suck and lick her occasionally flickering my tongue on her crown earning gasps and moans. I move my finger down her warm slick slit she feels so good I just want to rub my head between her. She comes apart with my mere touch her voice trembling and her breath shaky.

I pull down my briefs and kick them off while licking her clean she is still sensitive from releasing this early. Little does she know it's just the beginning. I rub my dick on her folds coating her with her wetness and play between her hole and her clit until she's wet enough for me to enter her. I move my dick to her hole and then slowly enter her. I don't think I have ever experienced anything this tight and this hot. My head alone is bare in and already I can feel the blood rushing to my d*ck eager to make me a weakling. I slowly thrust myself moving my waist in circles to lessen the pain and to ease myself gently into her without tearing her or scaring her. What the hell is wrong with me? Immortals shouldn't be capable of feeling and yet here I am needing to make her feel safe and unharmed during the process. I am not a vanilla sex kind of guy and yet Nichume has manipulated me into one. I feel my head ripping through her hymen and she whimpers from the pain I look into her glossy eyes and a tear manages to slip right down to the bed and suddenly my heart is the one being ripped apart and no longer her womanhood.

Nichume may think I have taken something special from her but believe you me she has left something in me something I never imagined myself capable of harboring. Feelings of love. Under normal circumstances I fxck without any mercy. I ruthlessly emotionlessly tear my way through a girl's cookie like it's nothing and feel no shame even when she bleeds but here I am being gentle with Nichume. I am stuck between her legs wanting to savor this moment for as long as I can. Fxck she's so damn tight and feels amazing to be inside of. My hands roam her majestic body and I grab her thigh and slowly pump her kneeling in front of her watching the faces she makes as she enjoys me being inside of her. She watches me biting her lower lip letting out muffled moans watching as I thrust in and out of her at a reasonable pace she no longer has tears in her eyes which tells me that I am gentle enough and she is enjoying herself as much as I am. I bend down and kiss her pushing her back on the bed and she doesn't fight me she kisses me slowly embracing the moment. My hand moves to her face and I caress her cheek breaking the kiss looking into her beautiful half-open eyes and her swollen lips. I am compelled to kiss her again with how sexy she looks right now underneath me breathing the same air as I am her insides clenching around my dxck so tightly and amazingly. This child will be my downfall. I slowly kiss her again with how vulnerable she looks right now I'm terrified I might hurt her. I feel her insides slowly wrapping around me as my dick expands preparing to release.

"Cum with me Little dove"

She releases with an almost loud whimper her voice always soft and controlled my cxck is resting inside of her warmth is not helping my situation at all her heart is pounding in her chest I can literally hear it as if it's about to jump out of her mouth if she dares to say anything. I lean in my lips so close to hers that I find myself taking her mouth into mine again wanting to taste her one more time.

"You are making me weak" I confess foolishly I caress her cheek and she looks at me with those big brown eyes almost confused by my confession.

"I didn't mean to" She says always so innocent. Mine. My little dove. How do I set her free without trying to capture her again?

"You mine little dove" I say and pull out of her. My dxck stained with evidence of her lost virginity her cum and mine slowly softens. I get off the bed and find my pants taking out the keys for the cuffs.

She looks at me with some kind of confusion as I take off the cuffs. She doesn't argue or say anything smart. I take the cuffs and put them on the pedestal. I wear my clothes and walk out never looking back.

"I need you to get her clothes and clean her up. When you are done someone will drop her off at her old school."

To Be Continued

Red Lace 13

ADELOLA IBRAHIM

"Explain to me how this manipulation thing works" I ask curiously.

"Manipulation is more or less some kind of mind compulsion" Jane says and I raise an eyebrow confused "When you compel a person you are altering their mind to agree to whatever you want them to do-"

I cut her off "Is it permanent? Are they aware of their actions at that moment?"

"They are present they are aware of what is happening. They believe whatever you make them believe. For example if you were to ask a slave to pour water on themselves they wouldn't ask questions they'd just do it because it feels right to them." Jane explains I squint my eyes.

"Are there any long-term effects of manipulation? Is there a way to break it?" I ask with genuine concern the last thing I want would be to hurt someone and leave permanent scars.

"Maybe a person would feel like pieces of their lives are missing. Manipulation can be broken by the one who did it or a more powerful Immortal. There are some mortals that are resistant to manipulation." Jane also warns my sister is sitting watching us quietly as Jane answers all my questions.

"And how do you do this?" I ask.

"You look directly into a person's pupil and convince them to do as you please you'll learn this better as you go along" Jane says unbothered.

"Have you guys never worried about how this affects the next person? I mean these are humans. You can't just take away from them as you please a person should be able to make a choice a decision. You guys are taking that away from humans. Immortals and Mortals were meant to co-exist. That is what you both told me. When you manipulate them and compel them to do what you want you are taking away that choice from them!" I burst out angrily.

"It's harmless as long as they don't know they've been manipulated then they are good to go!" Adae says coming over to Jane and me.

"How do you think Akin would feel if he found out you manipulated him into sleeping with you like this?" I ask with my arms folded in front of my chest. Adae rolls her eyes at me.

"He won't find out as long as Akin believes he's with me out of free will then we are good. Focus on yourself and learn to be the best mistress you were meant to be" Adae says then turns away from us. I let out a sigh.

"Maybe you are not ready for this life understand that if you don't get initiated then there will be repercussions in the future" Jane warns I look at her and she shrugs her shoulders.

"I understand that this is a lot to take in but if you are going to be a mistress then you will need to learn to keep your feelings at bay. Feelings only make you weak and unable to fulfill your duties accordingly. What happens when you need to sacrifice your first child ever huh? Then what?" Adae asks and I raise an eyebrow confused and shocked by this new piece of information.

"Our Ancestors require a sacrifice giving up your first child to the ancestors takes a lot from you" Adae explains and I see the hurt in her eyes. I never knew she went through this when was she even pregnant?

"Mom never had to give you up" I shoot out.

"That is because mom is not from our bloodline each bloodline does things differently. Mom didn't grow up in this world she's always been protected by her ancestors from some of our practices but even she knows that there are some things she cannot protect us from. Here we do things this way and our traditions are meant to be respected and followed accordingly. Now do you want this or not?" Adae demands an answer looking at me dead in the eye without an ounce of emotion.

"It's not like I have a choice or anything"

NTANDOYENKOSI ATHINI MNGUNI

"Khanya" I say as soon as my friend has excused herself.

"Can we sit down you and I need to have an actual conversation about how everything happened!" Khanya demands sternly it used to turn me on how he could switch up and he knows it. I don't argue and sit down with him at a nearby table with chairs.

"You know I love you Nkosi it hurts me that you ended things the way you did and I know you loved me too" He says and I don't respond. He's right but I am not built for the distance. "I understand your concerns and I am not disputing them but you looking at this from one side. What if we work out huh? What if we don't fall victim to the stats and actually last? I honestly wish you could believe in us the way I believe in us." Khanya says I am about to respond to him when someone disturbs us abruptly.

"Nichume is here!" The person says it's our classmate. I look up at her in shock trying to process what she just said. "Your sister just showed up at the gate! Security took her to the principal's office. Your parents were going to be called" The person explains but all this sounds like a dream. I have longed to hear this but now that I'm hearing it with my actual ears it all sounds so unreal. It sounds like a good dream and someone is about to wake me up and tell me that it was all a dream.

"Nkosi come let's go!" Khanya says getting off the bench but I'm too shaken to even stand up on my own. How?

"How? Are you sure it's her?" I ask her and she nods with a smile.

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"Helvetica Neue" Helvetica Arial sans-serif; line-height: 24px; padding: 0px;">"It's your sister you have to go to the office right now!" She says Khanya helps me up because I don't think I will be able to stand up all on my own. My legs are shaky as we rush to the office I don't know what I'm more worried about at this point. Is it still the Nicume I know how much has she changed from the little girl I grew up with how is she doing mentally? All these invasive thoughts make it almost impossible for me to even walk into the office let alone knock.

"What if it's not her? I don't know who I'm walking into here Khanya" I admit with a shaky voice. Lord knows I've waited for this day for so long but more than anything I've been waiting for a call that would inform us her body was found in a ditch just to put us out of our misery but now she is on the other side of this door and I have no idea what to expect.

"How do you feel deep down in your heart?" Khanya asks holding me by my upper shoulders and looking into my eyes.

"I don't know Khanya" I admit "I need to breathe I need water!"

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

The disappearance of our daughter took its toll on Mihlali and I's marriage in the worst possible way. I blamed myself for my letting her go for not getting to her on time. I thought Zimasa Ibrahim had betrayed me but just like myself and Shadow we were blindsided. The ritual and everything that happened that night was merely a distraction to getting my daughter out of the country. I don't like going to war because I don't like the man I become Olayemi and his goons crossed the line when they took Nichume. I had a choice to either go for his daughter an eye for an eye type of thing or hit him where I know it will hurt. I don't doubt that he loves his children but in their world mistresses are disposable mistresses leave their homes and marry for business purposes while a son while a son stays home and he builds the legacy. If I want to hit

Olayemi where it will really hurt I'll have to go for his son. I got his attention by doing vile things I would have never done had I not lost Chume. I had to put away my feelings and my emotions and use my anger to get things done and Shadow has been there with me every step of the way. Olayemi is feeling the pressure and I have no doubt in my mind that soon he will return my daughter home.

"Shadow what do we have?" I ask him as he walks into my office.

"Not much the trap has been set all that's left is for them to take the bait and we have ourselves a prince" Shadow says happily rubbing his hands together.

"If your plan doesn't work then we are doing this my way" I say to him taking a swig at my scotch.

"Your plan is a suicide mission. You know I would walk through fire for you but uMama still needs you. You have a son and two daughters that are waiting for you to come home. Mihlali would kill me herself if you died" Shadow reasons.

"This has dragged on for far too long Shadow I don't know if my daughter is still alive or if she's still the daughter I know or even worse she's been raped and her soul has been killed. I know nothing and it's driving me crazy. If it means saving her then we are blowing up his mansion. Someone has to die!" I promise and Shadow shakes his head with disapproval.

"This is going to be a never-ending war Akhona is in Bloemfontein with her family Ntando and Yethu are starting varsity this year and Mihlali is in Cape Town waiting for you to come home for good. I'm not saying give up on Chume but be smart about this. If you going to go to war with Olayemi at least make sure every one of your children is home safe and protected. The only places where you and your family are untouchable are KZN EC and Western Cape. Don't let your anger lead you to an early grave my friend" Shadow says placing his cup on the coaster. I let out a sigh feeling this painful squeeze in my heart.

It's been three years and I haven't gotten anything I feel like a failure of a father husband and grandfather. My children and my family all deserve so much more than the little I have done. I clearly underestimated Olayemi and his connections. Nothing I have done has been enough to shake him or even get a reaction. I thought of giving up but then I would have failed my daughter and my wife and I couldn't do that to them. Shadow has been a good friend Siphso has been so supportive throughout this ordeal and Elijah also came in handy with his contacts but even that didn't do much.

As I am sitting and reflecting on my failures my phone rings and it's the kid's school I answer the call.

"Khaya Mnguni speaking"

"Mr. Mnguni you are speaking to your children's principal Mrs. Abrahams. Nichume is here she's in my office. She was dropped off in front of the school I remembered how you asked that we call you and not the cops." Mrs. Abrahams says and it takes me a good second to process what she is saying.

"I'm on my way!" I say and drop the call. Shadow looks at me waiting.

"That was Nichume's school. They say she was dropped off in front of the school today" I say packing my things and grabbing only my phone and car keys.

"Are they sure it's her?" Shadow asks following behind me.

"There's only one way to find out" I say getting inside my car he gets inside the passenger and we drive off to the school.

I park my car and rush inside the yard. When I walk inside the yard I run to the office the only reason I haven't called my wife is that I don't want to get there and find out it's not her or maybe I myself am still in disbelief. I push the door open and she turns around to look at me. The minute her eyes land on me she stands up and throws herself in my arms.

"You are safe now! They are all going to pay!"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 14

NICHUME TSHAWA MNGUNI

When one of the ladies cleaned me up and dressed me up in a pair of sweatpants and a vest with sneakers I didn't think I'd be leaving this place honestly. I am well aware of what happened between Adeyemi and me I don't know or even understand why I allowed him to take my virginity but for some strange reason my brain knows no regret and yet my heart feels different about the ordeal. Now I know I enjoyed every bit of it and maybe that was just my body reacting naturally to sexual conduct but it doesn't change the fact that I hate him for having killed my friend. I am conflicted about this whole thing I have so many questions that only he can answer. This life thing is quite strange under normal circumstances I know I would have never slept with him willingly I don't know if he drugged me or how it even happened but I know deep down in my heart I didn't consent to it. I would have never consented to sleeping with him knowing the kind of monster he is. My mind is scrambled there are details missing important details of how I even ended up agreeing to sleeping with him. Maybe the mind can be altered but the heart does not lie I know what I am feeling and I know that it's not feelings for Adeyemi. Yes the sex was gentle and he was tender but deep down in my heart I know he did something to me to make me consent I just don't know what because I have no memory of me drinking something prior or even being stung with something.

I don't know how I really feel about going home I know I'm excited about seeing Ntando and Yethu but I don't know if I am still the sister they remember me to be or if they even want this version of me. My parents I'm no longer dad's little girl or mom's will they accept this new version of me? Will they love me still? Will I even fit in in the real world? Am I ready to deal with everything that happened inside the mansions? I can't lie and say my stay was hell because it wasn't but everyone will expect me to say it was. Normal society will expect me to feel a type of way I won't be expected to miss that place because according to society standards I'm meant to be broken by that place and should I display any kind of emotion or feelings towards that place and the people from that place then I'll be labeled as a case of Stockholm syndrome. I am having all kinds of mixed emotions about returning to the real world but I can't wait to see my siblings and my parents. That's the only reason I am looking forward to being in the real world. I'll accept the world as it is.

I rub my inner wrist whip tattoo as the uber pulls up to my school the place doesn't look any different either than the fact that the only people here are matrics and grade 11s. I sigh when the uber drops me off in front of the gate security has no reaction because he probably thinks I'm my sister. Very few people are able to tell us apart and the ones that seem to recognize me are quick to come to me and crowd my space leaving me no room to breathe or process my new environment.

"Oh my God you're alive!"

"How are you here right now?"

"Where were you?"

"Everyone has been looking for you!"

"What happened to you?"

"Is Sisonke really dead?"

"Were you really abducted or you ran away from home?"

All the people surrounding me ask me all these questions and suddenly I find myself unable to breathe my panic attack is back after 2 whole years of none at all they are back and this one hits differently. Maybe it's different because I haven't had any in a long time and now I'm just overwhelmed by everyone with their questions. While stuck in this fear-stricken state I feel someone pulling my hand out of the crowd until we are away from everyone.

"Nichume look at me. You're having a panic attack" The person says I can't recognize the voice at all. My surroundings have faded into the background and I can't tell what is real anymore.

Everything is so scary. I need to return to the mansion at least there nothing scared me I knew everything that was to come and not even the dungeon was enough to give me a panic attack. How am I expected to live in the real world when I can't even handle my old classmates?

"Sweetie look at me. You are safe!" The person assures me I fix my eyes on the voice because my vision is blurry at this point and I can feel tears rolling down my cheeks. "Look at me baby you're okay!" the person's face slowly starts to form and she comes into focus. It's the matron I look around me and we are in the principal's office. The door swings open and I find myself startling out of fear. I turn to see my brother walking in followed by the school principal herself. Yethu looks at me for a split second before he walks in further I stand up and meet him halfway. I never knew how much I missed him until now.

"Is this really you?" Yethu asks holding me tightly. This warm embrace is strange but its home. I haven't felt this much love in a long time and to be in my brother's arms makes me feel safe and loved. I needed this.

"It's really me" I admit with a shaky voice. I feel his tears on my back it feels good to be back. He breaks the hug and he holds me at arm's length he looks at me from my head all the way to my feet he pulls my hands into his and he flips them over before his eyes land on the whip tattoo. He looks at the tattoo and then back at me I know he wants to ask but he swallows his words.

"Are you okay?" Yethu asks he looks genuinely concerned.

"I will be" I say I am not sure about my response but I am hoping I will be okay over time.

"We need to call the cops" The matron says.

"No their father said to call him should this day come. Nichume you may sit." The principal says my brother holds the chair open for me before he sits beside me. The principal goes around her desk about to search for our father's number I'm assuming.

"It's 067....." My brother narrates and she types it out. She drops the call returning the phone to its stand "your father is on his way. Please bring their sister here." She says to the matron who walks out to get someone to call my sister.

"Nichume do you need anything to drink or eat?" She asks and I shake my head no because for now I am not sure if I want to trust her. Living in the mansions I met multiple women her age who acted sweet and kind but deep down were pure evil and did all these wrong and vile things. Yes she is my principal and she probably would never harm me but for now

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I am not sure if I want to trust her. Living in the mansions I met multiple women her age who acted sweet and kind but deep down were pure evil and did all these wrong and vile things. Yes she is my principal and she probably would never harm me but for now I'm choosing to be vigilant than gullible because being gullible and trusting is what landed me in the mansions to begin with.

NTANDOYENKOSI ATHINI MNGUNI

After about 5 to ten minutes of contemplating and Khanya trying to calm me down and prevent a panic attack I finally gather the strength to go inside the office and see for myself. Is it really her? My brother and sister both turn the minute the door opens and closes looking into her eyes I have no doubt in my mind and heart that it is her yes she looks different and grown but it's her. She rises up slowly from the chair I am standing by the door overwhelmed with all kinds of emotions seeking answers but at the top of it all is disbelief and happiness. I never thought I'd see her again I never imagined she would be returned to us and yet here she is looking beautiful she looks every bit like mom even her body. She looks healthier and more beautiful than I would have expected considering everything she probably went through. Dad told us about the mansion he told us what happened in that kind of place so I think I know or have some kind of idea of what my sister may have gone through.

I throw myself in her arms flooded with emotions and tears it's really her. My sister. My best friend. My everything.

"It's really you.

You back" I say crying on her shoulder with hiccups even.

"I've missed you" She says with her face buried in my shoulder.

"I'm sorry Chume for letting you go that day. I'm sorry for not com-" I apologize as the guilt comes back. If it weren't for Sisonke and me she wouldn't have even gone to begin with.

"No Ntando shhh. It's not your fault" Chume says she always had a good heart and I am glad that place didn't take away how good she is.

"If it weren't for me you would have never been taken and Sisonke would still be alive" I whisper unable to hold my tears back. Having her here in my arms all over again feels unreal it feels like someone is going to wake me up and it will all be nothing but a dream.

"Ntando its okay I am okay!" She assures me not that she would even tell me if she wasn't okay.

"Nichume if you ever need to talk about what you went through. The school counselor is here for you." Our principal says. My sister and I break the hug.

"I don't want to talk about it Ma'am. I just want to go home and be with my family." Chume says and returns to where she was sitting.

"No problem I will leave you three alone. You will let me know when your father arrives" The principal says and then walks out.

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

Having my daughter back in my arms is an amazing feeling to think that I almost gave up on finding her and now she is here back in my arms safe from all harm. The kids get their certificates while I go to the car with Nichume.

"Welcome back kid" Shadow says unsure whether to hug her or shake her hand I understand why he would maintain a distance.

"Thank you uncle thank you for everything" Chume says and she throws herself in his arms he looks at me with a raised eyebrow but I shrug my shoulders. "I know you were helping dad find me I heard you guys never stopped looking" She says breaking out of their hug.

"Don't mention it kid. I'll request a cab call your wife!" Shadow says and then we do a handshake before he walks away from us.

"Please don't call mom she'll worry and panic and ask too many questions" Chume says the minute Shadow is out of arms reach and earshot.

"Why wouldn't you want your mother to know princess? She's been worried sick about you." I explain and she nods and lets out a sigh.

"I know and I understand I rather we have a conversation in person than over the phone. You can just text her that you found me that's all for now. I know she'll call you and she'll want to come to Joburg and just a lot." she explains while I don't understand her reasons I have no choice but to respect her wishes and simply send Mhlali a text letting her know I have our daughter and that we are on our way home. I notice how she keeps rubbing her wrist whenever she thinks I'm not looking. I pull her hand and I see a whip tattoo on it.
"They marked you"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 15

AKINTOYE SAMUEL DANIELS

Adeyemi asked me to work closely with him he's been on edge from the minute we left the mansion. We are not doing much just visiting the factories and trying to recover what we lost because of Khaya Mnguni.

"Okay out with it. What has you in the mood? You've been on edge ever since we left the mansion." I point out he shoots me a look and then returns his eyes back out to the road. I stop the car and he turns to look at me.

"What the fxck is your problem? We have work to do." he reminds me and I nod at him getting out of the car I pull out my vape and start smoking. He eventually gets out of the car and comes to my side. We lean by the car and just look out at the beautiful city of Johannesburg at a distance from us.

"Talk to me" I say and he sighs and runs his hands over his face.

"Do you ever do something and feel guilty about it a few minutes later?" He asks I take one long pull and then let the smoke out of my mouth trying to process what he is asking. Adeyemi is an Immortal he is not meant to be capable of guilt so this to me is new.

"Well sometimes. I feel guilty about a lot of things but each thing has a degree to it if I process it and I realize that I was doing my job then I live with it and forget it. There's a lot to feel guilty about in our line of work." I say and he nods "What's going on?" I ask him because he clearly needs a friend right now.

"I fxcked up and I don't know how to fix my fxck up" he admits I don't respond waiting for him to get into detail about what he did "If I am going to tell you what happened I need you to keep your hands to yourself" he says confusing me. I don't know why he thinks I would throw hands at him of all people.

"Sho whatever" I say dismissively.

He takes my vape and takes one short pull before returning it to me "I know you have a thing for her feelings or some kind of soft spot and I think I do too" he explains I look at him still not understanding what or who he is talking about. "I deflowered her against her will I used my Immortal power to compel her to not fight me when I sleep with her" he says it takes me a good minute to process who he is talking about "Nichume" as if reading my mind he finally says her name. I turn to him and throw a punch on his cheek he stumbles back.

"You raped her!" I say angrily he holds his hand out at me.

"I need you to understand th-" he tries to explain I take a step back balling my fists clenching my jaw. How dare he rape her? This is the thing with these immortals and mistresses they think they can just take and hurt whoever they want and get away with it.

"Understand? Is this why you said no one should sleep with her during her training? Because you wanted her for yourself? So that you can fxck her against her will?" I yell at him angrily. He clenches his jaw.

"It wasn't supposed to happen like that and I hate myself for what I did to her I know you and she had built some kind of bond but calm the fxck down!" he says I chuckle in disbelief and most of all anger. In the little time I spent with Nichume I learned that she is a good person and it's hard to not fall for her. She never belonged in our mansions teaching her was hard at first but after she let down her walls it became easy to train her. She slowly allowed me in and we built some kind of friendship or bond if you want to call it that. She's a great person with an amazing personality and anyone who ends up with her would be lucky to get to call her his. So yes I have a soft spot for her.

"Fxcck you!"

NICHUME TSHAWWE MNGUNI

The drive to the airport is quiet none of us are saying anything to the other because what are we going to say to each other? Coming back home has proven to be exactly how I had imagined it would be. I had hoped that things would be different than how I had imagined them to be but I was wrong. None of them know how to act around me my super talkative sister is quiet and looking out her window and Yethu is lost in his phone. I know they have questions questions I know mom will shamelessly ask me the minute she sees me.

3 HOURS LATER

We walk into the house and the minute mom sees me tears roll down her cheeks. She rushes to me and pulls me into her arms and cries unable to hold herself. Hearing her cry is enough to make me cry too I've missed her I've missed her sweet scent and now her reaction I was definitely expecting it. She pulls me away from her chest and then she cups my face.

"My baby" she says wiping my tears with her thumbs "You're home. You're okay!" She assures me I don't doubt that I'm okay but my biggest fear at this point is trying to fit into society after everything. "Are you okay?" she asks and without even hearing my response she looks at dad "Did you take her to a hospital to be looked at?" Mom asks dad.

"I figured we'd do everything when we got home" Dad says and then he walks over to mom and kisses her forehead before leaving us in the kitchen together.

"I'm okay mom" I say to her but Mihilalikazi Tshawwe does not believe that one single bit.

"Do you need to eat? Do you need to shower? Sleep?" she asks and I chuckle.

"I've missed you mom" I admit and she pulls me into her arms tightly making me emotional all over again. How do I tell her that Adeyemi had sex with me? That he raped me? She would die if she found that out. I know she is already assuming the worst about my stay in the mansions my admitting to what she thinks will only break her. She's been through enough as it is.

"You look beautiful" She says and I giggle getting out of her arms.

"I get it from you" I admit and she laughs.

"What happened Chume? How are you here right now? Did you escape? Did they set you free?" she asks and my hand unintentionally goes to my wrist. Over the years I had somewhat found comfort in my tattoo rubbing it always makes me feel somewhat at ease. Of course she sees me do that and she immediately pulls my hand into hers and looks at my wrist. I see tears fill her eyes all over again.

"Mom please don't cry." I plead this is the last thing I need right now.

"We looked for you everywhere. Your father searched high and low for you he would leave me alone for months trying to find you Chume we followed every lead but nothing we just never found you"

"They let me go it was because you and dad never stopped searching that they let me go mom it is because of you guys that I am back home and safe" I say and cup her face wiping her tears "I am okay mom I am back home" I assure her and she nods with a faint smile.

"Come you must be tired" Mom says leading me to the lounge she sits me down on the couch "Akhona must be on her way back. We didn't cook we couldn't cook." Mom says as we walk into the lounge.

"Akhona is in Cape town?" Ntando asks and mom nods settling beside me.

"Yes she went to get us something to eat" Mom says.

As if she heard her name she walks into the lounge. The minute her eyes land on me she rushes over to me and she pulls me into her arms and hugs me tightly.

"You home" Akhona says and she starts crying she is the least emotional one and yet here she is crying on my shoulder. This is going to be hard!

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

"Ntando and Yethu come help me serve the food" Akhona says they are hesitant but they stand up about to head out with her. I know what she is doing and I'm glad she is getting them out of here.

"They don't have to go" Chume says they stop in their tracks "I know what you doing but nobody has to leave" I say and they sit back down.

"Are you sure?" Mihlali asks her and she nods.

"I'm just going to have to repeat this story again and I don't want to ever have to speak about the past three years again" Chume says she's rubbing her wrists slowly. Akhona sits down next to me.

"Sisonke and I left the school in an uber to buy kota's in Braam she said she knew a place that made the best ones there. Ntando was left in school to make sure that nobody noticed we were missing. Our mistake was not sharing our location before we left or the car's details because that was how we ended up being taken. He took routes that Sonke didn't recognize and his excuse was traffic when we were "stuck in traffic" two men got inside the car one beside me and the other in the front seat the one next to me had a gun and told us not to try anything stupid. They took our phones and watches and threw them out of the window.

After a while of driving they drove into this huge yard outside of the city and away from people the place is in what looks like a forest because you can't see anything outside the trees or even inside until the mansion itself comes into view. The yard was busy with security in every corner of the place they

led us inside where there were other abducted women and some of them apparently came at freewill. They made us stand in a straight line just to get a good look at each one of us. We were then taken to rooms where we would be cleaned up and dressed in white silk sheets before being returned to the hall. Sonke and I were the youngest there or so it looked like it. When we were back in the hall they told us the rules of the place they told us about how things worked in that place and how we would be slaves taught to pleasure men during gatherings" She says and I find myself cringing thinking about poor Sisonke who was killed mercilessly by that little bastard. "- when they received word that dad was coming that night they moved Sonke and me through underground tunnels to another mansion. We were kept in separate rooms until I was moved again when I asked about Sonke they told me she was sacrificed during a ritual to make the Prince an elder." Chume explains the room is dead quiet without anyone saying anything. Akhona is squeezing the pillow I don't think she even noticed she's holding the pillow like that. Chume continues "The first stop after that mansion was a mansion here in Cape Town" She says and I raise an eyebrow how was my daughter in Cape Town and none of my men spotted her? "They kept me in the mansion for about a week waiting for things to die down before they could move me to Nigeria. In Nigeria I attended school and the mansion there was bigger than the ones here in South Africa. Things were different in that mansion unlike when I was here I was attending school every day I was being taken care of as though they were preparing me for someone. Well they were they told me when I completed my matric they would sell me to someone from a foreign country. After about a week in that mansion they started giving me lessons" she looks at Mihlali before looking at me she looks down playing with her hands.

"What lessons?" Mihlali asks.

"Hlali-" I warn but she shakes her head no.

"What kind of lessons Nichume?" Mihlali asks Chume looks at me and I shrug my shoulders.

"Lessons on how to please men my first lesson was to give a blowjob" Nichume says and Yethu gets up and walks out silently. Chume lets out an exasperated sigh and Mihlali takes her hand into hers. "Every day in that week it was the same thing until I could do it right. The following week it was something else every other week it was something new until they were happy with the skills they were teaching me. Lessons took place in what was called a dungeon it was a bedroom with all kinds of pleasure toys and things used for pleasure. When I had finished three months they marked me pierced my nipples and my clit and they tattooed my inner wrist with a whip it was a way for commoners to be able to identify where I belonged if I were to ever get lost in the city." She explains I never in my life imagined I would be reliving what my daughter went through when she was taken. Every second used up by her telling her story I am reminded oh so painfully of how much of a failure I am as a father how I let her down when she needed me the most.

"Please excuse me"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 16

MIHLALIKAZI TSHAWE MNGUNI

When we lost Nichume my world literally caved in on me. The day Khaya broke the news to me felt like the day I lost my entire family in an accident it didn't make any sense it all felt like a bad dream. I will forever say I don't know how these children survived the depression I went through during that period and just when I thought things were getting better they were born prematurely. Nichume had to stay in the hospital for a couple more months due to her lungs not having fully formed. My baby fought to stay alive and I think that's the only reason I could stay positive when she was taken knowing that she was a fighter and would make her way back to us. Even if she hadn't deep down I knew that she wouldn't have died without a fight and that's just one of the little things I admire about her. Her disappearance affected the entire family I think it hit me the hardest and in that state I turned my back on everyone because for the first ever since being with Khaya I felt helpless as a mother and I know I was wrong for turning my back on my pillar considering how much Khaya has done for me to even get us to where we are today. I am forever grateful for him the kind of man he is because he never gave up on us or on me he never gave up on finding our daughter and he always made sure that despite what was going on he loved me and would never give up what we have for the world and I appreciate that about him. Sometimes I think he overcompensates because of the man Bandile was he always tries to measure up to the man Bandile was but the truth is Khaya is greater than the man Bandile was. I loved my late husband wholeheartedly and I continue to love him still but truthfully he would have never been the kind of man Khaya is we also can't prove anything because I lost him too soon in our marriage. Maybe Bandile's spirit lives in Khaya and our children maybe Bandile is the one that brought Khaya into my life because there's just no way a man can love you this much. The triplets are not Khaya's biological children but Khaya has not once made them feel like they were not his Khaya made sure that all my children are loved equally and when

he reprimanded them he never not once made them feel like he was their stepfather. The way he loves my children is the number one reason I will always love him the way I do and I think that's why the children love him the way they do which brings me to why I think he walked out and left. Despite him knowing what happened in those mansions I don't think Khaya was emotionally and mentally ready to hear or rather process Nichume having gone through that. There's a difference between knowing something and having to experience it through your child hearing what she was made to go through is all so painful and it hits you harder. Even as I listen to my daughter I never would have imagined that at her age she would have gone through all of this it terrifies me and the fact that she is not showing any bit of emotion as she narrates all of this is just worrisome and scary because it shows me that I no longer know her I have lost my daughter and as a parent I need to come to terms with that and learn the new her. After she finishes narrating the things she went through she excuses herself from the lounge leaving the rest of us speechless and without a single word. I make my way out of the lounge to find my husband. When I walk into our bedroom I hear the water running from the bathroom I let out a sigh and walk to the bathroom. When I walk in I find him sitting in the shower on the floor fully clothed with his knees up and his face buried in his palms his shoulders are shaking which makes me believe that he might be crying. I have never seen my husband cry before not even on our wedding day so this for me is new. As I stand by the door contemplating I realize that I never not once bothered to ask how he was doing during this whole time our daughter was missing he was too busy focused on me that he did not once bother about himself. I put my phone on the counter and then I get inside the shower with him the water is freezing cold. I kneel in front of him and rest my head on his I was right he is crying. He pulls away from me and he hugs my waist I sit down and he buries his head on my lap. I never imagined Khaya Mnguni was capable of being this kind of vulnerable but here he is on my lap crying his heart out.

"Maybe if I had found her sooner-" he says letting out a breath before continuing to say "- maybe if had gone to that place sooner" he breaks out breathlessly "-sh-sh-she wouldn't have gone through any of that. Maybe if I had insisted on them studying this side we wouldn't have lost her" He says in between hiccups and stutters from crying.

"You couldn't have anticipated what happened to her Sthandwa sam" I say brushing his head tears rolling down my cheeks seeing my husband this broken. "There was nothing you could have done to prevent this remember you once told me that we have no control over our lives and the hardships we face. This was Nichume's hardship and as painful as it is that she went through all of this she had to go through it because if not her then who? Our daughter is home she is okay. All that we can do for her now is to be there for her and make sure that she is okay get her into therapy and help her heal and get better learn the new her understand the kind of person she has become"

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

I've always known that Akintoye felt something for Nichume I saw how close they were how he was always making her feel comfortable and safe that he had feelings for her him punching me because of her only proved my allegations to be true. Normally I would have fought back and probably beat him to it but he had every reason to react the way he did I messed up and I hate myself for it. I don't know or understand what came over me and led me to rape her it's even worse because I know she didn't consent to it and that alone makes me feel like shit. As we are driving off two cars stop in front of us blocking our way and just as Akin is about to reverse one car blocks the road making it hard for us to move. We look at each other and despite our anger with each other we need each other if we want to make it out of here alive.

"What's going on?" I ask him and he shrugs.

"I don't know whoever this is they clearly don't know who we are!" Akin says and I nod. I take out my gun check my bullets and it's fully loaded and ready.

"I'll take the left and you'll take the ones on the right" He suggests the people start shooting our car "Get down Prince" Akin says pushing my head down as bullets fly through our car windows.

"We need to get out of the car" I say

"Don't be stupid if we get out we are dead!" Akin reminds me I hate sitting and waiting for lord knows what "Send your father a message with your location and ask him to send a few cars here" he suggests.

I take out my phone and type out a message to my father 'WE'VE BEEN AMBUSHED. SEND CARS TO THIS LOCATION' I click send but the message doesn't get delivered. I look at my network bar and it's empty "Fxcck!" I say in frustration.

"What?" Akin asks.

"No service. Whoever is out there knows exactly what they are doing we can't just sit here and wait to die!" I say impatiently pushing the door open. Akin curses but he opens his door too. I peek my phone out to see what kind of movement is happening behind us and I see nothing I peek my head out and I see four men approaching us from the car behind.

"There's four coming behind us" I shout to Akin.

"There's another four in front of us" Akin responds.

"Mo daba pe o teriba lati je ki awon nkan rorun fun ara re o ti yika! (I suggest you surrender to make things easier for yourself you are surrounded!)" The man with a thick Yoruba accent says. I turn to look at Akin who waits for me to give him the go-ahead but for once I don't have a plan.

"Fokii o! (Fxcck you)" I shout and the person chuckles.

"We need to think of something" Akin says to me.

"We outnumbered we can't fight all of them" I remind him agitated us fighting is a death wish.

"Fi ara re han Bastard Aiku! (Show yourself Immortal bastard!)" The man says angrily. I look at Akin and then raise my hands up in surrender stepping out of the car. He shakes his head in disapproval but does the same.

"Smart choice" The person says. They are wearing masks covering their faces all-black clothes with bulletproof vests and thick heavy boots.

"Now what? Who are you? What do you want?" I ask them.

"We are here for you Alade (Prince)"

NICHUME TSHAWE MNGUNI

After telling them everything I had to get out of the room I had to take a moment and just be by myself and breathe. They pity me are worried about me and are scared for me but most of all they don't know how to act or even respond to what I have just told them. I walk into my bedroom and it's still how I had left it when I went to school 3 years ago. I walk around my bedroom and just take a moment to reminisce on the girl I used to be she was very sweet kind loving a virgin above all else and she had no intentions of losing her womanhood before 21. She was ambitious she had dreams and she had goals but now all that has changed. This version of me is lost confused and unsure of who she is or the life she is meant to live and it's draining it's a lot to handle but this version of me is stronger. There's nothing this world can throw at me that I wouldn't be able to handle. I hear a knock I don't respond but the person lets themselves in any way. I am standing in front of my mirror looking at our family picture this was taken the last Christmas I had with my family in our great grandparent's house.

"I brought you something to eat" Ntando says I turn to her and smile "You not hungry are you?" she says with a chuckle putting the plate on the pedestal. I shake my head no.

"Thank you though" I say trying to sound a little more cheerful. "How did you do with your matric?" I decide to ask needing the distraction.

"I passed with a B and a few distinctions here and there" she says sitting on my bed. I walk over to sit next to her. She takes a pillow and leans back on the rest of the pillows on my bed. "I'm glad you are back home Chume I missed you. I missed my best friend." She says and I join her laying back on the pillows.

"I don't know how I feel about being back. I know I missed you guys I longed to be back home but everyone is tiptoeing around me you are all acting like I'm going to break any minute now everything is just a lot." I admit; Ntando reminds me of this other girl I met when I got to Nigeria. She and I became the best of friends.

"Because we don't know how to act around you Chume we don't know how to treat you knowing what we know about you now. I'm sorry you went through everything you did I just wish I had been the one to go instead of you. Maybe Sonke would still be alive you wouldn't have been taken a-" I shake my head and cut her off.

"We have no control over the things that happen to us Ntando. You need to forgive yourself take comfort in knowing that I am okay and that life in that place was not all hell" I say taking her hand into mine I kiss her hand and she looks at me and wipes her tears. She comes closer and she lays her head on my lap.

"Did you see her die?" Ntando asks I'm assuming she's talking about Sonke.

"No I heard about it on my way to Nigeria. At least they spared me that scene." I say brushing her hair with my fingers.

"How was it? Living in the mansions?" She asks.

"Strange. Intriguing. Fascinating. Scary. You never knew what to expect every day was a mystery" I say with an unintentional smile on my face.

"And what's it like having the piercings?"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 17

NICHUME TSHAWÉ MNGUNI

As you may have imagined mom took me to a specialist but because I am 18 I asked to see the doctor alone because I did not want her to find out about the rape. I realize how much she and dad have endured already during my disappearance. This secret won't hurt and I hope it will lighten the burden on them. The doctor gave me some kind of morning-after pill and pills to prevent any future diseases and transmitted infections. My siblings are starting university shortly I need to apply too and get my life in order. Lethu will be coming home soon so yes they have a lot on their plates. Adeyemi is a character I wish to be relieved of and forget about as quickly as possible but it is easier said than done because he's all I've been thinking about since I came home. He's all I've been dreaming about as of late. It disgusts me. The worst part about it is that it's never bad dreams. The first day I fantasized about him was a pleasant dream; he was like the perfect boyfriend treated me right and made me happy but I awakened before anything could happen between us. And the second night I dreamt of him I woke up with my hand inside my pj pants and very much wet; now that dream I don't recall but I know I woke up and took a long shower just to clear myself of him. I despise how he is all I can think about even when I zone out: I find myself in a world where only he and I exist. It's like he's become my place of comfort and I loathe it. Lord knows I hate myself for allowing him to invade my mind the way he does but I have no control over it. I take my laptop and try to investigate anything I can find about Immortal beings but I don't get much. Just as I'm browsing an idea hits me or rather I am overcome by this urge to search about the mansions. I don't know what to type in order to get the information I'm looking for and so my next best option is to type out the little details I recall about the place I was in. I come across an article where someone is talking about their experience of the mansion. It's a blog from an anonymous person she's detailing her experience and how she was never the same after she was set free by her master such that she found her way back to the mansions because that's the only place where she was able to feel normal again. I angrily close my laptop because there's no way I will ever go back to that place. Why would anyone want to return to the same place that broke them? I put my laptop in my drawer and head downstairs where Yethu and Ntando are sitting watching tv.

"Are mom and dad home?" I ask them.

"Mom said she was going to see Aunty Yoyo and dad said he was going to work. Why?" Ntando asks.

"I wanted to go a book store I need something to read and keep my mind off of things but I can't drive" I explain.

"I'll take you" Yethu offers. I'm shocked that he is offering because he was the first one to walk out when I narrated what happened and truth be told we haven't spoken since. I think he's been avoiding me or something.

"Oh" I exclaim it wasn't meant to come out as it did.

"Ntando can drive you if you don't want me" he quickly says.

"We can go Yethu it's fine" I say and he gets up.

"I'll just change my shoes and then we can leave" He says and walks to his bedroom. Ntando looks at me and I sit down next to her.

"He hates himself for how he reacted and he's trying but he doesn't know how to approach you" Ntando explains and I nod.

"I'm not faulting him for anything though" I say and she shrugs her shoulders. Yethu walks in with the car keys.

"Ready?" He asks and I nod standing up. We head out and he opens the door for me and gets in the driver's seat.

"What's up?" I start off and he sighs.

"I'm sorry for walking out that day I'm sorry for avoiding you these past two days. It hurt me hearing what you went through sis I know things must have been hard for you because you experienced them and all... I guess what I am trying to say is I am sorry" Yethu confesses apologetically I look at him and then place my hand over his on the gear.

"I understand and I don't hold your reaction against you. Dad walked out too when he no longer could stomach what I told them so really your reaction was expected. As for you avoiding me now that was something else" I say with a chuckle and he laughs unsure of my reaction.

"I'm sorry about that I didn't know how you felt towards me after I bitched out sis. Your sister has given me the talk and I know what I did was wrong. Can I pay for whatever books you buying?" He offers and I giggle.

"I would never say no to that!" I say and he laughs at me and then goes silent as if in deep thought.

"What's up?" I ask nudging him.

"How are you doing for real?" He asks taking me by surprise. "I know being home is probably overwhelming and everything are you coping? Is therapy helping? What do you need from us?" He asks I'm honestly shocked but I appreciate him reaching out.

"I just need everyone to be normal around me I'm not fragile I'm not something that will break at any second. I just need some kind of normalcy around me. It's bad enough that society is giving me stares people pity me people whisper when they see me and there's judgment from others because of the tattoo I have" I let out a sigh "It would be really nice if home felt like home that's all." I admit.

"Have you thought about removing the tattoo?" He asks I'm about to respond when I stop myself. Maybe the right thing to do would be to remove it but I don't know if I'm ready to.

"No"

ISABELLE ZIMASA IBRAHIM

Ever since that gathering where Adeyemi sacrificed Sisonke my husband has been on edge. He has been lashing out at everyone his businesses are thriving but they are also failing. The elders are on his neck about the girls that have been going missing and showing up dead drug routes being intercepted and not reaching them in time weapons going missing and mansions being invaded. Khayaletu Mnguni has not rested since the day his daughter went missing and my husband is feeling the heat. I'm glad he's finally decided to return her. Now of course he and his son had a huge fight after that gathering. Adeyemi was never supposed to sacrifice Sisonke

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there was a slave that was ready and willing to be sacrificed but my son is as thick-headed as his father. Emotions were flying high punches were thrown and people didn't speak to each other for about a week or so. I don't know what obsession Adeyemi has with Nichume but I hope that now that she is gone he will be able to focus on fixing his relationship with his father. Adaego became a mistress and she changed she is not the daughter I know and raised. Her commitment to the mansions scares me it worries me and unlike me she has lost herself along the way she has allowed herself to become the truest form of what a mistress is and what it entails. Of course my husband is proud of her but I on the other hand am worried about her but hey what do I know? I'm the one that was raised as a human being. At least Adelola has taken more of me than she has of her father and

siblings. I am sitting at my workstation in Olayemi's office he went out to meet with the elders and should be back later. There's a knock on the door disturbing me I yell for the person to enter and he walks in and stands by the door.

"Yes" I say.

"Mistress. I was hoping to speak to master" he says.

"As you can see he is not here. What did you wish to speak to him about?" I enquire and he looks at me and then looks down. "Speak!" I command and he looks up at me shocked by my tone.

"We found Akintoye's car shot on the side of the road. Your son and he were on their way to the lab but word has it they never made it their bodies were not found in the car" he explains.

"Bring me Okoye and Adiche" I say to him and he rushes out. I get off my chair and start pacing around. Adeyemi and Akin are well-trained they know how to take care of themselves. No bodies mean that they are probably alive and on their way home or at least that is what I would like to believe.

"Fxcck!" I scream in frustration. Should I call my husband? He said not to be disturbed. Okoye and Adiche walk in.

"You summoned us" Okoye says walking over to sit on the couch. I have accepted that Okoye will never respect me and while I do have the power to make him submit I'm choosing not to use it against him and let him be.

"Adeyemi and Akin are missing. One of the guards says that Akintoye's car was found on the side of the road with bullets no bodies were found in the car." I narrate and Okoye doesn't react while Adi takes a step closer he looks concerned.

"No bodies means that they are probably alive and on their way home" Okoye says unbothered.

"If they were gunned down they would have called for backup" Adi argues.

"I trust the boys and the training they received they are fine and probably on their way home as we speak. We do not have to worry Oluwa about this he's dealing with enough as it is." Okoye says leaning back on the couch.

"He wouldn't have to be if you had just done your job properly and let those high school children go all those years ago! He is cleaning up yours and Adeyemi's mess!" I say to him angrily and unable to hold my tongue "You did this you are the reason Khaya is fucking with the mansions. I don't even know or understand why Olayemi lets you go unpunished!" I say turning to face the window my emotions are all over the place I am worried about my son and seeing the smug look on Okoye only pisses me off. He has been the one that has been influencing Adeyemi to rebel.

"Mistress I will send out guards to find them. If by tomorrow morning they have not been found then we will do a thorough search."

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

I am back here with Olamide this time around meeting with the elders they are shaken after the last lab explosion. Khaya is not making things easy for us hence his daughter was returned I need him off our backs and focused on his daughter so that my business can run smoothly again.

"What are we doing about this Khaya character?" One of the elders asks.

"I am handling it as we speak. His daughter has been returned to him he should stop now." I say taking a swig at my drink.

"Should? So you not sure? This is a wild guess to you. We are losing money we are losing clients. We have lost a lot of girls in the past three years. What about Okoye? Has he been punished for the role he played in abducting the girl?" He asks I look at him and blink slowly just processing everything he is saying. If he doesn't stop undermining my rule then he will lose that tongue of his.

"Okoye has played a huge role in ensuring that the mansions are running as well as they are" Olamide defends.

"The same way he has played a role in trying to destroy them. Okoye needs to be punished else he will forever undermine your rule he will forever undermine his masters!" Another elder says.

"I was unaware that we are here to discuss Okoye's trial" I say and they all go silent "Now the problem is fixed. The girl is returned and Khayaletu Mnguni will no longer be a problem!" I say and my phone beeps indicating a message. I take it out and it's a picture with the caption "I have no beef with you I just need

your son for the next three years and then we'll be even!" The picture finally loads and it's Akin and Adeyemi tied up in what looks like an old building. "Try anything and I will kill them!"

NICHUME TSHAWA MNGUNI

Yethu went to the bathroom while I browse the bookstore. I'm trying to reach this book on the top shelf but my arms are short and I have no idea where this woman disappeared to.

"Allow me" The person says reaching for the book for me. He takes it and he's about to hand it to me when he reads the title of it "Wicked Ties" He reads the cover "Interesting book choice chains and whips excite you?" he asks reading the cover of the book. It's no secret that it's an erotic novel because it is in the erotic section after all.

"Thank you for getting the book for me" I say about to grab the book from his hand when I notice the ring on his finger. He's an elder.

"You're a slave" He says looking at my wrist I quickly pull my sleeve down retracting my hand "Where is your master?"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 18

NICHUME TSHAWA MNGUNI

As I mentioned before adjusting to the real world is not easy. I stand before this man battling the need to bow my head down when an elder speaks to me because in my three years of captivity that is what they programmed me to do. I have my freedom; I know I am free but it's hard to convince my mind that I am no longer a captive; I find myself bowing my head down and submitting to this man despite my being free. It's an involuntary movement from my side meaning I have no control over it. I don't know if I'm allowed to mention that they have set me free. I don't know how a slave is meant to behave after being set free. My anxieties start to act up not now please I plead inwardly trying to find the right words to respond to this man. My heartbeat is escalating as fear consumes me making it hard to let in any breaths. Breathe Nichume. Just breathe. It's all in your head.

"You were initiated. It means you know that when an elder speaks to you you have to respond!" he demands. His tone is no longer as friendly as it was when he was assisting me with the book.

"Chume is everything okay?" Yethu asks coming up from behind me. I am grateful that he is here but even his presence does not stop me from bowing in submission to a master.

"I'm okay. Can we please just leave?" My feet are stuck in the ground. I am unable to move because an elder has not yet dismissed me. Tears roll down my cheeks I never imagined that this was how things were going to be from hereon. He holds the book out to me.

"She couldn't reach the book and so I got it for her. You are welcome" He says.

"Thank you. Master" I say with the lowest voice taking the book from him. I thought I could do it. I thought I was ready to face the world but clearly I'm not. He walks away and that's when I'm able to let out a breath.

"Master?" Yethu asks "Was he one of the men that took you?" He asks and I shake my head wiping my tears quickly. He slips his finger under my chin making me look up at him "Chume"

"Can we please just pay and go home? I don't want to be here anymore" I beg with my eyes searching for the elder who assisted me with the book. I'm grateful when Yethu doesn't ask any more questions and walks to the till and only then am I able to move my feet and follow him. We pay for my book and we leave. We get to the car and he opens the door for me. I get in. He puts my book on the car floor next to my feet before closing the door for me. I look outside as tears roll down my cheeks. I keep wiping them but that seems to only make them worse. The more I try to stop the tears the more I feel my chest slowly closing in on me there's no air coming into my nose and so I open my mouth taking huge gulps of air but nothing it's not working there's no air coming into the chest. I feel hot.

"I-I-I can't b-re-athe" I say with short breaths to Yethu. He starts to panic and looks inside the cabin hole for something and quickly hands me my asthma pump. I quickly take it and start to pump some air into my mouth like a starved dog.

"I'm taking you to the doctor!"

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

Shadow called me telling me that they got them but I couldn't leave my family not after what Nichume told us. These past two days I've been sitting and thinking about the best way to punish them but nothing fitting came to mind. I need them to pay for what they did to my daughter; I need them to see the depth of what they did to my baby girl. Shadow meets me at the door of the warehouse.

"We started without you" He reports and I chuckle. Shadow is sick in the head! "How's the family? How is Nichume?" he asks and I let out a sigh.

"She's stronger than I imagined her to be. She narrated everything that happened to her." I tell him and he stops in shock.

"Everything being?" Shadow asks in shock but also with a hint of anger in his voice. I know he has his suspicions about what they could have done to her.

"She says they taught her everything. They marked her everywhere" I say and I see him clench his fingers and his jaw tenses up. "She says the only thing they didn't do was penetrate her" I explain.

"You calm" Shadow points out and I shrug my shoulders "A calm you is lethal!" he says. We walk into the room that we held them in. They have their hands tied up over their heads.

"I figured it was fitting considering they are so big on chains and whips" Shadow jokes and I find myself laughing at his stupid joke. The other one looks badly beaten up while the Prince looks untouched. He only has died up blood on his body.

"Immortals heal quicker" Shadow explains answering my unasked question. I nod at him.

"Noted that means we can do whatever we want with him" I say walking over to the table that has all kinds of torture weapons. I pick up the spiked four-finger knuckle fight ring and put it on. I clench my fingers trying to adjust my hand to the new feeling. Shadow leans on the table and watches me happily as I walk over to the guys.

"This is for the young girl you killed when you got initiated" I tell him before punching him in his cheek. He spits out blood angrily before turning back to look at me.

"I'm assuming you are the famous Khaya Mnguni?" He asks cheekily. I nod.

"Yep you are going to pay for killing that little girl and taking my daughter" I say and then punch him in his stomach this time. He grunts but tries to suck in the pain. He laughs looking back up at me.

"Your daughter is a real beauty I'm sure that wife of yours is just as beautiful" He says and I punch him again in his stomach and on his face with my free hand until his face is bloody and his stomach is torn by the spikes.

"Did she tell you about our last night together? She moaned my name so sexily in my ears she tasted so fxxking good!" He says and he laughs loudly and is proud of himself. I'm about to beat him up again when my phone starts ringing in my pocket.

"That's probably her send my greetings to her will you" I take out my phone and it's Yethu. He never calls unless it's an emergency. It's always a text from him. I walk away from the boys to answer Yethu who is frantically telling me that Nichume had an asthma attack.

"Judging by your face it's her isn't it?" He asks grating my nerves with that voice of his. I take off the knuckle rings and throw them on the floor. Shadow walks over to me.

"Nichume had an asthma attack. I need you to send a message to Olayemi. Let him know I have his son and if he tries anything I'll kill them both. Send a picture of them as they are."

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

Khaya has gone too far. The man got his daughter. He has no business taking my son. He can't fault me for his daughter's inability to stay safe. As a father he was supposed to teach her how to take care of

herself. He was supposed to do better. I stand up and walk out of the room as they yell and shout at each other. I call the number that texted me.

"Olayemi Ibrahim the king!" The person answers sarcastically.

"How much do you want?" I ask him and he laughs it's not Khaya

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it's not Khaya that's for sure.

"It's not about money Mr. Ibrahim. Surely you didn't think we'd let you get away with keeping our daughter for 3 years? Did you?" The man says. I squeeze my phone angrily.

"What do you want?" Annoyed and angrily I ask him.

"I have exactly what I want an eye for an eye. Your son talks a lot for someone held captive" he says. I don't respond. "Now this is what's going to happen. You will tell your people to stand down. I don't want to hear any whispers that you are looking for them or else i will use every torture weapon I have on this table on your son until he begs me to kill him. He may be an Immortal but that doesn't mean he can't be killed and him being an immortal only elongates the torture. See how quickly he heals? Imagine all the ways I can torture him." The person threatens.

"Take me let him go and take me instead." I plead something I never do. Isabelle will kill me if she comes to learn that our son has been taken.

"Three years Olayemi never forget that!"

MIHLALIKAZI TSHAWA MNGUNI

I rush into the hospital and make my way to the receptionist frantic and scared. After getting a call from Ntandoyethu telling me Chume had an asthma attack I dropped everything and came to the hospital. I enquire about Chume.

"Mom" Yethu says walking over to me. He throws himself in my eyes. "I was so scared mom" he admits. I brush his back and allow him to take a moment. He needs it. He breaks out of my arms after a good minute or so.

"What happened?" I ask him.

"I don't know. I left her at the bookstore and when I came back she was quietly standing with some guy. When she responded to him she said 'Master'. When we got to the car she had an asthma attack. That's when I bought her here and called you. I didn't know what to do mom." Yethu explains. I nod.

"It's okay baby. You did well. Is she with a doctor right now?" I ask him and he nods.

"I haven't seen her since we got here" he says with so much worry and concern on his face.

"Mnguni" the nurse calls out we walk over to the nurse.

"I'm the mother and this is my son. How is my daughter?" I ask her.

"Your daughter is fine. She just had a mild asthma attack but she is stable now" she explains.

"May we see her?" I plead and she nods leading us to the room Chume is in explaining what happened and the treatment they gave her.

"Baby" I say rushing over to her and pulling her into my arms.

"I'm sorry for scaring you" she says and I chuckle.

"Are you okay? What happened?" I ask all this at once.

"Nothing mom I'm fine. I guess I was not ready to get outside yet." She says and I look at her worried and unsure of what she is telling me.

"Dad just got to the hospital" Yethu reports and Chume looks at him bored.

"You didn't have to call everyone. I'm okay. It was just an attack." Chume explains bored.

"You couldn't breathe Chume the asthma pump wasn't working. I didn't know what to do. I panicked."

Yethu explains unapologetically.

"Chume how are you?" Khaya asks the minute he walks in. He quickly pulls her into his arms hugging her tightly.

Chume breaks out of the hug "I'm okay dad Yethu panicked that's all. Is this blood?" she asks. I turn Khaya to look at me and I notice the blood on his knuckles.

"Yes I was in the gym when Yethu called. I didn't use boxing gloves" He explains. I raise an eyebrow because I know the man I married and I know that his knuckles wouldn't look like this if he really did what he is saying he did. "When are you getting out of here?" Khaya asks her.

"The doctor said he would discharge me today" Chume says.

"Yethu please go get me coffee no milk 2 spoons of sugar" Khaya says giving Yethu an R100 bill.

"I'll have a cupcake please" I say before he walks out of the room.

"Baby I need you to be honest with us" Khaya starts off and Chume looks at him worried.

"Ok. About?" She asks with a frown.

"Are you sure no one raped you? I'm sorry to take you back but I need to know" Khaya asks and I frown looking at him and then at Nichume who is looking down.

"I didn't tell you because I knew how bad you felt how much you blamed yourself for what happened. I kept this because I knew how you guys would feel. It happened the day they let me go." She explains looking down. I lean on my husband my legs unable to carry me. I bury my face in his arm. Khaya's muscles are hard and tense. "The doctor gave me something to prevent any sickness or pregnancy"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 19

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

They've separated Akin and me. I hope he's smart enough to not tell them shxt he's not allowed to tell them. I trust Akin though he would never sell us out. He knows what's at stake if he dares sell us out. The mansion is the only home he knows and has and he wouldn't risk it. The only thing keeping me sane since our captivity is thoughts of Nichume. I shouldn't but her beauty her hypnotic eyes are the only thing keeping me from going crazy. Whenever they are not torturing me or when they are torturing me I focus on thoughts of her to bring me peace.

Khaya storms in pushing the door open. I look at him unbothered but he looks like a raging beast ready to feast on me. I wonder what pissed him off this time. He doesn't take anything from their table of torture and he comes straight to me and he starts throwing punches at me. He fxcks my face up and punches me everywhere on my body as if punching a punching bag. I can't even think of any smart responses with how much he is hitting me. After the beating I take from this raging beast. He takes a chair and places it in front of me.

"For all the years you had my daughter I kept thinking of ways to make you Okoye and your father pay for what you put my family and me through. You sent me on multiple goose hunts just to throw me off. The masterpiece was

when you planted a body with her things to make us believe she was dead. I won't lie when I was waiting for those results. I had hoped she was dead because then it meant she was no longer suffering but little did I know the suffering was yet to come." He grits angrily and it's only then do I see the emotions and hear them in his voice. He's a father a hurting one. They stripped away all my confidence laying me bare to him and his punishment. The thought of someone doing this to my sister would make me lose my shxt too.

"Your daughter was a slave. She was no different from the slaves at the mansion." I fire at him. It's all I can let out. I'm hoping my explanation makes sense. He chuckles. His chuckle is not because I am funny but it sounds dangerous and raw with emotions.

"Alright then *Master*. Let's treat you like a slave and see how that works out for you!" He says and types something on his phone. Before I know it there is someone knocking on the door. "We have a guest!"

ADELOLA IBRAHIM

My brother has been missing for a week now and things at home are tense. Dad is on edge even worse than he's been the past three years. Talking to him or even trying to get something out of him has proven to be a mission and a half. He's not coping with Adeyemi's abduction. Adaye is preparing to meet her future husband. I can't say she is psyched because like our father she is stressed about Adeyemi and Akintoye. It's a mess at home. Mom is trying to hold it down but even she can't do much. There's a knock on the door. I get off the couch and go answer. Today is my day off from the lessons. Those are going well I guess. Personally I don't see the need for all of this but what can we do? I didn't choose this life but it chose me. I open the door and the guard is carrying a small box; I raise an eyebrow waiting for him to tell me who the box is from.

"For your father" He reports and then he walks away. I look for a note but I don't find any. I make my way to his office behind the stairs. I knock and he doesn't respond I knock again and this time he actually responds. I walk in

and he is sitting behind his table drinking while mom sits on the other side on her tablet.

"You have a package" I say placing the package in front of him.

"What's this? Who is it from?" Dad asks. I look at him and shrug. How am I supposed to know?

"I don't know dad" I say and then step away from the table.

"You can sit baby. How is your sister?" Mom asks. I sit beside her.

"Last time I saw her she couldn't choose which dress. Her makeup is already done and so is her hair" I say. Dad drops something bringing our attention back to him.

"What is it?" Mom asks him and dad pushes the box to mom who drops her iPad. I try to see what's in the box but I can't.

"This is not what I think it is?" Mom asks.

"It is. Lola you may leave!" Dad commands dismissively.

"If it's about Adeyemi I want to know!" I say.

"Now is not the time Adelola!" Dad yells startling mom and me.

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

- **I told you to stop looking.**- I click send and it delivered the message.

"You going to pay! My father is not going to rest now. You made a mistake by sending him that!" Adeyemi says gritting his teeth angrily or maybe it's to mask the pain.

"Nope we play by my rules and your father knows and understands the importance of that ring. He won't risk it!" I say to him "Great job doc your work was very clean. You may leave now" I say to the doctor who performed the removal surgery.

"You're not going to get away with this Khaya!" the young prince says and I laugh.

"I think I already have. You can't possibly think I was going to sit back knowing that you raped my daughter now did you?" He keeps quiet. "I am going to make your life a living hell until you beg me to kill you! By the time I am done with you you will never touch another man's daughter!"

"I want to see Akin!" he demands and I laugh at him.

"You are in no position to make demands little prince" I tell him and he grits his teeth at me like a little dog. "Now are you ready to talk about the mansions?"

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

I may have underestimated Khaya and how far he was willing to go for that so-called daughter of his. For him to send me my son's cxck ring tells me just how psychotic he is. Who knows what else he'll send me next if I don't comply and play by his stupid rules? Yes Adeyemi has messed up multiple times but he's a child all children mess up. This? This is a bit extreme even for him.

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"Helvetica Neue" Helvetica Arial sans-serif; line-height: 24px; padding: 0px;">"You have to find our son!" Isabelle says clearly scared and worried about him.

"We can't do anything. For now Khaya sending me this is a message that if I don't stop looking then he'll probably remove more than this ring" I tell her and show her the message accompanying. She stands up and starts pacing around the office.

"We can't just sit and do nothing! He has our son. He has removed an important piece of him. That ring is his protection. That ring prevents him from becoming the monster he was before being initiated t-"

I cut her off. "I know what that ring is. I know dammit. Do you think I don't want to bring my son home? I'm as stressed as you are but we have to be smart about this. If we don't play this right then who knows how much more pain they are going to cause him?" I say and walk over to her I bring her to a halt holding her by her shoulders. "I'm worried and scared for him as you are but Khaya won't kill him. Adeyemi is strong. This torture doesn't phase him" I assure her and kiss her forehead but she pulls away from me.

"Three years is a long time Olayemi!" she complains and I sigh.

"I know and I understand that. We just need to come up with a plan. Something he won't see coming" I say and she shakes her head no.

"I'm going to see his wife. Maybe she can convince him to let our son go!" She says and I grab her arm preventing her from getting any further.

"Mihlali grew up with a gangster grandfather. She knows her grandfather trained her husband. You cannot possibly expect her to show some kind of compassion to the man that raped her daughter" I say and she looks at my hand on her arm and then back at me. It's only then do I realize what I have just done. Isabelle was unaware of the so-called parting gift. Adeyemi keeps bringing me trouble!

"What did you just say?" She asks not because she didn't hear me but because she probably needs to process this bit of information.

"It's not what it sounds like" I quickly explain.

"Then what is it? Either he raped her or he didn't? There's no in-between" Isabelle argues. I don't respond. "So he did rape her? When was this?" She asks and I shrug.

"It was the day he set her free. Ade said he was leaving her with a parting gift. He meant no harm. He seems to have taken an interest in the girl. He manipulated her into sleeping with him" I explain. She does that crazy chuckle women do when they are about to go off at you. I stand there waiting for her to go off at me.

"Mani- *he he he!* Yoh! Are you hearing yourself? You see nothing wrong with what he did do you? As a father how would you feel if you found out that some guy raped Lola huh?" She asks and the mere thought alone is enough to piss me off.

"No man would ever dare to try that!" I say defensively and she laughs again.

"So it's okay for your son to rape women? What am I even asking? This is what you breed in those mansions! That it's okay for men to do as they please with a woman's body. It's no surprise that your son saw nothing wrong with his actions because his father and his uncles are no different. Let him rot in there!" She says angrily and is about to walk away when I grab her arm. She looks at my hand and then at my face before trying to yank me off.

"Have I ever raped you Zimasa?" I ask her. She sucks her teeth looking at me for a while. "If I have then why are you still with me?" I ask her.

"Because there's no freedom away from you. Even if I tried to leave you you always find a way to bring me back here Yemi-" she is cut off by a knock on the door we both turn to look at the door and I drop her arm "That must be Adae's future husband" she says and walks over to the door leaving me standing. She cannot possibly be suggesting that we leave our son under the care of Khaya he will kill him!

NICHUME TSHAWWE MNGUNI

"Have you considered removing the tattoo and taking off the piercings?" My therapist asks. I automatically rub the tattoo on my wrist. At this point I can no longer feel myself doing so because it's become an involuntary movement. I find comfort in rubbing my tattoo. It makes me feel like everything will be fine.

"No" I say quietly.

"And why is that? Most people would gladly remove everything that reminds them of that place" she suggests and I shrug.

"Maybe I'm not like most people. I know that people expect me to move on with my life and forget that this happened and that I went through it but it's not that simple. That place for me was not all bad. I met some friendly people. There were people there that treated me right. Removing the tattoo and the piercings feels like I'm deleting that part of my life and I don't want to do that. I'm not trying to forget I'm not trying to pretend like it never existed or happened because all of it happened and believe it or not doc the piercings bring me pleasure. I never knew. That place changed me. I will never be the same person I was before it so why not embrace the new me and stop trying to make me go back to the little girl I was because she's gone. She's dead." I say and she goes silent for a minute.

"I've noticed how you always rub your tattoo. Why do you do that?" She enquires and I shrug my shoulders.

"It brings me peace. It makes me feel calm and content. I somewhat feel safe when I rub it You know the past two years of me in captivity I never not once had an asthma attack anxiety attack or a panic attack" I say and she frowns looking at me confused but also intrigued.

"Do you wish to go back?" This is the question she decides to ask me probably trying to understand why I have shared this bit of information with her. I take a minute to think about my answer. Things were simpler there but not simple enough for me to want to go back. I don't want to serve men for the rest of my life.

"Things would be easier if I went back but no I don't wish to go back there. I don't want to spend my entire life kneeling before a man bent over by a man and pleasuring a man. I want to go to school I want to have a normal life I want to get married someday and grow old with my partner. I don't want to live my life devoted to that kind of place" I explain and she nods.

"Then why do you hold on to that place if you don't wish to go back?" She asks me and I shrug.

"I don't know maybe because that place healed me of my asthma my anxieties and panic attacks. Maybe a small part of me feels like I owe that place something some kind of appreciation for building me into whatever it is I am right now. That place has built my character. It has played a huge role in shaping the kind of person I am today.

To Be Continued

Red Lace 20

NICHUME TSHAWWE MNGUNI

There's a knock on my door. I close my laptop sliding it under my pillow.

"Come in" I call out and the door opens slowly. It's mom and dad.

"Hey baby" Mom says as they sit on my bed.

"Hello my Angel" Dad greets.

"Morning mom and dad what's up?" I ask because they seem serious. It's been a week since my episode and I don't know what to expect from them at this point. They have been worried about me ever since everything took place.

"Ntando and Yethu are going to be leaving for university soon." Mom starts off. I raise an eyebrow waiting for them to continue.

"I had your certificate looked into and it's legit everything checks out. We wanted to know if you wanted to go to school or if you want to take this year off and just focus on your healing?" Dad asks straight out. I didn't even know that they were getting my docs verified. All this is shocking for me.

"Well I'd like to study Psychology" I say quietly. Mom looks at me shocked.

"You always wanted to pursue a career in writing or computer science" Mom says and I nod.

"That was then mom now I want to study Psychology. I can take up writing as a part-time course I think I still have time if you guys don't mind paying for the extra course?" I ask them and mom looks at dad who shrugs his shoulders.

"I'm just happy that you are willing to go to school. I'll talk to the university and get back to you with their response." Dad says.

"Which university did you wish to attend?" Mom asks I think of my answer because if I mentioned I wanted to return to Gauteng they would be offended and think I want to return to the mansion or fear that I'd get abducted.

"UCT or UWC are great universities and they are known for their good grades plus you being in Cape Town guarantees your safety" Dad responds before I can say anything.

"UCT wouldn't hurt" I say and they smile.

"We getting Ntando a place to live in the city should we get you guys a two-bedroom apartment or would you prefer to live alone?" Mom asks.

"They'll share an apartment. It makes sense that way." Dad says and mom shoots him a look.

"If you guys get us an apartment I need you guys to allow us to be teenagers. That means" I look at dad "You have zero access to whatever complex we live in you don't show up unannounced; you call before you come over we will visit whenever we can no bodyguards lurking in the bushes dad" I say and mom chuckles.

"That's a bit too much. I need to know that you are safe and well-protected at all times!" Dad retorts and I look at him. "I'm a father. It is my duty to worry about you and your sister it is my duty to make sure that you and her are well protected at all times!" Dad defends.

"I don't dispute that but dad I know my phone has a tracker my laptop has a tracker if it were up to you my body would have a tracker but please allow Ntando and me some kind of normalcy. I personally need it. We are in Cape Town we are in the safest city we will ever be in." I assure him and he shakes his head. He's not convinced.

"As long as those people have a mansion in his province then you are not safe Chume you and your sister. I really think you should remove that tattoo or get something new design to cover it. As long as you have that tattoo you will always be a sla-target."

"Slave that's the word you wanted to use" I correct he sucks his teeth about to respond when mom places her hand on his knee.

"I just think that you keeping this tattoo is holding you captive mentally-"

"Baby-" Mom reprimands but dad shakes his head no.

"I'm not going to tiptoe around my daughter. What kind of father would I be if I wasn't honest with her?" He asks mom rhetorically and then he turns to look at me "I'm all for you making your own decisions you know your mother and I will always support you and your siblings but Nichume you have been through a lot that boy manipulated your mind. Who is to say that it's not him that's making you keep this tattoo or whatever ties you have to that place? Healing comes only if you want it and the longer you hold on to your trauma or rather the more you find comfort in your trauma the more you stray further from healing. Holding on to your trauma only delays whatever healing you are trying to work on. My advice as a father and a person who has overcome his own traumas remove the tattoo and remove the piercings. You are only as free as you allow yourself to be!" Dad says and then he stands up and kisses me on my forehead. "I love you kid" He says and walks out of the bedroom leaving me with mom who lets out a breath.

"He has a point"

ADAEGO IYAZINKOSI IBRAHIM - ABIOLA

I think the only good thing about marrying someone from our world is that you are never unsatisfied sexually. Your sexual appetite is always matched yes Immortals have zero feelings but they will definitely please you accordingly. I miss Akin but life has to move on he was human and he was never going to give me the treatment I need whether financially or sexually. If Dad found out about him and I he would have probably castrated him or something along those lines. In a nutshell marriage is good so far.

"That's it cum for me" Ike encourages with his finger playing with my clit one thing about him is that he knows how and when to be gentle with me and when to slxt me out. He knows exactly what to do and when to do it to get to where I need to be. What a man! I let go "That's it baby girl" He says when I release all over him he cums right after me and then he stays there for a while. I brush the back of his head that's buried in the crook of my neck.

His phone rings from the pedestal "don't answer it" I plead.

"It could be work" He says getting off of me and stretching his hand to take his phone and answer it "IkeOluwa Abiola" He says.

"Baby" The person says after he answers he quickly presses a button to lower the volume while he gets off the bed walking to the window. I feel my heart sink to the bottom of my stomach. Immortal or not my mother raised me as a human being she raised me to want love to want a fairytale and what she and my father have. They love each other and I want that. Maybe my nature doesn't allow me but somehow I've allowed myself to be influenced by books. I don't believe that a person is incapable of feelings else how are we able to love and care for our loved ones? I get off the bed and walk to the adjoining bathroom. I sit on the toilet seat and pee I bury my face in my hands. At least Akin respected me. I'm disturbed when there's a knock on the door. I quickly wipe and throw the tissue inside the toilet then stand up and walk over to the sink to wash my face. The door opens and he walks in I see him from the mirror in front of me as I rise up.

"That call was not what you think" He says and I don't respond "Ade" he calls me and I roll my eyes in response waiting for him to say whatever he wants. "I'm talking to you" He says.

"Then talk like I am listening" I say turning to look at him. He runs his hand over his face.

"You mad at me?" he asks me I chuckle. "I don't understand why our marriage was a business transaction between our parents. I had a life before you and I'm not going to throw that away all because you are in my life." He explains and I laugh I try to walk past him when he grabs my arm. I look at his hand and then look up at his face.

"Let go of me" I say.

"As my wife I will respect you. I will satisfy you sexually. I will take care of you as expected but that's just about it. I don't know what else you want from me." He says and I nod.

"You had a life before me I respect that but I hope you will also be as understanding when I go about my life because that's our marriage isn't it? A business transaction. You do you I do me." I say and pull my arm out of his grip. I walk into our bedroom and take my phone from the stand. He walks in as I am getting under the covers.

"I am still talking to you" He demands.

"I assumed we were done you said your piece and I said mine. What else is there to say?" I ask him. He lets out a breath.

"Fine I'll be late for dinner tonight." He reports.

"And I won't be sleeping at home tonight"

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

"I'm curious" Shadow says placing a chair in front of me and sitting on it.

"About?" I ask annoyed.

"Manipulation how does it work? I mean you not leaving anytime soon. Might as well be friendly with each other." Shadow asks and I chuckle.

"You want to understand what I did to Nichume and how it might affect her?" I ask with a chuckle and he shrugs his shoulders.

"Yeah I mean why not. I rather we know what we are dealing with in case we decide to kill you." Shadow says unlike Khaya Shadow doesn't wear his heart on his sleeves. He shows no kind of emotion which would make you wonder if he even cares about Nichume.

"What's in it for me?" I ask him and he laughs.

"It's funny that you think you are in a position to make deals. You the rapist here what makes you think you are in any position to make deals? You owe it to Nichume to give me answers. If you feel something for her as much as I would like to believe you do then you will tell me what I need to know" He says and I take a moment to think. "If you don't want to talk then no problem" Shadow says getting off the chair.

"Fine. Manipulation works like mind alteration. I was able to compel her into sleeping with me and that exchange between us created a bond. Nichume was not some random because I felt something for her when we slept together it was easy to create some bond between us and if she felt something for me then that bond could make her act some type of way." I explain trying to find a better way.

"Meaning?" Shadow asks and I shrug.

"She is tied to me as much as I am tied to her. She hates me so there's no bond between us as per se. If she felt something for me then she would be fantasizing about me she would feel tied to the mansion and even if she were

free she would still feel the need to live according to the ways of the mansion because that's the life she knows her mind tricks her into believing that she needs to serve me or do whatever is required of her to please me." I explain and Shadow looks at me as if in deep thought.

"But you don't need to worry about any of that because she hates me" I say with a bitter chuckle.

"Do you ever regret what you did to her? Taking her freedom away from her? Taking her womanhood without her consent?" He asks I take a good moment to reflect on my actions and to consider my response.

"When you and your man caught us Akin had already punched me because of what I did. I regret what I did to her and if I could at least see her I would take away whatever manipulation I did to her. Yes it wouldn't undo the rape but at least she would be rid of the manipulation." I say remorsefully with a twinge of regret.

"Is there a possibility of her falling pregnant?" Shadow asks ignoring my request.

"I doubt it we put the girls on birth control" I explain and he nods.

"And if she were to fall pregnant what would happen? She is human can a human have a child with an immortal?" I nod.

"It wouldn't kill her if that's your question but carrying an Immortal from my bloodline would mean she inherits some of the things we are capable of. Good or bad. Why are you so curious? Is she pregnant?" I ask him genuinely concerned because if she is then rituals need to be performed protection rituals things to ensure that she carries to full term and she does not inherit whatever qualities I have.

"We took precautions when we got her" Shadow says confidently.

"Do you honestly believe that some morning-after can prevent pregnancy and infections from an Immortal? You're dumber than I thought. I don't mean any offense."

To Be Continued

Red Lace 21

3 MONTHS LATER

ADELOLA IBRAHIM

It's been three months since everything happened. I am studying at Wits. My parents decided together that I couldn't study in the Western Cape because that is Khaya's territory and they don't want me to be captured by him. I tried to argue that Adeyemi was captured here in Joburg but that was futile; I have bodyguards that follow me everywhere ago to make sure I am safe and protected. I don't even understand why I'm going to school because my future is in the mansions anyway. I am studying Pharmacology because I need to have a useful degree according to my father. I have been secretly seeing this guy without my parent's knowledge; he gives me some sense of normalcy and I love it; I need it with everything that's happening.

"So are you coming over today?" He asks. We are on a phone call and I am in my bedroom getting ready to go to campus.

"I'll see what I can do but I'm not making any promises. You know how strict my parents are" I explain. It's not even about my parents but the fact that I am marked. I don't know how he's going to feel having sex with someone who has all these piercings in all the right places.

I hear him let out a sigh "Lola I'm not with you for sex. I just want to spend some time with my girlfriend without worrying about her bodyguards and all. I just want you to fall asleep in my arms that's all. I have no ulterior motives" He assures me it's not even that because I have no problem giving myself over to him. My sexual appetite is beyond my control and I'm worried I might not just end it at cuddling when we could do more than that. And then there's my body with the piercings. I don't know how he'll feel about that. He's the first guy to not be intimidated by my bodyguards and the first guy I like outside high school. I don't want to mess things up between us.

"I don't doubt that let me talk to my parents and hopefully I'll be able to sleep over this weekend okay?" I plead and he lets out a heavy breath.

"No problem see you on campus" He says and cuts the call on me. I let out a huge breath. I take my foundation and apply it to my tattoo to hide it. It's been a routine ever since I started school. Dad would be offended if he knew I hid that part of me but I need some kind of normalcy outside this house and the mansions.

"Morning honey" Mom says walking out of their bedroom. I smile.

"Morning mom how are you?" I ask her wrapping my arms around her in a warm hug.

"I'm okay are you okay?" She says breaking the hug.

"May I please sleep over at res this weekend there's a fresher's introductory braai" I plead and she looks at me I make those puppy eyes making her chuckle.

"You know I don't have a problem with you spending the night at school but you know your father baby I'll talk to him and text you what he says okay? I will try to convince him." Mom says placing her hand on my cheek in a comforting manner.

"Thank you mom"

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

“Are you ready for tonight’s meeting?” Isabelle asks walking into the bedroom I am on my iPad reading the news.

“No. Elders are panicking they are worried. 10 elders are dead in the past 10 weeks. Every week there’s been a death all the same way. Khaya claims he has nothing to do with it but I don’t believe him. I have someone keeping tabs on him but even he has nothing to report on him.” I say frustrated. She crawls on top of the bed and sits in front of me but I don’t remove the iPad from my face.

She places her hand over the iPad and lowers it she then slips her finger under my chin making me look up at her. “My love let me make you feel better before you leave for work” She says bringing herself closer to my dxck.

I’m about to respond when my eyes land on an article that pops up on my screen with the headline -THE PIPE MUTILATE HAS CLAIMED HIS 11TH VICTIM THIS WEEK! I click on the pop-up and an article comes onto my screen.

“My love” Isabelle says.

“Not now another elder has been killed.” I report she gets off of me and sits beside me “They are calling this person the ‘the pipe mutilate’. The media are feeding into this nonsense. They say they found him in his hotel room just like the rest whoever this person is they are targeting elders.” I grit angrily she rubs my upper arm. For the past 11 weeks a body has been showing up all killed the same way. Their cocks are always mutilated and the rings on their fingers are never found. The police don’t have anyone in custody or any leads on who might be responsible and all these killings happen mostly in Cape town. One or two happened in Joburg and that was at the beginning of the year. Forensics think it’s led by revenge or something like that. Whoever is behind these killings will regret ever messing with me when I find them.

AKINTOYE SAMUEL DANIELS

Khaya walks into the room I am in I look at him and then back down.

“Get up!” he commands and I remain on the floor unmoved by his command. “I said get the fxck up!” he says angrily.

I look up at him “Why? So you can kill me?” I ask him and he chuckles shaking his head no.

“I have nothing against you Akin my daughter told me how you took care of her. How you protected her during her stay in those places.” He says I can’t hide my shock when he mentions all of this. Why would Nichume tell her father about me? “Yeah I know. She seems to have a soft spot for you and for that reason I am letting you go. I need you to deliver a message to your masters” Khaya says and I look at him with a raised eyebrow.

“Where’s Adeyemi?” I ask him and he shakes his head no.

“Don’t worry yourself about him”>“Don’t worry yourself about him worry about getting out of here today. I know there’s a meeting at the mansion today your masters will be flying in from all over” He explains I still look at him waiting for his point “I need you to tell them to close the mansion here in Cape town down or else the next thing I will send will be more than just a cock ring but it will be a body part of his son. Tell them a bomb has been planted somewhere in the mansion if they do not cooperate then I will not hesitate to blow it all up. They have this weekend!” Khaya threatens normally I wouldn’t believe him but after all the months I have spent in this man’s captivity I know better than to take his threats lightly. Khaya is a man of his word and he stays true to his threat. I would know because I have been beaten cut and tortured in order to get information about the amount of time I spent with his daughter and the things I did to his daughter. Whenever I gave him the information he needed and confirmed it with his daughter he became more lenient towards me. I guess Nichume put in a good word for me.

“One of my men will drop you off a few feet away from the mansion you’ll have to walk the rest of the way. Someone will bring you food clothes and water to wash so that you have enough energy for your trip.”

Khaya says and then he turns on his feet.

“Why are you setting me free?” I ask him.

“Because I am a father despite what you taught my daughter. It doesn’t change the fact that you tried your best to protect her and keep her safe. I don’t take that lightly. My beef was never with you you just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.” He says and then walks out leaving me confused worried and with mixed emotions.

NICHUME TSHAWE MNGUNI

I take a nice long shower standing under the shower head enjoying the warm water hitting my skin our parents got us an apartment to share in the city so that we would be closer to university. I decided to take up psychology so that I can better understand myself and what I am going through. Therapy is okay but my therapist is only ever speaking from a privileged point all she is doing is advising me blindly and unknowingly of what she is saying because she has never walked a mile in my shoes nor will she ever understand what I went through. I get out of the shower and brush my teeth clean the bathroom and walk out meeting my sister in the corridor.

"You came in pretty late" She points out and I shrug.

"I was out with some of my classmates we got a little carried away" I explain she looks at me and I stare at her back.

"I'm all for you enjoying your life living it to the fullest but Chume if you need to talk. I am here for you don't drown yourself in alcohol as an escape" She pleads and I laugh.

"I don't drink Ntando I just enjoy going out with some friends that's all. I can't sleep without dreaming of him sexually Ntando this is the only way I can forget about him and what he did to me." I confess she gasps in shock. It's only then that I realize what I just confessed to her. I've always kept the dream thing between my therapist and myself. I tell her everything but there are things I keep from her because I don't want her to worry. Ntando will run to our parents about this. "Please don't tell mom and dad about this Ntando!" I beg she walks over to me slowly with calculated movements.

"You've been dreaming about him sexually?" She asks her voice low and full of concern.

"Ntandoyenkosi I need you to promise me you won't tell our parents!" I say.

"How long has this been happening Nichume?" She asks and I shrug.

"Ever since I got home it's never rape in the dreams I have of him and it's frustrating. I hate him Ntando but he haunts me" I admit.

"Maybe because he didn't make you feel like he was raping you when he did have you told your therapist about this?" She asks with so much worry and concern on her face.

"I've done everything she has suggested but it never worked. He stays in my mind and in my dreams Ntando. That's why I don't sleep that's why I always go out. It's the only way to stay awake and not sleep" I admit and she sighs pulling me into her arms.

"I'm sorry sis. Why didn't you tell me this sooner?" She asks.

"I didn't want to worry you. You already doing enough as it is. Your relationship is suffering because of me and I hate that." I pull out of her arms "I want you to have a normal life one of us deserves it." I assure her and she looks at me for a while "I'll be fine Ntando I have a coping mechanism and it's working perfectly." I assure her she looks at me skeptically before letting go of me.

"I don't want to have to call mom or dad Chume. Your coping mechanism cannot be going out every night. Eventually your body will shut down." She warns. I know she means well but the last thing my sister wants to hear is me telling her that I disappear to a sex club every night just to get a fix. It's nothing like those sex clubs that look like strip clubs and all this one is more reserved and well-respected because this is where people with issues like me find some kind of comfort and get to deal with the shxt we've been through. I found out about it on this other Facebook group I created a fake account so that nobody would know or find out about it. It's the only way I can cope with everything. It's the one thing that has helped me to date therapy wasn't working so I needed to get to a place where nobody would look at me weirdly or find my sexual urges weird and strange. So far it's working out very well for me some days I enjoy being dominated and some days I enjoy dominating a man. It's the only way I get to take my power back and actually feel free because I get to do everything on my own terms.

"You going to be late for class"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 22

NTANDOYENKOSI TSHAWE MNGUNI

“You can’t go to your apartment for a coat Ntando its just dinner” Lihle says and I shoot her a look.

“Khanya is making it hard to be with him and besides he’s not going to find out! I haven’t had dinner with a guy since last month I need to look cute!” I say and she rolls her eyes at me.

“I honestly think you are being dramatic you need to make Khanya understand. Also that guy looks a little old” Lihle says.

“He’s doing his masters he’s probably 23 or 24 years old.” I say and she shakes her head disapprovingly.

“I still think you shouldn’t just jump to go to dinner with a man you don’t know. What time is this dinner anyway? Where is he taking you?” Lihle asks all these questions.

“He said he was taking me to some restaurant. I checked his IG he looks loaded.” I say and she raises an eyebrow at me bored.

“You are just as loaded you don’t need this man’s money.” Lihle says trying to convince me against it. While Lihle and I met here I told her about my relationship with Khanya and according to her I’m making a mistake by not fixing things with him. She’s a sucka for a cute romance story and mna I’m tired of Khanya’s drama.

“I will see you when I get back okay?”

It's lunchtime when I rush home. Cape Town weather decided to switch up on me when I least expected it to. Getting inside the house; I rush to my room to look for a coat in my closet but I can't find one that will match my current shoes; I run to Nichume's room to search her closet for a coat I once saw her wearing. She has something in the dark red that I am looking for. I take out her dark red coat and put it on standing in front of her mirror. I put my hands in her pockets and I feel what I can assume to be rings. I pull my hand out with the rings and put them on her bed. It's a lot of rings. I pick them up and they are all the same design with different gems on them. Inside each ring band is a name written. I take a bowl from the kitchen and put the rings inside it and return them to her bedroom on top of the bed then rush out. I send her a quick text letting her know I took her coat and would be back later than normal today. I'm going out on a date with this guy tonight.

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

“Do you trust him to deliver the message?” Shadow asks and I nod my head turning my chair to face him.

“He has feelings for Nichume or he fell in love with her” I tell him. He raises an eyebrow.

“You picked all of that up from?” Shadow asks me with his eyebrow still raised. He doesn’t understand.

“The three months he spent here. I saw how he spoke about her. He’s conflicted himself. I would know because that was me when I met Mihlali. She confused me.” I admit and Shadow laughs throwing himself on the chair opposite me. “Akin is loyal to his masters I don’t doubt that but he is also in love with Nichume. He respects me and he’s seen my work. He knows I mean my word and my threats even more. He won’t risk it.” I say certainly and Shadow takes one last swing at his drink. “I’m trusting you” Shadow says and places his glass down. He sits up leaning in which means he’s about to be serious. “You remember the conversation I played for you three months back between the little Prince and I?” He asks he seems a bit off as he presses his iPad looking for lord knows what. I look at him waiting “The one about how Nichume was tied to the Prince?” he asks he seems worried. He has that look on his face where he already knows I will not like whatever he’s about to tell me “Promise you won’t flip out” Shadow says. I look at him. “I need you to promise me” He says leaning back. I let out a sigh and nod. “I’ve been tailing Chume” I shoot him a look and he raises his hands apologetically “I know what you said about trusting them and shxt. They saw her in hotels with different men. They thought it was Ntando niggas weren’t sure to tell you because they didn’t know how you would act” Shadow explains. Slowly my anger is rising but above all its concern.

“Shadow stop speaking in codes and say what you want to say!” I grit angrily. He looks at me cautiously.

“Nichume is ‘The Pipe Mutilate’. She’s the one that’s been killing all those men.” Shadow explains and I shake my head no in disbelief but also because my daughter is not a murderer. I laugh it off he continues; “Every guy seen with her at a hotel shows up dead the next day. She’s targeting elders” “If you are going to talk shit about my daughter then I suggest you get the fxck out!” I retort angrily because his accusations are unfounded and Nichume is all things but definitely not a murder. No father wants to hear that their daughter is a murderer and goes around sleeping with old men but I’m scared Shadow might be right because he never lies to me.

“Hear me out watch this” Shadow says handing me an iPad. “I’ve been tailing her for months now. The video has been with me for a week. I thought as her father you would want to know.” I watch the video skipping a few parts until she gets to this shady deserted area she comes out with this guy and they drive to a hotel nearby where they spend some time in the bedroom

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she comes out with this guy and they drive to a hotel nearby where they spend some time in the bedroom she walks out of the room with her bag in the early hours of the morning and returns to her

apartment. "Chume needs help. Whatever that prince did to her it messed her up. I always send our guys to clean up after her. I told them not to tell you this and to let me tell you" his words are cautious and calculated.

"You can leave" I say quietly. Shadow doesn't argue and walks out of the room. I throw the iPad on the wall angrily. How has this been happening and nobody thought to tell me? What do I even say to my wife? How do I approach Nichume about this? Is she aware of what she is doing? Is she still under that boy's manipulation?

I make my way to Akin's holding room and lock the door. I walk over to him and I hold him up by the hem of his t-shirt raising him up by the wall.

"What did you do to my daughter?" I ask him.

"I did nothing to her!" He retorts scared and worried for his life. He coughs when I throw him on the floor trying to catch his breath. "I swear I did nothing to your daughter!" He pleads.

"Nichume is killing people" I tell him. I don't miss the shock on his face.

"That's not possible!" Akin says. I look at him with my nose flaring with anger. "Adeyemi slept with her. Unless she's pregnant with his child then I don't know why she would kill people." Akin says with short breaths. "When Adeyemi didn't get initiated in time he would unconsciously kill the girls he slept with. Unless your daughter is an immortal then I don't know why she is behaving the way she is"

NICHUME TSHAWA MNGUNI

I'm on the phone with my classmate when she called me it was because she forgot something in my books and now we just chatting about today's lesson. I walk into my room and dad is sitting on my bed with a clicks plastic bag.

"I'll have to call you back Cebisa." I say and cut the call. "Dad we agreed you wouldn't show up unannounced!" I complain still standing by the door.

"Are you the pipe mutilate?" Dad asks and I frown looking at him confused.

"What?" I ask him because he is being ridiculous.

"Nichume I need you to be honest with me. Have you been killing elders?" he asks me again and I shake my head no.

"Dad I would never kill anyone. For you to even ask me that is just ridiculous. I mean no disrespect!" I say the last bit quickly.

"Then explain these" He says pulling a small bowl with rings in it. I take a step back. How did he find them?

"You had no right going through my things!" I retort and he chuckles. I didn't go through your things I found these on your bed. Now are you going to answer me or what?" He asks i feel tears rolling down my cheeks. "Those will not save you my angel. Now start talking!" Dad says he has his straight face on meaning he's not here to play around nor will my tears sway him.

"One day I was online trying to find answers about what's been happening with me. I came across a post i joined a facebook group with a burner account. When I started school it was easier for me to visit this other place where people who have strange fetishes meet up and make them come true." I confess and he says nothing but I can see that listening to me confess is heartbreaking for him. "I went there because I couldn't sleep without dreaming of Adeyemi I would even fantasize about him and that made me feel messed up. At first I did nothing I would just go there and visit the place doing nothing but it was like the more I went the worse the dreams became and the harder it was to hold back and control myself until eventually I gave in to the temptation and the insatiable hunger. The first guy took interest in me and when he saw I had the tattoo he tried to take advantage of me he tried to dominate me the way they did in the mansions killing him was self defence which turned into anger and from there I just couldn't stop. I stopped going there for a few days until I went back again sometimes I'm conscious and I know what I am doing and sometimes I am unaware of what is happening until a person is dead or until I find a ring in my things and I see the news the next day or a few days later. I can't control it and I don't know who to talk to or how to deal with whats been happening to me." I explain and he stands up "Dad I swear to you i didn't do this intentionally. I don't know whats wrong with me. I've tried to stop but its like the more I try the worse things become I-" I break off as tears are now flowing uncontrollably I suddenly have hiccups and i'm unable to continue narrating. I feel him wrap his arms around me his hands rub my back trying to keep me steady but my legs can't carry me up. He allows us to sit on the floor and he cradles me comfortingly like a little child.

"You might be pregnant" Dad says when I have calmed down I get off his chest almost falling.

"No!" I deny because there's no way I am pregnant by him.

"I bought you 3 tests lets be certain" He says and I shake my head no.

"I am not pregnant dad. I would know if I was" I say and he looks at me. I stand up and take one test box and go to the bathroom to give him the satisfaction. I walk back into the room and he is waiting on the bed for me.

"It says to wait for five minutes" I say and he nods.

"It might be the reason you've been doing what you doing. I spoke to Akin Shadow confirmed Adeyemi said it was possible." Dad explains and I shoot him a look.

"You spoke to Akin and Adeyemi? Why?" I confront him but he keeps quiet. "Dad!" I say.

"We captured them a few months back. I recently let Akin go Adeyemi is still at the warehouse." He confesses I look at him and he shrugs unbothered. "Dad why would you do that? Why would you start war with Adeyemi's father and uncles?" I ask him.

"They started the war when they took you from us for three whole years i'm just returning the favour." Dad says calm as hell.

"I want to see Adeyemi!" I demand and he laughs.

"That's not going to happen Angel h-" He's disturbed by my phone timer ringing indicating that our five minutes is up. I take the test from the pedestal and look at it. "What does it say?" he asks.

"I'm pregnant."

To Be Continued

MERRY Christmas to you all. Hope you had a great one ♥

Red Lace 23

NICHUME TSHAWE MNGUNI

The statement leaves a bitter taste in my mouth. Dad looks at me. It's not disappointment on his face but a mixture of emotions just like myself. Adeyemi has ruined my life in the worst possible way. I have university I can't have a child now.

"What's the next step?" Dad asks. I look at him shocked because he did not just ask me that. Can I at least process it first?

"I want to see him" I say and Dad shows no reaction to my demand.

"Get dressed and let's go" He says standing up from the bed. I look at him shocked because why is he not opposed to this demand?

"Will you not stop me or tell me I'm crazy?" I ask him and he shakes his head no.

"You not crazy and I will not stop you. He did this to you. He's the only one that can undo it." Dad says. I don't respond and wear a jacket and walk out with him.

"And mom?" I say and he shrugs his shoulders.

"We can head home today after seeing this boy" He says and I let out an exasperated sigh. Mihalikazi blows things out of proportion.

"For you to fall pregnant or whatever and for the manipulation to run as deep you need to have felt something for the Immortal that made you fall pregnant" Dad says stealing a glance at me. I don't know what he is implying but it's false!

"I don't know what you are talking about dad" I retort because how dare he suggest I felt something for that man?

"Alright no need to be mad at me. I just hope this won't be another case of Stockholm syndrome." He says returning his attention to the road and increasing the volume a bit. We get to this deserted place that's by the harbor with a lot of transportation crates. He parks the car and we head off. After all the crates there's a warehouse I'm assuming because it looks like it. He opens the door and we walk in. It's not as busy as I would have expected it would be I guess. I don't even know what I imagined because I only ever see such in movies. I believe this is the moment where it sticks that my father is a dangerous man. The few people around greet us as we head over to Adeyemi I assume. He opens the door and there he is tied up with his hands over his head kneeling on the concrete floor all beat up with his eyes closed.

I thought of everything except this moment. I never imagined what it would be like to see him again for the first time after what he did to me. Looking at him and how helpless he looks I find myself being overcome with anger and pity. The anger I understand the pity makes no sense to me because why do I pity the same man that raped me and made me pregnant?

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

I never imagined she would want to see me after everything that happened but she's here. I keep my eyes closed because I don't want to open them and find out her scent is nothing but a figment of my imagination. Even though I hear her shallow breath it's not enough to convince me otherwise because why would she want to see me? Another reason I am keeping my eyes closed is that I understand how much I have hurt her and I am scared to see the hate she has for me in her eyes. I feel a hot slap on my cheek. The hand is soft and smaller so I have no doubt that it's her slapping me.

"Look at me!" she demands spitting venom. I have never heard her sound this angry and confident. Usually when she speaks she has this shaky voice despite her confidence but this time around her voice is not laced with any kind of fear. Perks of being with daddy I guess.

"Hello little dove" I say and she snarls looking at me with disgust "Still hate me I see. I'm assuming that this is not a social visit? You glowing since the last time I saw you. You are either happy to be home or you are carrying my parting gift" I say proudly and I see Khaya taking a step closer to me with visible anger. It's definitely not the first so it has to be the latter. "Wait are you pregnant with our child little dove?" I ask. I'm surprised honestly. I didn't think she'd fall pregnant easily. I never imagined she was fertile especially because she got off the contraceptives a week before we released her. Interesting.

"Dad please give us a minute." She says. I look at Khaya to see if he's really going to leave his most prized pregnant possession with me. As if reading my mind he takes a long hard minute staring me down with hopes to probably intimidate me I think. Nichume places a hand on his forearm. He slowly softens as he looks into her eyes. This look she is probably giving him is one that never works on my father from the girls so I'm astonished when he melts and allows her to stay with me. Trusting. Khaya gives me one last threatening look before he leaves the room.

"I want you to undo what you did to me!" she demands. I look at her and chuckle.

"What I did to you would have never run this deep unless you felt something for me so enlighten me. At what point did you realise you had feelings for me?" I ask with the biggest smug. She huffs in frustration.

"I don't know" she says and I chuckle knowing how much it will annoy her. In the state she is in she is obligated to answer me honestly whether she wants to or not. She sucks in a breath. "It was that night you took me out to show me the city. You were different from what I was used to seeing. For that little time we spent together I even forgot that you killed my best friend." She admits I see tears welling up in her eyes. I take a moment to remember the day she is referring to and we honestly did have fun that one day. "I've answered you. Now please undo what you did to me. You've proved your point. I felt something for you. I'm pregnant with your child and it's turning me into a killer. Please just make it stop I can't live like this." She confesses frustration visible on her face and desperation audible in her voice. "Please" she begs touching something deep within me.

"Come closer to me we need to be at eye level

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AD

"I instruct and she kneels before me. Her perfume is a sweet scent intoxicatingly honey-sweet. Just as I had imagined she would smell. "Look into my eyes" I say and she does just that. I look down at her because with her kneeling I am still taller than she is. "You are free free of all manipulation. From hereon no one will ever manipulate you or compel you to do anything. Live your life free and rid of any kind of compulsion Nichume." I say quietly and for a minute she doesn't move or react but I know that the manipulation is gone.

"So what now?" Nichume asks me. I look at her confused. "Does this mean I'll stop unconsciously killing elders?" She asks and I am taken aback by her question.

"What do you mean you are killing elders?" I ask her unable to contain my shock.

"I'm pregnant and this thing I am carrying is making me murder elders" she explains. I won't lie her calling our child a thing stings a bit.

"Nichume if you are killing elders that means your life is at risk. You need to attend the gathering and have a ritual performed to welcome you into our society so that the ancestors may protect you and this child you are carrying." She shakes her head no with every word I let out. "This is serious Nichume if word comes out that you are behind the killings then your life will be in danger you and the child and let's not forget that your twin looks just like you!" I remind her and she stops and stares at me she gets off the floor and on her feet.

"I am not going back to that place!" She says sternly.

"Then contact my mother and father and have them perform the ritual. Explain what is going on or else things will only worsen from hereon. They are the only ones that can ensure your safety." I explain.

"I can get rid of it can't I?" she asks stopping from her pacing.

"That will only worsen the situation. You are pregnant an immortal modern medicine will not work and ancestors will only punish you with something worse. This child you are carrying needs to have a welcoming ceremony performed for it and it can only be performed by a head elder and mistress. My parents"

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

I watch the interaction between Nichume and this boy it is strange watching them interact. I have no doubt that there's some kind of chemistry between the two of them but I doubt Nichume will abort this child after whatever conversation they are having ends. Shadow walks into the room I am in.

"I wish I was also your daughter so that you would also listen to me" He jokes. I shoot him a look and he laughs making me laugh too. He's annoying when he wants to be.

"Don't bore me!" I say and he shrugs his shoulders.

"How are things in there?" He asks me and I shrug my shoulders.

"I have no clue. I think he's removed the compulsion. As for what they are still discussing I have no idea nor do I want to know." I admit honestly. The last thing I want is my daughter telling me that she wants to co-parent with that asshole in there.

"Is she okay?" Shadow asks with concern. I nod.

"I think over time she will be. She is pregnant" I tell him and he turns to look at me probably hoping to see me ready to kill that boy. "What?" I ask him.

"I'm shocked at the fact that he is still alive even after making your daughter pregnant. I will never confirm you my friend." Shadow says and then he turns on his heels to pour a drink.

"What is it?" I ask him as he turns to me carrying both our glasses.

"Okoye and Adiche are here in Cape Town their master will be landing around 6 pm" Shadow reports. I look at him taking the glass from his hand with a grateful nod. "What's the plan?" Shadow asks.

"Olayemi knows what needs to be done in order for him to get his son back. And with the last few killings I know they are shaken. They won't take my threat lightly." I say confidently but the look on Shadow's face tells me otherwise. "What?" I ask him.

"I'm all for your confidence and whatever but that Okoye is unstable. Who is to say that he won't retaliate? At the moment I'm sure they think you are the ones killing the elders. I can't imagine they will take it lying down." Shadow warns and he has a point.

Nichume walks out of the room. She looks stressed.

"Uncle" she greets Shadow who nods acknowledging her.

"How are you kiddo?" Shadow asks and she lets out a heavy sigh. She looks at me and then at Shadow.

"He knows everything. He was the one that came to me about you" I assure her and she nods.

"Apparently for the killings to stop his father and a headmistress need to perform some ritual to welcome the baby and whatever. If I try to get rid of it everything will only get worse and if word came out I was responsible then they would go after our family." Nichume explains "Daddy I don't want to go back there. He removed the manipulation but lord knows I don't want to ever go to that place again" she says and throws herself in my arms.

"You won't go back there" I assure her. Shadow's phone rings and he steps aside to answer it. He turns to us nodding looking shaken.
"Shadow what the hell is it?" I ask him because he looks shaken. "Shadow speak dammit!" I demand and he lets out a breath.
"Mihlali was involved in an accident. She's being rushed to the hospital."

To Be Continued

Red Lace 24

NTANDOYENKOSI TSHAWE MNGUNI

He opens the chair for me to sit; I am shocked by his level of mannerism. He is such a gentleman it's shocking. The man opens doors; asks if I'm comfortable and he does everything right for someone his age. I asked and he told me he was 23 and pursuing a career in biochem. His name is Ludwe Soyinka he mentioned that he was mixed; his father is Yoruba and his mother is Xhosa. He sits opposite me and rests his left hand on the table.

"So Ntando. What's your story? Your family is a big thing here in Cape Town intimidating actually." He says and I chuckle.

"Yet it didn't stop you from asking me out" I challenge and he shrugs his shoulders.

"What can I say? I love a challenge and you seem like a great one. A monied woman doesn't intimidate me. My ego is not fragile." He says proudly. I find myself laughing and very much charmed by his confidence. The conversation flows and the server comes to take our orders.

"So what's it like being a triplet? I stalked your Instagram." He says without shame making me giggle because I did the same.

"It's fun actually. I come from a big blended family so being one of three is really not bad. I love my siblings we are tight AF. So tight that I know my sister won't mind that I borrowed her coat to impress a man" I say and he chuckles.

"That is cute so you live with your sister? What about your brother?" He asks and takes a sip of his juice.

"He's studying in Joburg sadly but it's whatever. Where did you get your ring if you don't mind? My sister has a collection of them." I say and I notice him shift uncomfortably retracting his hand back.

"It is a family heirloom. You said your sister is collecting?" He asks and I nod.

"Yeah she has a few of them seeing yours now. I want to get her another one to add to her collection as an apology for prying" I say and he raises an eyebrow curiously making me laugh "Well she came in this morning. Sis barely gets any sleep out of worry and concern I pried. Ever since we got her back I'm just trying to be as normal as I possibly can about everything but she doesn't make it as easy for me. I'm sorry for oversharing it's only the first date. Let's talk about something else" I suggest and he's more than willing to change the subject. I am glad we have moved from my family to talking about life and meaningless conversations. He pays for our food and drives me home when I receive a call from Nichume.

NICHUME TSHAWWE MNGUNI

Dad breaks the hug at the mention of mom's name. One thing about this man is he loves his wife to the death of him. He rushes out of the room and I have to run after him with my short legs to his car. The drive to the hospital is a silent one. Not even music is playing in the car. We get to the hospital and he rushes to the reception to enquire. I decide to call Ntando.

"Hey sis" she answers she sounds like someone having the time of her life.

"Hey Ntando where are you?" I ask her because I'm concerned after what Adeyemi said. I have to be extra careful.

"I am on my way home what's up?" She asks.

"Mom was in an accident. I'll text you the name of the hospital" I say and then cut the call because Ntando will be asking me questions I have no answers to. I'm not sure if I should be telling Yethu just yet so as to not scare him. Knowing him he will fly home. I walk over to dad who is shouting at the

receptionist about his wife. I touch his arm and he shoots me a look. His face softens when he notices it's me.

"She is just doing her job she will let us know when we can see her" I say. He lets out a breath. "I called Ntando she is on her way here." I let him know and he just nods walking over to the waiting chairs.

CATHRINE PHIRI

I walk into the restaurant and I find Okoye sitting and waiting for me. Okoye and I go way back he taught me all the skills I needed to know. He was my dungeon master when I was still living in the mansions as much as I am a mistress and superior to him but I respect him greatly just as he respects me. He stands up to share a hug with me before we both sit down.

"Mistress Cat how have you been? Long time no see." He says and I smile at him leaning back on my chair. It really has been a long time.

"I've been surviving. How have things been this side? Olayemi still giving you trouble?" I ask him and he turns sour.

"Olayemi won't listen to reason. You know his son has been missing for 3 months now and he's not doing anything to find him. He's becoming weak all because of that wife of his." he spits out angrily I raise an eyebrow because as far as I know Okoye respects Olayemi and would never speak ill of him. "He told the elders his son was in the UK" I say and he chuckles.

"UK? Please. Master is allowing his wife to carry his balls. Whatever she says goes. When he was with you he carried his own balls and he did exactly what needed to be done. This him? I don't know him." Okoye says and sips his drink angrily. I find myself smiling to myself. Knowing that I was the only mistress to make him powerful sits well with me. It's a good stroke to my ego.

"Then maybe we need to send whoever has the prince a message" I suggest. One thing about Okoye he never thinks things through. He is always so quick to betray his master especially if he believes he's doing it for him.

"I'm already threading on thin ice with the Master if I do anything now it will only jeopardize everything" he says I give a side smile.

"I never took you for a weakling Okoye the most powerful dungeon Master to ever live is scared to go against his boss in order to get his son back? The sole heir to the mansions?" I say and shrug my shoulders taking a sip of my drink I see him flare his nose angrily at my comment. Okoye will never change.

"I am anything but a weakling!" he says angrily I lean in on the table and so does he. I look him dead in the eye.

"You will get revenge for Olayemi because it is what he needs to get his son back! You will not tell him about our meeting!" I say and he nods I lean back and take a sip of my drink.

"You right mistress" Okoye says. This is the only way for as long as the prince is missing then this is how things need to be. Adeyemi needs to be found and that baby this girl is carrying needs to die!

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

I land in Cape Town with my wife Okoye will be fetching us at the airport and driving us to our hotel. Being in this city knowing that my son is held somewhere here doesn't sit so well with me. It's frustrating but I have no choice but to dance to Khaya's tune until I get him back. We meet Okoye in the parking he greets me with a handshake.

"Mrs. Ibrahim" He snarls at my wife I've come to accept that these two will never get along.

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"Helvetica Neue" Helvetica Arial sans-serif; line-height: 24px; padding: 0px;">"Okoye" She says rolling her eyes at him. We get inside the car while he gets in front.

"So what do I need to know?" I ask him as he drives off.

"I sent Khaya a message" Okoye says proudly.

"What message? Under whose orders?" I ask him. Okoye could jeopardize my getting my son with his impulsive decisions.

"I figured the only way to get Adeyemi back is by fighting fire with fire. His wife is in hospital as we speak I sent someone to cause her a little accident." He explains always so proud.

"Stop this car!" I command.

"Are you mad?" Isabelle snaps at him and Okoye stops the car. "You had no right meddling in our family affairs!" Isabelle is yelling at him. I get out of the car and Okoye gets out right after me.

"I thought you would be happy" he says I throw a punch at his cheek making him hold it and I throw an uppercut making him look up. He is both shocked and pissed. I throw another punch at him and then trip him so he falls to the ground. I start kicking him angrily. Okoye has disrespected me multiple times but this time he has gone too far. I'm not scared of Khaya and the only reason I haven't retaliated is that I owe him this for his daughter. He needs to do whatever it is for me to get my son back safely. I keep kicking him until my wife pushes me away from him.

"Yemi this is not the way." She says placing her hand on my cheek to calm me down. I am livid and blinded by rage. At this point Khaya will never let this go.

"He fxcked up Zimasa! He fxcked up!" I say angrily turning away from my wife I hear Okoye coughing trying to catch his breath. "You! You are out! You are banned from the mansions!" I say turning to him he's trying to sit up whilst coughing in pain.

"You would dare choose a stranger over your brother?" he says in between painful heaves.

"You have just started a war one we cannot win!" I say as my phone rings it's a call from the mansion.

"Yes" I answer.

"Master this is Akin. Khaya said to give you a message" Akin starts off I worry because where is my son?

"Where is Adeyemi?" I ask him.

"Khaya still has him but he said to tell you that the mansion has a bomb planted in it" Akin reports I find myself kicking a stone out of anger. How could he have known already that we were behind his wife's accident?

"When did he let you go?" I ask him.

"About 2 hours ago" Akin says meaning that Khaya already had the bomb planted even before his wife's accident.

"Who is at the mansion now? Everyone needs to clear out!" I instruct him.

"We've cleared out everyone and sent mail to the elders not to attend the gathering. They are all in the hotel as we speak" Akin reports.

"Alright. That's good How is my son?" I ask him.

"He's strong he's not easily broken." Akin reports and I let out a breath feeling some sense of relief.

"Alright we will talk. I need you to be somewhere safe until the bomb is found and disarmed" I say to him.

"That's going to be a problem Khaya said if anyone tried to remove it wherever it is it would go off. There's no disarming it." Akin reports. I drop the call on him.

"What?" Isabelle asks.

"That was Akin Khaya planted a bomb in the mansion. It's a warning that this is our last gathering in Cape Town else he kills everyone." I tell her and Okoye laughs.

"This is what happens when you give a man power he doesn't have. Had you kept his daughter none of this would have happened!" Okoye spits out "Mobolaji is with his other daughter as we speak just say the word and it's done." Okoye says talking about his son. I am about to march over to him when Isabelle gets in front of me to stop me.

"He's not worth it"

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

I excuse myself to get away from the girls Ntando just got here about 5 minutes ago. I call Shadow because he needs to tell me this was a typical accident and not what I think it was. These Nigerians coming into my city could not have come here to start a war not when I have the upper hand.

"How is she?" is the first thing he asks me.

"Blow it up" I say to him.

"What?" shadow asks as if he did not just hear me.

"I said blow up that fxcking mansion into pieces!" I repeat gritting my teeth angrily.

"You don't even know if it was them" Shadow says.

"Should I send someone else to do it?" I ask him.

"No I'll do it."

To Be Continued

Red Lace 25

CATHRINE PHIRI

My name is Cathrine Phiri but you can call me Cat. You don't know me yet but over time you will. After my meeting with Okoye I return to my hotel room. I didn't book into the same hotel as the other elders and mistresses because for one I don't like many people and those elders are misogynistic and sexist for my liking. I make a quick phone call.

"Mistress" He answers ever so loyal.

"I need you to send word to Khayaletu Mnguni that Olayemi was responsible for his wife's accident and give him the address I am about to send to you now" I instruct him.

"Yes Mistress" he says and I drop the call on him. This should be fun to watch. These men have done as they please for a long time. It's about time I got rid of all of them. I send a group text to all the mistresses to meet up in a conference hall in a hotel nearby. I am about to enter the shower when there's a knock on my door. I pick up my towel and wrap it around my body then make my way to the door. When I open the door it's Olamide. He stands in front of me looking like the God that he is. Just like his brother Olayemi he is a gorgeous man. He oozes sexy slightly shorter than Olayemi but definitely the right size down there like his brother. Unlike Olayemi Olamide never wanted a part in this life and hence he's never in the country and only comes when necessary.

"You are here" I say. I didn't expect him to honor my invitation.

"You should know by now when you call I always honor the invitation" he admits. I find myself blushing like a little child. This man will be the death of me. He's a pleasant distraction and unlike his brother he actually likes me. If I wasn't busy chasing behind Olayemi this man and I would be far right now. He wraps his arm around my waist walking in and turning me around with him until he has my back against the door with him in front of me. My breath hitches in response to this sexual advance. He smells sexy! Strong woody and manly he lowers his face to mine and stares deep into my eyes. I wrap my arms around his neck.

"What do you want Cat?" He asks slowly and seductively as my name leaves his lips.

"You!" I challenge and he gives me his most charming side smile before he picks me like I weigh nothing. I wrap my legs around his waist as he leads us to the bed. He throws me on the bed and kneels between my legs my kitty dampens in response to all of this tension between us. He stares deep into my eyes. I raise my hands over my head hinting that he ties me up. Growing up in the mansions you find yourself unable to enjoy vanilla sex. It's uninteresting. I want to be tied up and fcked until I can't feel my legs because that is what I grew up to and am used to. Olamide smiles at me teasingly before he takes off his tie and uses it to tie my hands. He doesn't stop there no he wraps his fingers around my throat choking me and starts kissing me sloppy and dirty until my lips feel numb and I'm short of breath panting like a starved dog. He breaks the kiss and looks deep into my eyes.

"If I fck you; right here right now you and I are official. You are mine alone?"

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

I kiss her perfectly waxed vagina and then part her pussy lips with my fingers and flicker my tongue over her clit-piercing and she lets out a moan enjoying the feel of my tongue dancing over her piercing. I am angry and stressed but I need to ready her before going in. Isabelle is not some slave I picked up on the mansion.

"Baby" Isabelle moans but I don't respond. I continue what I'm doing licking and sucking on her clit piercing until she's restless and trying to move away from me. I hold her down with her legs open and fck her with my tongue in her hole. The moans leaving her lips are enough motivation I can't stop not now that I know she is close.

"Yemi I'm going to cum." Isabelle warns but I don't stop I move from her hole and back up to her clit and lick and bite her but not with enough pressure but just enough to get her to release violently and her back arches off the bed. Her breathing is heavy and she's trying to catch her breath in between her moans.

I climb up to her beautiful face. I pin her hands over her head holding her wrists together while I thrust my manhood inside of her making her moan and arch her back off the bed from both pain and

pleasure. I move in and halfway out of her before slamming back into her. My free hand moves to her throat to choke her while I pound into her making her gasp with each stroke. Her moans are short pantings trying to catch her breath. I move my mouth down to her boob and suck on her piercing playing with it between my teeth sucking and biting her. I feel her insides clenching around my manhood enjoying what I am doing to her. I pull out of her and let go of her hands and boob. She huffs in frustration.

"Suck me off Princesa" I command and sit beside her I know how much she hates me pulling out of her as she is releasing but I need the release more. Isabelle kneels between my legs and puts me inside her warm mouth. I shiver at the excitement.

"Calm down" she says pulling out. I push her head back down wanting to feel her warm tongue on me again.

"Don't punish me Isa" I command and she giggles and gives me that naughty look of hers I love so much. She goes back to my dxck and sucks on the tip finding my very sensitive spot and focuses on that while giving me a hand job. I can't help the groans escaping my lips right now. The sensation is amazing breathtaking even. I can't hold on any longer on the bed and my legs can't remain still at all. At this point I feel like a little teenage boy getting his first blxwjob ever. She continues that as I slowly expand in her hand. She goes all the way in with her warm mouth that deep throats me. If she continues I won't be able to hold back. She can feel me about to cum so she starts to move up and down gagging in between. I am happy to say that she gives the best blxwjob and still gives me that innocent sexy look I can't get over. She continues until I cum in her mouth and she swallows all my load. She wipes the corners of her mouth and then sits on my dxck with her legs on either side of mine squatting on top of me.

"I love you" I say unable to keep the emotions I am feeling right now. I can safely say that I don't go a day without confessing these three little meaningless words to my beautiful wife.

"I love you too" Isabelle says and then starts to move when I'm fully in. She moves up and down slowly and then increases her pace. She grinds on me and moves her waist in circles. I'm groaning because she's moaning.

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

Shadow calls me about 10 minutes or so after our initial call. I walk out of earshot of the girls to answer his call. Biko and his wife and Lara are all here because they heard about the accident.

"Is it done?" I ask him before he can say anything.

"Yes it's done and you were right. This hit on your wife was Olayemi probably retaliating because of his son. Word on this street is that the elders are all booked in the Southern Inn. Do you need me to finish them off?" Shadow asks I take a good minute trying to process everything and whether I'm doing the right thing.

"Kill them all" I say to him. The hotel belonged to Mihlali's late husband who left all his businesses amongst Mihlali and the rest of his family. "Make it look like faulty wiring. I want all of them dead!" I command.

"That's 200 people including the staff at the hotel. Are you sure?" He asks.

"Did I stutter?" I ask him and he goes silent "Now get it done! I'm trusting you Shadow! There's no war without a few fatalities and let him know that it was me." I say and cut the call. I turn to look at my family with Mihlali's friends. This is for my daughters and my wife. I make my way back to them and sit between the girls who rest their heads on my shoulder. Just then the doctor calls out Mihlali's surname.

"Yes?" I respond getting up with the rest of everyone.

"We operated on her. At this point we are waiting for her to wake up. I have to warn you the accident was pretty bad. We should expect amnesia or even brain damage."

"What?" Nichume says with a shaky voice. I pull her to me.

"I am sorry Mr. Mnguni but we did everything we possibly could to help her. She suffered a severe head injury from that accident. We should be glad she is still alive" the doctor says and I shoot him a look. He quickly apologizes for his wording.

"Which room is she in?" I ask him because I refuse to take whatever word he is giving us. There's no way I am losing Mihlali not now that our daughter needs her the most. We walk into her room and the girls rush to her bedside and each takes her hand in their hands. I stand at the foot of the bed and watch them cry over their mother.

"Mom please don't leave me. Come back to us" Nichume pleads laying her head on her mother's bed and holding her hand. I walk out of the room because it hurts seeing my children like this.

"How is she?" Biko asks as I walk out of the room.

"Non-responsive" I respond. Yoza walks over to us and touches my arm.

"How are you? How are the girls?" She asks with so much concern and I shrug.

"They are hurting. Nichume is pregnant." I say and Yoza gasps in shock.

"What? How? Did Mihlali know?" Biko asks and I shake my head no.

"We hadn't told her. We only found out today when I went to see her. That boy raped her and made sure to make her pregnant with his child. She's not coping" I admit Biko lets out a breath. He is as shocked as I was I guess.

"Is she keeping it?" Yoza asks and I shrug.

"She has no choice" I say.

"And the person that did this? Where is he? Any luck finding him?" Yoza asks. I look at Biko who shrugs his shoulders.

"No we haven't found him yet. The person we spoke to mentioned some shxt about doing a ritual for Nichume and the baby she is carrying." I say and Yoza shakes her head.

"For what? There's no way that child is going anywhere near that place after what they did to her!" She says confidently and passionately.

"I need to breathe" I say to them and walk out of the hospital. I need to breathe away from everyone. I call Yethu because I don't want him to find out on the TV.

"Dad" He answers.

"Hey buddy how are you?" I ask him and he chuckles.

"We really don't have to do this dad. What's up? You only call when it's urgent or it's an emergency." Yethu says and I laugh.

"No you do that kid not me. Are you back in your room?" I ask him.

"Yes what's going on? You have your serious voice on." He points out making me chuckle.

"It's your mother kid. She was in an accident a few hours ago. The doctor says she could be brain damaged or have amnesia." I report and he goes silent for a while. "Yethu are you still there?" I ask him.

"Are you fighting with someone? Is mom collateral damage?" he confronts me.

"Now I understand you are hurting but you are not going to accuse me of whatever it is you are implying. I will pretend you did not just say that because you are hurting." I say sternly and hurt that he would imply I would put my family in danger.

"I'm not a child dad I know you deal shady. Is mom's accident even an accident or whoever you are beefing with is using her to send a message to you?" He asks.

"If you are ready to come home let me know. I have to go!" I say and drop the call. I sit on the pavement and just process. My phone beeps a message from Shadow telling me it's done and that they got Okoye. I call him.

"Shadow what do you mean about Okoye?" I ask him.

"Our guys found him on the side of the road and brought him to the warehouse."

To Be Continued

Red Lace 26

ADAEGO IBRAHIM ABIOLA

We are mid strokes; I am screaming holding on tightly to the bedsheets as my orgasm nears. It has been a while since the last time someone did me this good. Not to say my husband doesn't but he will never compare to a DM because they train DMs to hit it exactly how you want or need it. Also their embedded beads make the experience ten times better than any ring ever would. A door opening disturbs our moment. He stops and we both turn to look at the door only to find my husband walking in. I give him a side smile with a wink as his face turns navy with anger. This one gets off of me with panic and fear of what is about to happen.

"Master" He says getting off the bed and me hurriedly hiding his cxxk. I just stare at my husband waiting for him to go off.

"Get out!" Ike screams at the poor guy. He picks up his clothes and runs out like a little coward. I roll my eyes and get off the bed.

"You don't respect me do you?" He says marching towards me i pick up a robe on the floor and wear it but do not tie it.

"Respect you? I could have continued with him even with you standing by that door but I let him go. Don't tell me about respect." I say calmly.

"On our bed Adaego!" He yells I chuckle.

"Technically it's the hotel's bed and bedsheets. Also why are you even mad right now? Were you not the one that said something about us having lives before this marriage?" I ask him and walk over to him standing in front of him. "I did not do anything you haven't been doing honey." He grabs me by my neck as I am about to walk away. "Do it. Lu mi (Hit me)!" I say with a conniving provocative smile. He looks at me and squeezes making it almost hard to breathe "Lu Mi!" I provoke him and he drops his hand. I don't dare give him the satisfaction of rubbing my neck in his presence even though it hurts like hell. My pride won't let me.

"You are a whxre! I have never brought her here or anywhere near you out of respect for you and our marriage!" Ike says angrily.

"Your respect sounds a little subjective don't you think? Your respect only benefits you and not the other party in this marriage with you. Ike my love you started this. This is the marriage you wanted. Didn't you tell me that our marriage was nothing but a transaction? Well then let it continue being so." I say and turn on my heels feeling proud. Nobody messes with Adaego! I am my father's daughter through and through and I will be respected.

"I will let your father know of this!" He threatens and I laugh.

"Please abeg! Let him also know about your outside activities" I turn to him and face him "Let him know that you said our marriage was a business transaction and that you had a life before me to which you are still living. Ike this is the marriage you told me we would have from hereon I am merely playing my part in it. Now if you will excuse me I need to go finish because you disturbed us before I could reach an orgasm. I think you should ask him for some pointers. You could learn a thing or two from him."

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

"Come in" I say to him as I step aside to welcome him in. It's Okoye's son. He called me about a few minutes ago asking to see me because he couldn't reach his father. My wife is in the shower while he and I meet in the lounge area of our booked hotel room. I do not like being booked in a hotel that has all the other elders. Those people are a headache.

"What is this about?" I ask him gesturing that he can sit on the couch and he does.

"Father asked that I pursue the sister of that girl that was a slave and was recently released this year" He says "Khaya's other daughter Ntando." He reports.

"And what did you gain out of this Ntando?" I ask him.

"Her sister might be behind the killings of the masters" He reports. I sit back and cork an eyebrow.

"The girl is tiny. Are you sure?" I retort waiting for him to continue and prove his allegations.

"Ntando mentioned how she borrowed her sister's jacket and she found a couple of rings that look like mine Master" he explains and I find myself smiling. Now Khaya cannot fault me for waging war against him.

"Stick with the girl and find out more. Do not mention this to anyone else. Am I clear?" I command and he nods. I excuse him and he leaves my room. This is just the leverage I need to get my son back. I'm about to call Khaya when I receive a call from one of the guards.

"Olayemi" I answer.

"Master the hotel that had all the elders and mistresses has blown up. It doesn't look like there are any survivors but the police are here and investigating for any survivors" He reports and I swear everything goes blank. I drop the call on him. Khaya has gone too far! I call him and he answers immediately putting him on loudspeaker.

"I will take everything and everyone that you love! Watch me!" I threaten.

"You've already tried taking my wife. I was simply returning the favor" Khaya says confidently and smugly.

"I did not send any word about your wife!" I defend. "You have no idea what you have just done. Every one of your family's deaths will be on you! You watch!"

"And while you are at it make sure you don't kill your grandchild and have your son hate you for the rest of his miserable life!" Khaya says it takes me a good minute to process what he has just implied. There's no way he is saying what I think he is saying! "From what I saw we might just have some kind of Romeo from that son of yours without a Juliet"

"What did you just say?" I ask him.

"Your son's so-called parting gift is growing inside of my daughter and it's made her kill your precious elders" Khaya explains. Isabelle walks in as I am on the call. She must have heard everything.

"You're bluffing!" I say because there's no way. They put all slaves on contraceptives.

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sans-serif;color:#000000;background-color:transparent;font-weight:400;font-style:normal;font-variant:normal;text-decoration:none;vertical-align:baseline;white-space:pre;white-space:pre-wrap;">"Alright I will let you speak to your son and he will confirm everything" he says and drops the call on me. Damn you Khaya! Damn you Adeyemi for linking our families like this if Khaya is telling the truth.

"Nichume is pregnant?" Isabelle asks. I really wish she hadn't heard that part.

"He's lying!" I retort.

"And what happens if he isn't? Adeyemi raped that child pregnancy is possible!" Isabelle argues.

"She was on contraceptives! It's not possible!"

She laughs "Was I not on contraceptives when I fell pregnant with Adaego? Female bodies respond differently to different pills Yemi. If that child is carrying our grandchild then you and Khaya have to put whatever differences you have aside and make peace for the sake of our grandchild!" she reasons and honestly it bores me because it means Khaya will get away with everything. "You know I am right. If really she is responsible for the elder's deaths then she will need protection only we can provide. She will need a ritual to be performed to prevent her from killing any more elders and you know this. Adeyemi went through these killings and fortunately he is Immortal so he could control himself Nichume is human and the child she is carrying is obviously dangerous and powerful to make her kill this many people. She needs protection"

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

I walk into the warehouse. I have a couple of guys keeping watch at the hospital making sure that nothing happens to my wife and family. All the kids are safe in their respective cities including Lethu in the country he is living in. Shadow updates me on the status of the hotel blast and the number of people that have

been identified as dead. The death toll keeps on rising. The number so far has reached a hundred and it is still rising. I should feel terrible but again what's war without a few casualties here and there? The hotel will be rebuilt within a year or so. I need Olayemi and his wife to come and perform this damn ritual today tonight so that my daughter can be safe and become the daughter I know her to be without this little monster controlling her.

"Where is he?" I ask Shadow as he leads me to the room with Okoye.

"He is there. We had a bit of fun with him before you got here and would you believe that he is not an immortal?!" He asks rhetorically making me chuckle.

"I need you to get someone to clean up the little prince. I will be setting up a video call with his father. It's about time they see each other" I explain and Shadow stops in his tracks as if he does not believe what I have just told him.

"What? It's only been like three months. It's not enough!" Shadow complains.

"My daughter is pregnant. Her mother is in a coma and could wake up with amnesia or memory loss. Things have changed now!" I explain angrily. "I need them on our side. I need my daughter and the grandchild she is carrying protected and only they can do it. Lord knows when my wife will wake up I know nothing about motherhood and getting our daughter through all of this." I retort and Shadow lets out a sigh.

"At least kill Okoye to send a message. If you bow down now then that will only make them disrespect you!" Shadow says I stop in my tracks and turn to him.

"They fear me enough. That hotel blast was no child's play. They know better than to ever go anywhere near my province and my children. Now are we going to have a problem or are you going to do as told?" I ask him. He looks at me for a second and walks away angrily. I walk into the room Okoye is in and he looks a mess. The boys really fucked him up.

"What do you want? Are you here to gloat?" He spits out angrily.

"Nc nc nc nc. They really beat you up huh?" I say and he spits out blood which lands right in front of me. I chuckle. "For a man in your position you really ought to be a bit nicer to me" I warn.

"How's that daughter of yours? You know I'm the one that was responsible for keeping her in the mansion. I was the one who kept moving her before Oluwa could do anything. Let the prince go. I'm the one you want!" He confesses and I take a step back because if I take it forward I am going to kill him.

"I don't gain anything by keeping you here or keeping you alive. You are of no use to me!" I remind him and he chuckles.

"You think? How's Ntando? Apparently she went on a date with a certain young man" Okoye says and then he laughs out loud at me. "Oh you don't know? Oops my bad!" he says and chuckles.

"You're bluffing!" I say and he shrugs his shoulders.

"Okay" he says and keeps quiet. Ntando had better not have gone out with an elder. I walk out of the room needing to talk to her and hear her tell me that she did not.

"Dad where are you?" She asks the minute she answers the phone.

"Who did you go out with today?" I growl.

"Are you spying on me?" She asks angrily.

"Ntandoyenkosi I will not ask you again. Who was it?" I ask her more sternly.

"Some guy from school. Why?" she says unbothered.

"Do you want to die? Are you purposefully trying to get yourself captured? This weekend is not the weekend to be going out with strangers! Your mother's accident was not an accident. The people that took Nichume are here in Cape Town. Who knows what they will do to get to her?" I yell and she keeps quiet. "I love you and I care about you and your siblings. Whatever you and this boy have end it. Send a picture to uncle Shadow and he will do a quick sweep to make sure you are safe." I explain in a more gentle and fatherly tone.

"I'm sorry daddy" she says so innocently but Ntando is a rebel. She won't take this lying down and even with this change in tone I know she's not going to stay away from this boy. After the call I make my way to see the little prince and I find him dressed up and clean. They even trimmed his hair.

"To what do I owe the pleasure of being pampered?" He asks with a smug. This kid annoys me. He grates my nerves.

"You are being pampered for your phone call with your father" I say relaxed but I don't miss the shock on his face.

"What? What's the catch?" he asks and I shrug.

"If I want my daughter to be okay I need to do what's right for her. If you convincing your father that she is pregnant is what's right then so be it."

To Be Continued

Red Lace 27

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

"Brother" I say as we both sit down across from each other. With everything that has happened he is the only one I am trusting to help me pull this ritual off.

"You seem stressed I can see the lines on your forehead" Olamide points out and I chuckle.

"Do you blame me? All the elders are dead Olamide. Okoye is missing Adiche is trying to contain this elders situation and find out how everything happened. I mean how is it that all the mistresses were out in time? All this is too calculated." I say and he raises an eyebrow waiting for me to continue.

"You think someone planned this?" my brother asks curiously and I nod.

"The mistresses were all booked in the same hotel and yet they all so conveniently were in a meeting it's too much of a coincidence brother. Whoever is behind this explosion planned this to the tee" I say.

"And you don't think it's Khaya?" he asks and I shake my head no.

"Khaya would have killed everyone he would never have spared the mistresses because what would he gain by keeping them alive and killing the elders?" I ask and he seems to believe this theory of mine.

"It's clear that we are dealing with a female here this vendetta this person has is clearly against the elders but how are we still alive then?" Olamide asks and I shake my head.

"Unless that's the plan to keep us alive for whatever they want to achieve" I say deep in thought trying to crack my skull about who could be responsible for this. Our drinks are placed in front of us we place our food orders before the waiter leaves. "I called you here because I need you for something" I say to him and he looks at me.

“Sounds serious” he says and I nod in agreement.

“It is. Adeyemi made Khaya’s daughter pregnant.” I confess and he is shocked I don’t know at which part because he does not know that I am in contact with Khaya. “Before he let the girl go he used manipulation to sleep with her. Apparently the girl is behind the killings of the elders she’s the one that’s been mutilating them.” I explain and I don’t miss the shock on his face.

“What? How? Do you have her in your custody?” Olamide asks he’s both fascinated and worried.

“No Khaya called me to let me know his daughter was pregnant and Adeyemi told him a ritual needed to be performed. She is undergoing what Adeyemi went through when he wasn’t getting initiated. Today was supposed to be a gathering if we don’t do it today who knows how many more elders will die?” I explain and Olamide lets out a heavy exasperated sigh. He gulps down his drink and places the glass on the coaster.

“So now you have to make peace with Khaya? Is he willing? Is the girl willing to be initiated as a mistress? Does she understand that her carrying this child means she will never be free from our world? She is now a part of us whether she likes it or.” Olamide explains and I shrug my shoulders all this is a lot.

“We either introduce her to the ancestors together with the child or we initiate her as a new mistress” I suggest but he shakes his head no.

“She’s human she can’t be initiated as a mistress. We need to introduce her to the ancestors we need a powerful mistress to assist us though because without the other elders there’s not much connection to the ancestors.” Olamide explains I let out a breath. Isabelle is not strong enough.

“So where do we get this powerful mistress?” I ask.

“Cathrine Phiri” Olamide says and I shake my head no immediately.

“No!” I say sternly.

“Look we don’t have a choice here. You know she is powerful and she is well clued up on what needs to be done.” Olamide defends.

“Cathrine Phiri is not going anywhere near my son and my grandchild. That bxtch is always scheming.” I say angrily banging my glass on the table. He shoots me a look.

“What exactly happened between you and Cathrine?” Olamide asks. I chuckle bitterly.

“She’s a lying cunt that is what she is” I say angrily Olamide is left confused. Cathrine and I did not end on good terms.

She was the first woman I ever loved before my wife she and I could have been unstoppable but Cathrine had other plans. She has only ever wanted power and she would have done anything to get it. As per law she gave up her first child when she was 16 to become a mistress but she didn’t stop there. She killed our child in order to gain more power from the ancestors; she continued sacrificing two more of our children all in the name of power. She lied about the pregnancies and claimed miscarriages until I found out from a more powerful mistress that was helping her. She never miscarried but she was intentionally sacrificing our children for more power. When she found out I knew she fled.

“What did she ever do to you?” Olamide asks and I narrate everything to him keeping it lighter than it actually is. What she did turned me into the monster I was prior to my wife. Cathrine made me ruthless and without feelings. It’s even worse because at the time I was not aware that I was an immortal and she used that to her advantage.

“I understand you are angry and you want to kill her but we need her if we want this child to stop killing and for your grandchild to be protected by the ancestors.”

NICHUME TSHAWÉ MNGUNI

I walk into the hotel dad booked a room in a hotel because he doesn’t want this ritual performed at home. He said he doesn’t want any of them to know where our home is.

“How long is this going to take?” I ask Adeyemi who has his hands tied up sitting on a chair.

“An hour to two tops” he responds. “I know you hate me and the mansions but if you are going to raise an immortal it’s wise that you keep your tattoo for your own safety” Adeyemi explains I shoot him a look. “I know you think this tattoo makes you a slave but it’s protection from the people of our world so that they know who you belong to and after today’s ritual you will need to have it changed and get a ring that marks you as a mistress” He explains.

“I want no part of this world.” I spit out.

“For as long as you and I are going to be co-parents you are part of this world. You will need to attend the gatherings and adjust to this world.” Adeyemi says I shoot him a look and walk out of the room. I don’t want to be part of their world. I have no intentions of relocating back to Joburg after what happened. Hell No!

“Are you okay?” Uncle Shadow asks seeing me pacing up and down the hallway. I shrug my shoulders.

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sans-serif;color:#000000;background-color:transparent;font-weight:400;font-style:normal;font-variant:normal;text-decoration:none;vertical-align:baseline;white-space:pre;white-space:pre-wrap;">“He says that I will need to keep this tattoo and wear a ring that ties me to that place because it will protect me and this child. Keeping this thing inside of me is only going to complicate my life and mess it up more than they did. I don’t want this child uncle nor this life” I say he stops me and he pulls me into his arms hugging me tightly.

“I’m sorry kiddo. I really am” Is all Shadow says but he also continues to say “if it makes you any better your father doesn’t want this too but if it keeps you safe then sure.” He says.

“Can’t I just hand them over their child when it’s born? I don’t want to raise a child with him I don’t want to live in that world.” I say still in tears with sniffs in between.

“Maybe you can talk to your father about that kiddo I doubt your mother and father would support that decision” He says and he pulls me out of his arms. He’s about to say more when his attention is deterred away from me. I face the direction he is facing and I see Olayemi walking towards us with a man that looks like him and what I am assuming to be a mistress. “Go wait inside while I talk to these people” Shadow says I don’t question him and walk into the room. I walk in and Adeyemi looks up at me and says nothing for a change. I am grateful when he keeps his mouth shut.

“Your father is here” I tell him and he just nods. I walk over to sit on a couch and start pressing my phone chatting with my twin. She’s telling me about her date and how dad told her to stay away from the new guy. A woman walks in followed by Olayemi the lookalike Shadow and my father. The time is now 18:30 pm.

“Is this her?” The woman asks at the same time Olayemi’s eyes land on his son.

“Get these things off my son now!” He commands my father who looks at him and chuckles.

“Not until the ritual is over and I know my daughter is safe. Olayemi I am warning you there are snipers in every corner outside this building if you try anything your son will die!” Dad warns him but he doesn’t respond and instead speaks to his son in Yoruba.

“When can we start?” I decide to ask.

“At 7 O’clock on the dot. Do you have everything I need?” The woman asks and Olayemi’s lookalike nods his head.

“I thought mom would be here?” Adeyemi says.

“She’s not answering her phone I sent her the address. She is probably on her way” Olayemi says but Adeyemi does not seem convinced.

The woman sets up everything quietly in the middle of the room; she makes a circle with salt and chants something going around the circle. I am instructed to strip out of my clothes and wrap myself with a white cloth as I did when I was in the mansions.

“Ready?” The woman asks when I return to the room. I look at dad who nods he’s skeptical but I trust him.

“Ready.”

ISABELLE ZIMASA IBRAHIM

I look at my watch and I am running late Olayemi asked me to speak to the most powerful mistress and convince her to help us with this situation of Adeyemi and Nichume. To say I am happy is an understatement because this only means that Khaya will let our son go. At this point he has no reason for keeping him I’m not proud of the things Adeyemi has done but I am also a mother and I miss my son and want him home. I rush out of the room with my handbag and cell phone in my hand. I open the door and a woman is standing before me about to knock. She looks gorgeous nothing like I have ever seen before! She looks like she walked straight out of a magazine photoshoot her petite body and her well-structured body are everything. Her skin is so beautiful and clear nothing like I have ever seen before. She is wearing a black suit that hugs every curve on her body; she has a long curly black weave with one side brought to the front and the other left hanging back. She is wearing a bra under her suit jacket and she has

red matte lipstick on. She is definitely a mistress I would bet my left arm that she is a mistress because normal humans are not this perfect.

“Isabelle we finally meet.” the goddess says I look at her confused about how she knows me. “The name is Cathrine Phiri. I was your husband’s first love. I am pretty sure he has never mentioned me. He kind of hates me. May I come in?” she asks and in my state of shock I move aside to let her inside. She walks in and then she places her bag on the table and pours herself something to drink.

“He has mentioned nothing about you” I admit because what does she want? “How can I help you Cathrine?” I ask her and she goes to the couch and makes herself comfortable.

“I want us to have a conversation about Olayemi” She says holding a drink out for me.

“I don’t drink cognac” I say and she shrugs and puts the glass on the table.

“Sit please” She offers I’m skeptical but I sit anyway. “I grew up in the mansions Okoye trained me to be a mistress.” She starts off. “If you are a mistress then you know that when we reach 16 we have to be initiated and our first child has to be sacrificed to the ancestors.” She explains and I nod still confused as to where she is going with this “Isabelle you never gave up your first child” She points out.

“Because my parents are from a different bloodline where I descend from we don’t do that” I explain and she nods slowly.

“And yet you allowed your daughters to go through it” Cathrine points out. I keep quiet. “Because that is what your husband wanted right?” She says and takes a sip of her drink.

“What do you want?” I ask her again.

She narrates a story about how she and Olayemi were madly in love despite them having to sacrifice their first child in order for her to become a mistress. She tells me about how they didn’t stop at that; the elders were against their relationship. Every time she fell pregnant they would cause her to miscarry in order to gain more power and create a stronger relationship with the ancestors.

“Isabelle I never wanted the amount of power I have. They forced it upon me Olayemi thinks I was sacrificing our children when it was never me. I had to leave for my safety because he was going to kill me and his father was going to sit back and let him do that.” She explains and I shake my head no.

“You’re lying! What are you even doing here? Leave!” I say and stand up she also stands up and faces me.

“I am here for what I lost missy. I am here for Olayemi and the only way to get his attention is if you are dead.” She says and I chuckle.

“Sweetheart you are not the first and not the last Olayemi will never leave me. Please leave while you still have your dignity.” I say and walk to the door to open it for her. I unlock and when I turn around I feel something stab me in the stomach.

“You’re wrong missy. Oh Isabelle you are so cute and naïve. This blade is the only blade capable of killing an immortal and I am the only one that has it. By the time Olayemi is back you will be long dead. It's nothing personal but I can’t have you alive if I want my plan to go through successfully”

To Be Continued

Red Lace 28

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

I decide to excuse myself whilst they are busy doing the cleansing ritual; they are done with the initiation ceremony which needed my presence. I stand in the hallway trying to call my wife because knowing her she would have never missed this for the world so whatever is happening has to be serious for her to not be here right now. The phone rings unanswered that's strange. I try her again and still nothing and so I call the security that's supposed to be watching her. He answers.

“Master” he says.

“Give the phone to my wife” I command.

“Your wife is in the room sir she has not come out since you left.” He reports that's strange.

“Knock on the door and give her the phone” I say to him because he knows he's not permitted inside unless otherwise. He goes to the door and knocks for a while.

“Sir there's no response.” He reports again.

“try to open the door” I say to him and I hear him opening the door I hear him gasp loud enough. “What is it?” My concern is that he walked in on her naked.

“Master she's been stabbed there's no pulse.” He says for the first time in a long time my world comes to a standstill. He is speaking but I cannot hear him. I am deafened by the fact that he just said my wife had no pulse which meant she is dead and has been dead for quite a while now. “Master?” He calls out.

“Call someone to tend to her they might still save her. I will be there now.” I say and then drop the call going back inside the hotel room.

“Dad is everything okay?”

“Brother”

My son and my brother ask at the same time upon seeing my face for the first time I have no commands no feelings no emotions nothing. I feel empty. I'm scared. I can't lose Isabelle she is my wife; she is my life without her I am nothing. I am a monster without her.

"I have to leave" I say.

"Dad is it mom?" Adeyemi asks. Khaya and his puppet are sitting in a corner chatting. His daughter is in another room I am assuming the cleansing is done.

I march over to Khaya blinded by rage yelling at him "Was this your plan? Lure me here with a fake pregnancy while you have your minions kill my wife?" I say grabbing him by his t-shirt Shadow is about to fight me off when Khaya shakes his head. Khaya looks me dead in the eye.

"I don't touch kids or women my fight is with you not your wife!" I say and then he looks at my hands on his t-shirt and then back up at my face it's a silent threat but I'm too pissed off.

"My wife is dead because of you! Was this your revenge because of what happened to your wife? An eye for an eye?" I confront him angrily he finally pushes me off.

"Mom is dead?" Adeyemi asks with a faint voice. He knows to not show emotion or get emotional in front of anyone that is not family but I guess he trusts these people or maybe he loves his mother too much to allow his emotions to get in the way.

"If I wanted your wife dead I would have done it myself! Now I don't know who killed your wife but my wife owns the hotel they booked you in I am responsible for the IT in the building. I will help you find out who killed your wife" he says bringing his arms between mine and then pushing mine down to break the grip I have on him "As a courtesy I will untie your son right now even though I don't know that my daughter is fine just to prove to you I did not have your wife killed." He says and nods towards his minion I turn to see Shadow untying Adeyemi.

"If I find out you had a hand in her death I will kill all your kids in front of you. Starting with her!" I threaten with a glare towards Nichume who is walking out of the room followed by the Mistress. "Let's go!"

NICHUME TSHAWE MNGUNI

"Did it work?" I ask the mistress who just finished cleansing me. She looks at me for a while.

"Did you know you are carrying twins?" She asks I raise an eyebrow and she chuckles "I take it you were unaware. You are carrying two powerful half-immortals which would explain your bravery to do everything you did." She says and I hold my stomach protectively. "I mean no harm I have nothing against you in fact you are safe and protected by the ancestors. Your children are going to bring change to the way we do things in the mansions. People will come after you if they find out about this pregnancy. I hope your father is strong enough." She says I frown confused. "Advice? Move back to the mansions. Your father does not have the men or the power to protect you. Right now you need to be under Olayemi's care living in the mansions where you will be safe." She suggests while she is packing her things into her bag.

"I don't want to go back to that place!" I spit out and she shrugs.

"I was just advising. The choice is yours. This will help you with the nausea and the rings you took from the elders. I need you to have them returned to me keeping them will only take you ten steps back." She explains I look at her with confusion.

"I thought the ritual worked and the cleansing?" I ask her and she nods.

"Everything I did today worked but those rings do not belong to you and they need to be destroyed. Those rings were prayed for they are meant to protect elders and in the wrong hands lord knows what would happen." She explains. I let out a sigh. She picks up her bag "Take care of yourself kid this world will not be kind to you. Take this" She says handing me a coin It's not an ordinary coin because it's a platinum coin with a broken whip. "Whenever you meet a DM or an elder or anyone from our world show them this coin it is a sign of freedom and being released from this world of ours. Nichume you are free the urge to bow down and submit when you meet a master is gone. We can go out there and try it out" She says and I nod readily taking the coin. We walk out to the lounge and its tense. Dad and Olayemi are standing head to head like two bulls in a kraal

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"She says and I nod readily taking the coin. We walk out to the lounge and its tense. Dad and Olayemi are standing head to head like two bulls in a kraal Adeyemi is standing by his uncle rubbing his wrists with nothing tying them together. The atmosphere is dull nothing I expected. Looking at the men from the mansion nothing compels me to submit or look down I feel different in a good way. The fear I would normally have is not there I guess it's safe to say that whatever she did to me worked. "If I find out you had a hand in her death I will kill all your kids in front of you. Starting with her!" This is the first thing I hear with Olayemi pointing in my direction without looking at me he turns to give me one last lingering look filled with anger before turning to his son and brother. "Let's go!" he command Adeyemi doesn't even look at me before exiting the room with his father and uncle. I am left confused and wondering what happened in our absence.

"Dad?" I ask him as soon as they have left with the mistress.

"Isabelle is dead they killed her today and he thinks I did it" Dad says I raise an eyebrow because I know what this man is capable of.

"Did you kill her?" I ask him and he looks at me bored and insulted that I would even ask. I explain "Mom is in the hospital fighting for her life you are on hinge dad" Shadow agrees with me.

"I have been here with you all this entire time where or when would I have called a hit on her?" Dad asks and I look at Shadow who shrugs his shoulders.

"Don't look at me princess he did not send me if he called that hit on her" Shadow says defensively.

"Can we go to the hospital now I want to check on mom" I say and dad nods quietly. I realise then that I may have hurt his feelings with what I implied but I'm not about to apologize because he is capable of what I said. We get into the car and drive to the hospital when we get to the hospital mom has still not woken up and there's nothing new. I can't help but worry about Adeyemi I can't imagine losing my mother. She's stuck in a coma and I feel like shxt so losing her would feel like death.

ADAEGO IBRAHIM ABIOLA

My husband decided to storm out of the hotel room and leave me alone I sit on the bed busying myself with work on my laptop. With the mansion being blown up there's nothing better to do in Cape Town and I hate the mistresses so rather I stay in this hotel room and get busy. I am in my zone when I feel my phone ringing beside me I look at the screen and it's my father. A lot of thoughts go through my mind because what if Ike told him? Olayemi would kill me if he found out. I ready myself for the worst and answer his call.

"Daddy" I say with my most innocent voice and wait for it. He clears his throat.

"I hate to call you under such terms. Where are you?" He asks he sounds serious which could mean anything at this point.

"At the hotel. You worrying me is everything okay?" I ask him with concern his voice is rough and raw. Nothing like I have ever heard before so I don't know what to make of it.

"It's your mother Adae she's dead." He says I take a good minute to process what he has just told me right now. He's joking right? Mom is not dead she can't be dead. We were talking just a few hours ago and she was scolding me over the Ike thing. I confessed because I needed her advice so there was no way.

"No dad don't play like that!" I say sternly shaking my head not wanting to believe what he is saying to me right now.

"I would never joke about something like this Adae they stabbed her with a blade that was designed to kill immortals. I'm sorry baby but she is gone I am at the hotel right now and her body has just been taken away a few minutes ago." He reports and the phone drops out of my hand. Tears roll down my cheeks as the reality of what my father just told me sets in I feel this excruciating pain in my heart as though it is breaking literally. I can't lose her not now. I need her. I just allow myself to cry out loud because the pain is too much to bare. My heart hurts physically as though someone is crushing it my breath keeps hitching because of the pain. How could someone kill her? She's a sweet person with a good heart. She has never done wrong to anyone she was always so kind and forever smiling. I can't believe she's gone. I

wonder if dad has already told Lola I can't imagine she will take this okay. She and mom were tight as thieves. She will be crushed. I really hope dad tells her when he gets home.

ADELOLA IBRAHIM

I sit in Yethu's room while pressing my phone the guy I thought I was seeing turned out to be an ass that was merely after sex. Dad had him followed so now i am here in Yethu's room wallowing in my depression. We just saw on the news that they bombed a hotel people think it's a terrorist attack or whatever but I know its not and Yethu knows it too because our fathers are at war.

"Have you reached your mom?" Yethu asks and I shake my head no.

"She's still not answering I just hope that she and dad are okay with everything that happened" I say unable to contain my concern.

"Try calling your father maybe he will answer or call your sis-" he doesn't finish when my phone rings in my hand and its dad.

"Daddy" I answer with a sigh of relief.

"Angel" He says his voice does not sound as authoritative as it normally does. He sounds rough and raw nothing like i have ever heard from him.

"Is everything okay? Are you getting the flu?" I ask him because he never gets sick.

"It's your mother Angel she's dead. She was killed" Dad says and tears roll down my cheek words get clogged in my throat. "Someone came into the hotel room and stabbed her"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 29

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

"We'd like to ask you a couple of questions down at the station" The detective says after they have taken my wife's body. I have just gotten off the call with Adelola.

"What for?" I ask him "Your little minion has already asked me everything he needed to know." I say defensively.

"Mr. Ibrahim I am just doing my job here. In such cases the spouse is usually a suspect I mean who knows why you would have her killed" he says and I grab him by the hem of his shirt angrily.

"I would never kill my wife I loved her!" I yell at him as people pull me off this little prick. They put cuffs on me while my brother pleads they let me go. I don't even bother fighting because clearly this person has a vendetta against me. I am driven to the police station they put me inside an interrogation room and then take off the cuffs and walk out. The lead detective walks in and he places a file in front of me.

"Olayemi Ibrahim we've been looking for you" he says I shoot him a look.

"With such a thick file you would think that you have my address somewhere in there" I say resting back on the chair. "Why am I here what do you want?" I ask him.

"Your name is always popping up in shady places in odd conversations. I just want to understand why? About 21 years ago your late wife's father was murdered brutally" he says and I chuckle and cut him off.

"Simon? Point of correction he was her stepfather. I thought you closed that case years ago?" I say and he shakes his head no.

"I reopening it now that your wife is gone I have reason to believe that you are responsible for both murders Why is it that every time you are in Cape Town there's a death connected to you?" He asks and I shrug my shoulder.

"I don't know maybe I'm the devil. Look detective you have nothing against me. You are just trying to piece up things that are not even adding up. I suggest you let me go so that I can grieve my wife properly with my children. They need me now more than ever." I say and he closes his file.

"I am not done with my questions Mr. Ibrahim I will leave you for a few minutes so that you can gather your thoughts properly. Do you need water or coffee? It's going to be a long night." He says.

"Will I need a lawyer?" I ask him and he smiles.

"You have nothing to hide right?"

ADELOLA IBRAHIM

After the phone call with my father informing me of the death of mom I cannot keep up the front I wail Yethu pulls me into his arms for comfort and he just holds me brushing my back soothingly. I never would have imagined that at only 18 years old my mother would be declared dead my sister is not the best mother figure in my life and my dad? Well he's him. He could never play mom's role as well as she did I'm worried he will spiral out of control now that mom is gone. She kept him in check and only she could influence him the right way.

"Hey 'm sorry" Yethu says comfortingly even though he is not sure of how to comfort me and right now the only comfort I seek is sexual. I pull away from him and look up at him. "I'm really sorry about your mom Lola" he says genuinely.

"It hurts Ntando it physically hurts" I cry out and he wipes my tears with his thumb.

"I know I'm sorry Lola" he says and then he kisses my nose. I look into his eyes and he does the same he smashes his lips into mine and kisses me. It doesn't take long for us to be naked and have him hovering over me left in his briefs.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Yethu asks and I nod.

"I just need to feel something else either than this pain Ntando take it away please." I plead and he nods caressing my cheek. He wipes away the tear before smashing his lips onto mine again claiming my mouth as his. Yethu kisses me for dear life as though our lives depend on this kiss I am very horny right now with just a kiss from this boy! He slips his hand between us and into my panties; I am soaked and ready for him. I don't want foreplay; I need to feel him inside of me.

"Fxck me Ntando" I beg and as if something within him just clicked he rips my underwear off and inserts his finger inside of me. I am both shocked and turned on by this side of him. Yethu always seems like this soft vanilla sex type of guy so I am shocked right now that he is even capable of fingering me this roughly. It feels so damn good I can't help the moans leaving my lips. He is kissing me roughly moving from my lips and down to my neck I can't help the moans leaving my lips. He is kissing me roughly moving from my lips and down to my neck he moves from my neck and down to my boobs. He pulls on my nipples piercings roughly the sensation feels a little odd but in a good way. He knows exactly what he is doing. The pain and the pleasure that comes from what he is doing is enough to make me arch my back off the bed with a desperate need to feel him. I have never been this hot for someone and before today I would have never imagined Yethu capable of fxcking. He stops to get something out of his drawer and it's a condom. He rips it open with his teeth I take it upon myself to remove his briefs while he is busy with the condom. I grab it from him wanting to be the one to slip it on him. He is much bigger and longer than I would have imagined him to be and he is circumcised which makes everything interesting and better. Now of course he is not as huge as a DM but he could pass off as one I am impressed. I watch his length and size in appreciation licking my lips. He chuckles. I was unaware he is watching me.

"Are you sure Lola?" he asks me again after I have slipped the condom on his manhood. I kiss him shutting him up I don't need to be questioned right now. Just pleased. I slip my hands under his balls and give them a massage making him groan with his lips attached to mine. He pushes me back on the bed he grabs my wrists and places them over my head slamming into me. I gasp in both shock and amusement. It is so painful that it stings the condom makes it uncomfortable but it feels good either way. Damn this man knows what he doing and he is doing it all too well. He keeps pulling out and slamming into me making my orgasm increase. He brings a finger between us and he rubs my clit piercing intensifying my orgasm even more until I can no longer hold back anymore. I cum but he fxcks me through my orgasm with my legs feeling all lumpy and the cookie on fire. Yethu really knows how to fxck huh? He pulls out as another orgasm is building up and then he flips me over so that I am laying on my stomach. He pulls a pillow and brings it under my stomach so that I am arched enough for him to screw me from the back. Yethu fxcks me from the back going in slowly and in circular motion hitting one sweet sensitive spot he brings his hand between the pillow and my cake and starts rubbing on my overly sensitive clit occasionally pulling my clit ring. This feels too damn good if my moans are any evidence of what we are doing. I cry out as another wave hits me harder; I feel his breath right on the back of my neck next to my ear.

"You feel so fxcking good Lola I don't want to stop" he says and that alone sends me over the edge.

"I'm coming Ntando Cum with me." I plead unable to hold it in any longer and also I'm tired now. Yes the sex is amazing but lord knows I'm not one of those people that doesn't want the sex to end and the condom is not making it any better.

"Fxck!" He cums with a loud groan in my ear and I moan coming with him.

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

"What do you have for me?" I ask walking into the security room. I am here to see the footage of the hotel room. If Olayemi and I are going to co-grandparent then I have no choice but to help him. It's been a day since the death of his wife and my wife's coma. I need to keep busy because I will go crazy sitting in that hospital waiting for her to wake up.

"Nothing looks suspicious boss." He says running the tape from their floor. We see the guard standing by the door as he is supposed to.

"And no one came here and deleted any footage?" I ask him and he looks up at me and shakes his head no. We watch the tape and it plays for a while from the minute Olayemi left the room to the guard knocking in the room and finding her dead.

"Rewind that" I say to him and he rewinds. "Look at the timestamps in the corner" I say to him and he does that while playing the video. "A whole 30 minutes are missing from this tape are you sure no one came in here yesterday?" I ask him again and he nods. The only way he would not remember is if they manipulated him. So whoever killed Zimasa was an immortal. Olayemi has enemies in his own circle.

"You may leave I will do this myself" I say to him and he gets off the chair and walks out. One thing about the security system I installed it backs up everything to the cloud. So while they may have deleted the actual footage it is still available on the cloud my personal cloud. I log into my cloud storage account and insert my details I search through the actual footage and there is a woman that comes to the hotel room she looks at the guard and says something to him he walks away from the door while she knocks on the door. It shows Isabelle opening the door for this woman. Out of respect for our guests we decided to not install cameras in the rooms. The last thing we need is security perving over our guests. From there on I log into the street camera's to see what or how she arrived I'm pretty sure one camera may have caught the incident. While I am going through the street cams I get a phone call from Nichume.

NICHUME TSHAWE MNGUNI

"Mom I need you" I plead holding her hand into mine. Dad went to the hotel to help out with Isabelle. Apparently he was arrested last night. I kiss her hand. Ntando went home to wash she will be back later.

"You not supposed to be here I need you. I am pregnant and I apparently I'm supposed to return to the mansions if I want to protect these babies I am carrying. I am not like you I am not strong to carry twins. Please come back to me mom come back to us" I say caressing my tummy. "I can't do this without you you have to wake up. You have to come back to us. Dad will spiral out of control without you here. You are the only one that can handle him when he gets like that mom please just come back to us. We can't do this without you" I plead as tears roll down my cheeks. I need my mother I cannot begin this motherhood journey without her here. I place my head on her hand and just cry. Someone clears their throat I look up at her. She moves her fingers she's awake. Her eyes are open.

"Mom" I say and she looks at me as if lost.

"Let me go get you a doctor" I say and run out to get a nurse. While the nurse goes to get a doctor I call dad to come to the hospital and my sister. I return to the room and they are observing her making sure everything is okay.

"Mihlali what is the last thing you remember?" The doctor asks her.

"I just got married where are my babies? Where's Jay and Sethu?" she asks frantically. "How did I end up here? Where is Bandile?" she asks with panic. The doctor looks at her confused.

"Mihlali what year do you think it is?"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 30

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

I rush into the hospital and I meet Nichume standing outside of her mother's bedroom. She throws herself into my arms; I hug her tightly but she cries as though someone died. I am now confused. Did Mihlali die on my way here?

"Hey it's okay. She's awake. She's alive my angel." I assure her brushing her hair back and comforting her but she shakes her head and removes her head from my chest.

"She's lost her memory. She thinks dad Sethu and Jay are still alive. How do we tell her it's 19 years later? That she lost him?" Nichume asks and for the very first time I am at a loss for words "She thinks she just got married to father Bandile. Dad how do we do this? She doesn't know us." She says with her voice breaking. I am conflicted confused and most of all dumbstruck. The Mhlali that was with Bandile did not like me much. She had asked me to stay away from her and her family so how do I try to worm my way into her life now? Do I even tell her she later married me? How do I go about this? Maybe I should get Biko or Yonela to explain everything to her because I won't be able to. She will tell me to leave the minute she sees me.

"Dad what do we do?" She asks me reminding me of her presence and where we are.

"Call your aunt and uncle Biko while I try to talk to her" I say and she nods walking away to make the call. I knock on her door and she looks up to see me.

"What are you doing here? You know Bandile will throw a fit if he sees you here!" She warns. I let out a sigh and walk over to her. I stand beside her bed.

"Khaya please leave I don't want trouble with my husband" She says it should break my heart that she doesn't consider me as her husband but I have been in Mhlali's life long enough to know and understand that she loves me despite her memory loss. What she and I shared was special we fell for each other once and her staying away was only because of Bandile because she wanted to protect her marriage.

"How are you?" I ask her trying very hard to not jump into the bed and hold her tightly trying very hard to maintain my hard shell but I feel like I am failing because Mhlali taught me to show her emotions and feelings to never have this hard shell when I was with her. I feel like I am betraying her.

"Khaya" she says. I grab her hand and kiss where her ring is supposed to be. "You got married?" She asks. I chuckle and drop her hand.

"yes to an amazing woman. We have four kids together" I say and she smiles.

"How long was I out? Khaya Mnguni married? Who would have thought?! Whoever she is must be the strongest person on this earth because last I checked you never wanted marriage unless it was with me" she says with a laugh. She winces in pain.

"Are you okay?" I ask her unable to hide my concern.

"Yes just a pain when I laugh or move. The doctor said it would take a while for me to heal fully. I was in a terrible acci- what am I even explaining? You probably know already. You always kept tabs on me. I'm sure you already know who caused my accident too" she says jokingly. I shrug. "Khaya!" She half scolds. "I would not let him get away with hurting you Mhlali never! I will always care about you." She lets out a sigh after I assure her.

"I appreciate it but you need to stay away. Bandile is my husband. I chose him." She says and just then Biko and Yonela walk in Biko rushes to her side and he hugs her tightly. Yoza looks at me and I shake my head at her.

"I'll see you get well neh." I say and walk out of the room. I rush out needing to get away from them. It hurts it breaks my heart knowing that my wife has forgotten me. I get a call from the police station.

I have to clear my throat first before responding to remove this lump that formed in my throat.

"Khaya!lethu Mnguni" I answer.

"This is Olayemi. I need you to get me out of here. This is your city and these people won't hear a word I say" Olayemi says angrily and annoyed "They won't let me see my lawyer nor are they charging me with anything" he complains. I find myself chuckling. Olayemi is asking me for help.

"Is this you asking me to help you get out of prison Olayemi?" I ask him.

"I just want to return to my city that's all" he says arrogantly. His pride would never allow him to ask me for help. This is the most I will get from him as a plea.

MIHLALIKAZI TSHAWÉ MNGUNI

"Biko where is Bandile with my kids?" I ask him and Biko sighs sitting on the chair beside my bed. "Stop stressing yourself you need to rest" Biko says and I shoot him a look. "Don't you dare tell me to rest Biko. Where is my family?" I ask him angrily because no one in this place is telling me anything. Do they even know I am awake? "As a doctor I suggest you listen to your brother Mhlahi. You need to rest. Your husband and kids will be here to see you later" Yoza says. I shoot her a look. "Did something happen to them?" I ask looking at Biko. He looks away avoiding my eyes. "Were they in the same accident as me? Are they hurt? Can one of you just tell me what the hell is going on?" I yell angrily because they are not telling me anything. I know they are keeping something from me. "Mhlahi it's 19 years later" Yonela says. I look at her confused. What does she even mean? "I don't understand. What's going on Yonela?" I ask her. 19 years ago you lost them in an accident. You were pregnant with triplets when they died. You almost lost the triplets on multiple occasions

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sans-serif;color:#000000;background-color:transparent;font-weight:400;font-style:normal;font-variant:normal;text-decoration:none;vertical-align:baseline;white-space:pre;white-space:pre-wrap;">"I don't understand. What's going on Yonela?" I ask her. 19 years ago you lost them in an accident. You were pregnant with triplets when they died. You almost lost the triplets on multiple occasions" Yonela says and I shake my head no in denial. She's wrong she's lying to me. "If you are going to lie to me then both of you leave! Where's mom? Where's dad?" I ask Biko who lets out a sad sigh. "They died in a car accident Mhlahi 5 years ago. We buried them." Biko explains and tears roll down my cheeks tears I'd been holding back roll down my cheeks. The frustration of losing my memory and having to go through everything that I have already gone through apparently is just all too much. My breath clogs in my chest making it hard for me to even breathe. "Mhlahi you are having a panic attack. I need you to breathe for me sis" Yonela says. "Biko call her doctor for me" Yonela says while she attends to me. Good thing Biko married a doctor I guess. Yonela helps me breathe in and out. She puts the oxygen mask on me and gestures with her hands that I breathe in and out slowly until my heart rate slows and I slowly drift off.

NICHUME TSHAWA MNGUNI

"How is she?" I ask aunty Yoza and she sighs.

"She will be fine. He just had a panic attack. She's having a hard time trying to process everything. It will take time for her to accept everything. We just need to be patient with her." Yoza says. "How long is she going to be like this Yoza?" I ask her and she lets out a sigh. "It could be days weeks and even months and with some people years. There's no telling and I don't want to give you false hope." Yoza says and I let out a breath. "Dr. Mntwa explain to me what happened in there?" mom's doctor asks angrily. "My sister-in-law was looking for answers. She's persistent and she would not stop until we gave her answers." Yoza explains but the doctor shakes his head disapproving. "You of all people know how delicate the mind is. Mhlahi has lost over 19 years' worth of memory. You cannot bombard her with all of that information at once. She could have shut down she could have slipped right back into a coma or even worse died. Is that what you want? You were reckless doctor Mntwa. I am disappointed in you!" The doctor scolds he is about to walk away when he stops "From hereon I would like you to stay away from my patient. She needs some time. A psychologist will be here to see her and help her through this" the doctor says.

“And what are we her children expected to do until then? She is my mother. There is a baby on the way. I am pregnant. I need her!” The doctor sighs after I tell him.

“I understand you need your mother but you won’t get your mother if you go about things this way. I Mhlali doesn’t remember her life with you guys. She needs to see someone and -” Yoza cut him off.

“What Mhlali needs is to get back into her life and get back into her routine. It’s the only hope we have to trigger something recent in her life. You cannot keep her family away from her based on her need to see someone to work through her memories. That is this child’s mother in there doc and she needs to know. Mhlali is not weak she is strong enough to handle this.” Yoza says confidently.

“All I am asking of you doctor Mtwi is that you not bombard her brain with everything all at once. Mrs. Mnguni has just woken up from a coma and hearing that she lost her first family in a car accident might just lead to her brain shutting down” the doctor explains. Yoza huffs frustrated but she nods. The doctor walks away leaving us in the passage outside of mom’s room. Uncle Biko pulls me into his arms and holds me for a while.

“She’s going to remember Kiddo” he assures me.

“What if she never does? How am I going to do this without her uncle?” I ask feeling scared and hopeless.

“She will pull through” He says. His heart deceives him because it’s beating fast meaning he is lying. He doesn’t believe what he is saying to me right now.

“What do we do until then?”

ADELOLA IBRAHIM

I am woken up when I smell his cologne and feel his heavy arm resting on my stomach. Oh God! Last night shouldn’t have happened. My cake is on fire. I need to pee too. After removing his arm I run to the toilet to pee. I look at myself in the mirror and feel shame for my actions. I shouldn’t have coerced him into sleeping with me. I shouldn’t have manipulated him. I took away his choice after I promised myself I would never do that to someone. My sister and I are the same. Mom would be so disappointed. I wash my face and take the mouthwash and gargle with it before returning to the room. He is still sleeping peacefully. I take my things and wear them quickly not wanting to face him; he has a girlfriend which he loves so very much I shouldn’t have done that last night. I should never use sex to substitute the pain. I wake him up because he needs to send me the code to exit the estate he lives in. Of course Yethu lives in an estate in Sandton because who are his parents again? Exactly. He saw me sitting pitifully yesterday at the canteen and he suggested we go out for a late lunch. He was meant to drive me home after but he said we should chill at his place. Yethu is a genuine person. I know he had no intentions of making moves on me because he is loyal to his girlfriend. He just wanted to cheer me up and it worked for a while. We played games and ate a lot of food and forgot everything that had happened on campus.

“Lola” he says and he smiles at me suddenly.

“Ntando I am so sorry for what happened yesterday. I shouldn’t have manipulated you” I say and he looks at me confused. He sits up. I sit on the bed beside him and stare into his eyes.

“Yesterday never happened. We talked all night and fell asleep. You comforted me about my mother’s death and that was it.” I say trying to break the manipulation. He blinks a few times.

“How are you feeling after last night?” He asks me and I shrug my shoulders.

“Like I lost my mother” I say and he pulls me into his arms.

“It’s going to be okay Lola. Nothing I say will make the pain feel better but you’re going to be okay Lola. Again I am sorry for your loss.”

To Be Continued

Red Lace 31

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

Having my wife alive and well is great I'm happy she has woken up but I'll be lying if I said I am coping. I left her to go bail out Olayemi with my connections and what do you know the cop that arrested him believes Olayemi has his daughter in the mansions which makes it hard to get him out when this man has a vendetta against him. Now I need to talk to someone higher than the station commander. I shouldn't even be going through all these lengths for a man I hate but he just lost his wife and he could use whatever little help I can give him. Getting him out and helping him find his wife's killer is a good way to avoid my wife and keep myself distracted from going crazy. Shadow is against me working with my grandchildren's grandfather but it's not up to him. I gave him the footage and he has been looking for Cathrine with no luck. At least we got a name and a surname to go on after I showed Olayemi the picture of a suspect.

"Do you have any idea why she would kill your wife?" I ask him. We are sitting in the interrogation room. It's a Monday two days after his arrest. The only reason he is still here is that the man who is supposed to get him out is only coming back today to town.

"Who knows why Cathrine does the shxt she does? How far are you with finding her?" He asks gritting his teeth.

"Shadow is working hard" I say and he chuckles.

"I might as well forget it then. This same Shadow hates my guts." He says hopelessly.

"Shadow is the best hunter I have" I tell him.

"Find Okoye he will do a much better job" Olayemi suggests and I laugh.

"The same Okoye who has been meeting this Cathrine in secret? Or your brother who is fxcking her? Nigga please. I am all you have and can trust at the moment." I say proudly and he looks at me clearly annoyed that he has to depend on me but I love it.

"Adiche then or do you have dirt on him too? When am I getting out of here?" he asks and I shrug.

"The SAPS commander is landing today at around 2 pm. Hang in there for the next 3 hours." I say and he rolls his eyes at me.

"I have been in these clothes for three days now I have my wife's blood on this stupid suit as a constant reminder that she's gone and I couldn't protect her. Three hours is a lot"

NICHUME TSHAWA MNGUNI

It's Monday and I just got out of my lesson. Today I only had one lesson thanks to the lecturers that canceled the lesson. I haven't told Ntando about the pregnancy because I am not ready to have her on my ass about it yet. The rings are with Adeyemi; he drove with me to fetch them yesterday at my place. I get off the uber and walk to our apartment it's in a gated complex. When I get to the doorstep Adeyemi is sitting on the floor with his face buried in his folded arms over his knees. Why is he here?

"Adeyemi" I say and he huffs looking up.

"What are you doing here?" I ask him and he shrugs his shoulders.

"I don't know I was driving around and ended up here" he says standing up.

"You need to leave" I say to him sternly.

"I haven't slept since my freedom I keep seeing her dead body every time I close my eyes. I feel like I'm going crazy and it's funny because she's not the first dead body I have ever seen" he says with a bitter chuckle.

"That's because she was not some random slave she was your mother. It's okay to cry it's okay to hurt over her death. She meant something to you she birthed you" I say we are just standing in front of my door. He steps aside.

"Thank you for listening" he says and turns on his heels.

"Do you want to come in?" I ask him as he takes his first step heading down. I will probably regret this but he seems broken and sad. I'm not a cruel person and despite everything he is my baby daddy after all.

He turns shock visible on his face "I'd love to" he says and walks over. I step aside to let him in. I don't know why I did that but he needs someone to talk to.

"Have you eaten?" I ask him I am walking to my room and he is following behind me "that's the lounge over there. You can wait there while I change into something comfortable." I say and he chuckles going to the lounge while I change out of my clothes. I take off my jeans and wear sweatpants with a matching sweater.

"So I was thinking we can order in something filling and enough for three because I am not cooking" I say walking into the lounge. He is just sitting there looking around lost.

"Huh?" He says.

"Let's get something to eat" I say to him and he stands up and stretches his sweater goes up a little revealing his V and well-defined packs. How is it that he was in captivity for months and yet his body is still well-defined and toned? Men have it nice and easy shame.

"Where are we going?" he asks and I shrug.

"You'll see" I say leading the way. I lock up and when we get to the car he opens the door for me and closes it after me. I am shaken by this notion. I direct him to this other place Ntando and I like it so much they make nice expensive filling food. We place our food order and ice creams then find a booth to sit in while they make the food.

"I am sorry" He says I look up at him confused "For everything I put you through I'm sorry you will forever be tied to me" he says and it's only then does it register what he is apologizing for. "If Akin knew you were pregnant he would probably kill me" He says with a chuckle. I can't help but chuckle too.

"Where is he?" I ask him.

"He returned to Joburg yesterday with everyone else." He says and I nod. We share a moment of silence between us.

"Why?" I ask him and he frowns confused "Why did you rape me? Why did you manipulate me Adeyemi?" I ask him the word leaves a bitter taste on my tongue.

"Because I'm a selfish bastard who does whatever will satisfy him consequences be damned. I did it because I knew I had the power to do it and get away with it." Ade explains and I nod "I regret I did this to you Nichume and no amount of apologies can undo what I did to you. The least I can do is change my ways not only for these kids you are carrying but for you too. I'm not asking you for a chance to be with you but all I am saying is that I want to do right by you and our babies. Hopefully you will allow me to be in their lives when they are born?" He pleads

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you will allow me to be in their lives when they are born?" He pleads there is something sincere about him as he speaks. Each word is a conviction that he means everything.

"Alright we shall see. If you are going to be in my life then you have to stay in your lane. I will date whoever I want to date without you getting in the way. You will respect me and my space. You will not show up in town randomly unless you are here for the birth of the twins. I am not returning to the mansions and I need you to respect that. The only reason I will keep this tattoo is because it will keep me safe and no other reason." I say sternly and he nods.

"No problem" he says as the server places our food in front of us. He takes the paper bag and we leave the restaurant. When we get to my place we sit in the lounge and eat over light conversations and a movie we are even laughing which is strange.

"Can you imagine? Sh-" I hold back when I hear him snoring lightly his snore is not very loud like a tractor or something. It's nice and low. I get up and go fetch a fleece in the room and place it over his body. Despite everything Adeyemi is a good-looking man and in his sleep he is even cuter.

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

Khaya's connection finally got me out. I asked Khaya for the footage from the street camera and the hotel; he didn't want to give them to me at first but he

eventually did warning me not to watch them myself because he was worried I might spiral after seeing them. I walk into the hotel room after being dropped off by Khaya it's strange being back here without her. They have cleaned the room to the tea but her sweet smell still lingers in the air or maybe I'm imagining things. I look at the spot where her body was when I came in that night yes it's clean but I still see her cold-blooded body. I feel this overwhelming anger and punch the wall; I am going to kill her! As for Olamide I have something else for him. I take off my things and go shower her shower gel is sitting on the stand in the shower. I take it and smell it needing to feel her. The scent brings a memory back; I remember when we had just started falling or each there and we shared a shower together. Tears roll down my cheeks with the water I wipe them violently but they won't stop and then a sob escapes my lips. Am I crying? I can't recall the last time I ever cried because a man like me does not cry yet here I am in the shower crying over my dead wife. I did not mean for Isabelle to be as important as she was but that girl imprinted herself on my heart and now I can't seem to forget her. It hurts my heart hurts like hell. I slide down against the shower wall and just sob burying my face in my folded arms.

"You were never supposed to die before me" I cry out my voice breaking. Never in a million years did I imagine I would sit in a shower crying over someone let alone a wife. She made me love her she made me fall for her and get used to her presence and now she's gone. She left me.

After all that I walk to the lounge and sit on the couch and go through everything. She is going to regret ever crossing me.

NTANDOYETHU TSHAWA MNGUNI

Lola walks out of the door leaving me confused. What is she talking about? What did she mean by talking about manipulation? Lola is a beautiful girl. She is sexy very kind and sweet. What we did last night was consensual. There was no manipulation. She and I need to talk properly about what happened between us. I take my phone and I find missed calls from my girlfriend. Things between her and I haven't been good honestly for the longest time now. We've been fighting non-stop about literally everything and it's been draining. Yesterday those few moments I spent with Lola were the best I have ever had in a long time. We just started talking and one thing led to another. For a change I was happy and I had even forgotten everything that was happening at home. Truth is ever since Nichume came back it hasn't been easy. My siblings and I have been working on our relationship and just trying to make it

work I go home every weekend so that we can spend enough time together and just rebuild that bond we all once had before she went missing and the girl I have been seeing likes to think otherwise. She thinks I have a girlfriend I am secretly seeing in the Western Cape and it's always leading to unnecessary fights. I decide to call her back because even that will be an argument.

"Ntandoyethu" she answers angrily.

"Yoh ha.a joh I've literally just woken up and already you are angry. Unjani Sthandwa sam? I get it you're mad but at least respect me" I say and she lets out a huff.

"Sthandwa sam? Ntando I called you all night and you never answered! Are you cheating on me Ntando?" She asks but I don't respond to her "My friend saw you with some girl Ntando are you cheating on me? Is that it?" She asks and I run my hand over my face annoyed by all of this.

"Ey bruh it's 6 in the morning. I really don't have the time and energy for your insecurities right now. Not everything is about you Solethu. My mother was in an accident. She is stuck in a friggen coma and lord knows if she will wake up or not. Your drama is the last thing I want to deal with now." I say and drop the call on her. I am really annoyed by this hone and her drama. I call Lola but she doesn't answer the first 2 calls and only answers on the third ring.

"Lola!" I say with relief.

"Ntando what's up?" She asks is this her style now? Are we fighting? Does she regret last night?

"Haibo Lola are we fighting? You just woke up and said a lot of things that made no sense and you left bruh" I confront her and she goes silent. "Is this what you do? Have sex with someone and then think you can just erase their mind of everything?" I ask her and she still goes silent.

"Ntando you have a girlfriend. Last night I had a moment of weakness just grieving my dead mother. I did not mean for it to happen and I am sorry you feel some type of way about it." She says coldly and cuts the call on me leaving me hurt and confused. Well this is complicated.

ADELOLA IBRAHIM

I call my sister right after Ntando's call because what the actual hell? How is it that my manipulation doesn't work on him? Did I do it wrong? Is he also an immortal? What's going on? Am I not an immortal? God I am so confused.

"Lola I've been calling you." She answers with so much worry and concern in her voice.

"I'm okay. I know about Mom. Dad called me yesterday Adae" I say and she lets out a sigh.

"Are you okay?" Adae asks and I shrug as though she can see me.

"What can I say? She's gone sis. She's never coming back" I respond and she doesn't say anything for a while. "I called you about something else actually" I say to her.

"Oh" she responds confused.

"I slept with Ntando Mnguni last night" I say and she chuckles.

"You slept with who?" She says in shock with that annoying laugh. "You and your brother love trouble huh? Are we about to have some Romeo and Juliet again? I mean I'm all for it but damn girl." She judges and I roll my eyes.

"I tried to manipulate him but clearly it didn't work. How is it that it didn't work?" I ask her and she chuckles again.

"Because he is either immortal resistant to manipulation or you just didn't do it right."

To Be Continued

Red Lace 32

ADEYEMI PRINCE IBRAHIM

I smell her scent before I even open my eyes. I open my eyes and she's not here beside me but there's a fleece blanket over my body a gray and white fleece even. I look around and it's only then do I remember

that I am at Nichume's apartment. It's very dark in the lounge. I sit up and check my phone and I have a number of missed calls from my father and my sisters. Nichume walks in her steps are very silent as she walks in as if she's not sure what she is walking into.

"You're awake. I was just checking up on you. Thought you'd still be sleeping" she says standing by the door.

"How long was I sleeping?" I ask and she looks at her phone.

"The time is 7 pm now" she says and I raise my eyebrow in disbelief.

"And your sister?" I ask and she laughs. She's so cute when she laughs. It's dark but the little light from the passage is enough for me to see how cute she is.

"Ntando couldn't stop talking about how hot and gorgeous you look" she says with laughter. I chuckle.

"She said she was sleeping over at a friend's place. She didn't even ask what you were or why you were here." I chuckle my cheeks heating up. I can't help it. I have never had a woman compliment me on my looks. I'm always told how intimidating I look or whatever but no one has ever told me that I look good or hot or gorgeous. Nichume switches on the light. "You must be hungry" she suggests and I nod.

"I am actually. Your sister sounds fun. I'd like to meet her one day." I say and she shoots me a look.

"So you can kidnap her too and make her pregnant?" She asks and I don't respond. "Didn't mean for that to sound some type of way. I'm sorry" she says and I nod.

"I should leave before my father thinks I'm dead" I say standing up. She walks over to me and places her hands on my chest.

"Adeyemi I am sorry. That was meant to be a joke." Chume apologizes and I just nod looking down at her cute innocent eyes.

"Stop looking at me like that" I command and she bats her eyelashes at me.

"How?" she asks voice soft and innocent.

"With that look you could make anyone give you their wallet" I say and she giggles softly.

"Come let's go get something to eat" she suggests and leads the way to the kitchen to get us something to eat.

We sit down and eat. I watch her eating and how effortlessly beautiful she is. Nichume might as well be an immortal with how gorgeous she looks right now.

"Do you think you would ever forgive me?" I ask her and she takes a good minute to think it through. I like Nichume. I really wish I hadn't messed up because then maybe she and I would have a shot at something.

"I have forgiven you Yemi. We are having babies together but you and I can never be anything more than co-parents to the children I am carrying. You and your family and your society as a whole broke me and built a new version of me and it is taking a while but I am learning who I am and this version of me will never go back to that life. I don't want to be connected to the mansions or anything that has to do with that life. I want a normal life. I want something special with someone outside of this life of ours I guess. I respect you and I care for you as my children's father but that is all there is. You are a chapter in my life that I want to close permanently." She says and I can't help but respect her honesty.

"Thank you for being honest with me."

ONE WEEK LATER

CATHRINE PHIRI

Khaya helping Olayemi was never part of the plan. Khaya has just ruined everything for me. I have had no choice but to go into hiding because with them working together then chances are they are going to be unstoppable making things harder for me to achieve my goal with the mansions. I have had to fly to Durban for my own safety. At least there Olayemi won't look for me nor will Khaya. Okoye has gone MIA and I don't know what he must have told his master. Everything is just falling apart. Olamide won't

take my calls it's all a mess. I need to find a way to gain access to the mansions so that way I can put my plan back into motion. Tomorrow Olayemi will be laying his wife to rest. I need to find a way to attend that funeral without being seen but with Olamide not taking my calls I have nothing. Adiche is loyal to his master so he would never betray Olayemi. I need a way to get to them. At the moment Nichume is untouchable Olayemi has assigned her a mistress as a bodyguard. They go to school together and the bitch is quite powerful making it impossible to get to Nichume. I grab my coat and make my way to the Hilton hotel where I'm supposed to meet a master.

"What do you think?" I ask and he shakes his head with disapproval.

"Killing Isabelle was not part of the plan Cathrine. Olayemi needs to pay but not like this" the man says and I roll my eyes at him.

"Look it was the only way. We are doing this for the greater good." I plead but she shakes his head no still. "Then what do you want? This is the only way to break down everything that man has built and for us to take over with his wife dead it means we can now take everything from him right under his nose" "Isabelle was my daughter dammit!" He yells and everyone turns to look at us. I am shocked and startled by his tone.

"What do you mean? I don't understand. Isabelle's father died. Olayemi killed him" I ask. He clicks his fingers and before I can react there are men grabbing me from both sides.

"Take her to the harbor"

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

Planning a funeral for my late wife has been stressful. Making sure that i get the perfect casket for her getting the right dress for her the right flowers and just everything has been a job and a half. I am most grateful for my son and daughters. They have made this time half bearable with the amount of work they have put in to make sure that tomorrow is a success. Khaya sent a message letting me know that he wouldn't be able to attend the funeral tomorrow because his wife has been discharged. I am sitting in the office busy with phone calls left right and center when Adae knocks and lets herself into my office. I look at her waiting.

"There is a man in the lounge claiming to be our grandfather" she says. I look at her frowning and confused because as far as I know my wife's father is dead.

"Your grandparents all died" I say standing up and she looks at me questioningly.

"Well

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he says he's not leaving until he talks to you" she says and I let out a loud groan of annoyance. I really don't have the time for this.

"Get back on the call I was on. I was finalizing the program. Send them a picture of your mother for the program" I say and then walk out. When I get to the lounge there is an old man probably in his 60s or something. The resemblance between him and Isabelle is uncunning. How?

"My daughter says you wanted to see me" I say and he stands up and holds his hand out to me.

"I am Isabelle's father" he says I look at his hand and then his face without a response and he retracts the hand. "You don't know me but I worked with your father in fact we founded the mansions in this country together" He says and I still don't respond waiting for him to get to the part where he explains how he is Isabelle's father. "We came to South Africa together all those years ago and we built everything together before Adaoma died she sent me a letter telling me that I was Isabelle's real father" He says and hands me a handwritten letter from Isabelle's mother. "Isabelle knew I was her father. She and I would meet. The day she died she was on her way to meet me so that I would assist with your son's girlfriend" he explains

and hands me his phone with a conversation between him and Isabelle. The number is definitely hers. “She was supposed to meet me and my wife that day but unfortunately she died she kept me a secret from you because she was worried you would kill me to just as you have killed her mother and her stepfather”

MIHLALIKAZI TSHAWA MNGUNI

I watch Khaya as he drives us home. It's been a week since I woke up and the doctor cleared me to go home. He believes I need to be in an environment I am used to and I need to get into my old routine in order to gain my memories back. I'd be lying if I said it hasn't been frustrating not having my memories. Finding out that my husband and children died and my actual husband is the man that I spent years denying myself of being with. Don't get me wrong I was in love with Bandile but the only reason I even chose him over Khaya was because of the saying 'rather the devil you know than the one you don't'. Bandile was a good man and he was perfect at everything but there was something thrilling and exciting about Khaya. Knowing that I ended up with him after my losing my husband is not such a bad thing. Let's talk about the fact that I have triplets that are 18 years of age and a 10-year-old son. What? Who would have thought? Speaking of triplets I have not seen any of them ever since I woke up because apparently they are in school. I think they are avoiding me or they are scared and worried because I have no memory of them. It's going to take a while but I will get my memories back. I have to for not only my sake but for my family's sake.

“You've been staring at me for the past 10 minutes. Say what's on your mind” Khaya startles me disturbing my train of thought.

“So you were just going to leave me in the dark? You weren't going to tell me that I'm the woman you married?” I confront him and he lets out a loud sigh.

“Can we have this conversation when we get inside the house?” He says driving into an enormous yard with a long driveway. Interesting.

“This is where we live?” I ask him and he nods.

“This was the house you wanted to live in after we got married.” He whispers. He's been tiptoeing around me avoiding me and keeping himself busy. Only stayed when he thought I was sleeping at the hospital. I really wish he would open up more and let me know what's going on in his mind.

“It's beautiful and big” I admit and he doesn't respond. He parks in front of the door and gets out of the car he comes back with a wheelchair from the trunk which we got at the hospital.

“I've had some of your things moved to the bedroom downstairs to make moving easier for you” He says wheeling me into our home I guess.

“And what about your things? Didn't you move them with mine?” I ask him and he halts to a stop.

“I assumed you would want your own space Mhlahli. I'm not as strong as you are. I am unable to handle all of this. Your doctor said to ease you into things and if it means sleeping in separate rooms until you regain your memories then I'm okay with it.” He said I know I don't know him well enough but he sounds hurt.

“Can we sit down in the lounge and talk?” I ask him more like plead with him. He wheels me to the lounge and he picks me up placing me on the couch. He sits next to me facing me.

“Look what I went through was traumatic enough. Yes I have no memory of our lives together but you are my husband and I want to regain my memories and that starts with you not avoiding me at any chance you get. I don't know how much you know about my relationship with Bandile but he once lost his memory after the plane crash and he did not remember me at all. Unlike our situation his ex was alive and willingly swooped into his life cutting me out of the picture like I didn't mean anything to him.” I explain and he nods “That was painful and draining so I understand you not knowing how to act around me because I have been in your shoes before but Khaya I need you now more than ever. I will never make you live under a dead man's shadow. We have a life together. We've had it for 18 years right? I want to explore things with you and learn everything I have missed and for that to happen I need you to work with me and be the husband I was married to. Yes I have no memory but I would like to believe that we

wouldn't be married if you were not an excellent partner to me and gave great sex" I say and he laughs at the last part. A full-blown laugh. The difference between my situation and Bandile's is that I once had a life with Khaya and it was a good one while it lasted. I know what I am getting myself into because the little time we spent dating or screwing was fun but also good because Khaya is a good person to a certain extent.

"What do you want to know Mrs. Mnguni?" he asks and I chuckle it's strange but I will get used to it right?

"Our children are they coming home this weekend? What do I need to know about each one of them?" I ask.

"The triplets are Bandile's children. Our son is 10 years old and he is in a boarding school abroad. It was your decision which I am still trying to make sense of to date. The triplets are in university Ntandoyethu is Joburg and the girls Nichume and Ntandoyenkosi are at UCT here" he says handing me a phone "I bought you a new phone and restored your iCloud" He says and I unlock the phone with my face.

"Thank you for this. What else do I need to know about them?"

To Be Continued

Red Lace 33

MIHLALIKAZI TSHAWE MNGUNI

Khaya steps out of the bathroom with a towel around his waist water drops dripping down his toned dad-body. I bite my lower lip enjoying the view. Khaya was never the six-pack type of guy but his body has always been toned and maintained accordingly. With age he has only gotten better how is he this good-looking at his age? He's not even walking he's striding across the room to the bed or maybe I'm so lost in his gloriousness that he looks like he's striding in slow motion. God had to put me in this position where I can't even enjoy my husband as I wish. Wait am I horny right now? What? Luckily my accident didn't cause any permanent damage just a few bruises here and there and the memory loss but either than that I am okay. My body obviously hasn't fully healed from the accident but I'm sure I can take an orgasm right?

"No!" He says startling me "I know that look and the doctor didn't clear you." He says and I pout feeling hurt.

"Hubby" I say and he laughs at me.

"You are horny but we are not doing anything Mihlali" he says and my heart literally drops to the bottom.

"Ouch! But your dick is also up mos. We'd literally be helping each other here" I suggest and he chuckles dropping his town. Yah neh some men are gifted and if Khaya is anything like I remember then his sex is definitely fire. I am grateful when his phone rings he walks over with his dick still hard and leans over me to take his cell phone on the other side leaving me panting.

"Khaya Hello" He answers walking to the closet. Yah neh. I take my phone and call Yonela she's a pediatrician but she's still a doctor and she knows my file.

"Hlali you're home?" She answers.

"Yes mama I got home today. How are you? How are the kids?" I ask trying to find a better way to ask this question.

"Hloni is doing medicine he's almost done. Ntlaka is about to graduate his honors. Kholo is studying computer science and Yolo is studying psychology. They all doing well Hlali. How are you? Have you seen the triplets?" Yoza asks.

"Not yet Khaya said they were coming home this weekend. He's going to fly to Joburg for a funeral tomorrow morning. I don't know how I feel about meeting them or rather seeing them it's a lot to take in Yoza. One minute they are not here and now I have to adjust to the fact that there are three of them and they are turning 18" I admit I really hate that I have no memory of the triplets or Yoza's girls.

“I know I understand it is frustrating but at least you are trying Hlali and that on its own is commendable. Give yourself a pat on the back for effort the fact that you are willing to regain your memories will only speed up this” She says and I nod slowly.

“Quick question” I say.

“You can ask” she responds.

I clear my throat feeling a tad bit embarrassed about what I'm about to ask “When can my husband and I start being intimate?” I ask her and she breaks into a fit of laughter suddenly I feel worse for even asking but I want an answer.

“I would have expected that question from your husband and not you” She says making me feel even worse.

“Forget I asked” I say and she still laughs at me.

“As soon as you are feeling better I don't see why you shouldn't. As long as it's not strenuous and painful. The last thing we need is your injuries getting worse when they should be getting better” Yoza says and I let out a sigh of relief. Khaya walks into the room with his sweatpants hanging very low such that his pubic hair is showing.

“Yoza I need you to repeat what you just said for this man” I say placing her on speaker and earning a laugh from both her and my husband feels strange referring to Khaya as that. Yoza repeats what she told me and Khaya laughs thanking her. We talk a bit more and end the call.

“See? I'm good to go” Khaya chuckles and sits beside me.

“While I would love to tear it up but we've never been the whole vanilla type of people my love” He says and he kisses my cheek.

“Hlali?” He asks touching my hand I look at him. “Are you okay? You kind of zoned out” he says.

I look at him and he's frowning with so much concern on his face. I'm not sure if I should even tell him yet that I had a short memory from that kiss on the cheek. It was literally a split second I barely saw anything and I don't want to give him false hope. It will crush him.

“It's nothing I'm thinking of how you and I can do vanilla until I heal that's all. Who knows maybe that's how my memories might just return” I suggest and he laughs getting off the bed.

“You are an addict!” he reprimands jokingly “The kids will be here tonight will you be okay with them? Do you need me to stay? I don't have to go to the funeral if you don't want me to” Khaya says with so much worry and concern.

“You are 55 you need to stop stressing or else your heart will stop. Grandpa” I tease him and he chuckles nervously. “Are you okay?” I ask him because the mood has suddenly changed. Khaya is a grandfather to Akhona's children so I don't understand why he's acting shady right now.

“I should get dressed and get us something to eat”

ADELOLA IBRAHIM

I look at my ringing phone and it's Ntandoyethu I haven't gone to school since we had sex and also because we've been busy with the funeral preps here at home and at the mansions. I walk into my room and answer his call because he clearly won't stop calling.

“Ntando” I answer.

“Hey Lola how are you? I've been calling you all week and you haven't answered any of my calls. I only want to check on you that's all” He says and I let out a sigh. It's been so hectic that I have barely had the time to focus on her being dead. It's hard losing a parent it's even harder when it's your mother whom you were so tight with because now it means that when the time comes I won't have her there to help me with pregnancy with motherhood and all the other things I am still going to need her for. Yes she played her role for my teen years but now I need her for my adult years.

“It's been hard the only time I ever get to process her death is when I'm all alone in my room laying in bed trying to sleep because it's the only time I am ever fully alone. It hurts Yethu she won't get to see me

graduate get my first job and she won't be there when I get married or when I fall pregnant with my first actual child. It's a lot and it hurts" I vent and he just allows me to vent without saying anything.

"Do you want me to come to see you? Maybe we can go out for ice cream or something?" he suggests and I let out a huff. While I would love for us to do that but I'm not sure if it's wise because what if we end up having car sex? I don't want to fall for Yethu. My brother is in love with his sister and it's just going to be a lot of complications.

"No I rather we keep our distance from each other. Our families are not the best of friends" I say and he chuckles.

"Then we can be the next Romeo and Juliet the ones to bring them together." He suggests and I can't help laughing.

"You are stupid!" I say and he chuckles.

"You laughed so I'm okay with being stupid for you. Let's just go for ice cream I will bring you back before 4 pm" he says and I look at the time: It's right after 1 pm. "No later than 4 pm we have a ritual that needs to take place at 4:30 pm" I say.

"I promise"

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

I leave Mihlali sleeping and go to the warehouse to see Shadow; he said he had some news for me. Okoye is still with us and Olayemi said we could kill him or do whatever we wanted with him. Shadow on the other hand has made sure to do as he pleases with him. He's keeping him alive to torture him at this point he's not even looking for information he just enjoys torturing the guy. I walk into the warehouse and find Shadow in the room with Okoye; he has him hanging face down with his feet in the air; there's a lot of blood dripping from his body I don't even know from which part of his body the blood is from.

"Yeerr" I say proudly and impressed by his work he turns to look at me proudly.

"You said to have fun with him" Shadow says and then takes a cloth to wipe his hands.

"I did you said you had something for me" I say to him and he drops the cloth and leads me outside to the maintenance room.

"I still don't understand why we are helping these people but I got word from our people in Durban. They sported Cathrine at the Hilton hotel with an old man they dragged her to some shipment container at the harbor. The old man is said to be Isabelle's biological father. That is all we have for now" Shadow says handing me a file. "There's not much information why he would have his daughter killed it makes little sense" Shadow says and I nod.

"I guess we will have to find out thanks Shadow. And I know you hate us working with them but my daughter is carrying their twins we are going to co-grandparent together so we might as well get along for the sake of peace" I say and he chuckles

"Whatever let me return to that fool." he excuses himself going into the room he was in before. I browse through the file and he's right there's not enough information in this file. Hopefully Olayemi will make better sense of everything when I see him tomorrow.

NICHUME TSHAWA MNGUNI

I look at his contact details contemplating on whether or not to call him the most he and I will call each other about are the babies growing inside of me. I still haven't told Ntando and Yethu because i don't want them to know before mom does.

"Call him" Ntando says walking into the kitchen behind me we are about to drive home.

"Who?" I ask playing dumb and she laughs at me.

"Your Yoruba Prince charming the sex God!" Ntando says and smacks her lips making me laugh. She's so stupid!

“No I don’t want to talk to him” I say and she chuckles.

“Nichume the manipulation was broken but yet here you are hung up over the guy. Stop pretending you hate him and just get with him. How long are you going to do this to yourself? Denying yourself of the finer things in life?” Ntando asks and I take a second to respond.

“I don’t know if you’ve forgotten but this is the same man that raped me Ntando” I remind her so brutally and painfully. The word still leaves a bitter taste in my mouth.

“Clearly your heart seems to have forgotten that because why are you so desperately hung up over him huh? Come on Chume you like the guy despite what happened my advice to you is follow your heart.” She says and walks back to the bedroom with a water bottle. I unlock my phone and look at his contact. I can’t disappoint my family like that I’m not like Ntando who has no problem disappointing them. I delete his contact and get myself water before going to my room to fetch my things. We meet in the passage and head out.

“That was a quick call” Ntando says and I shake my head no.

“I didn’t call him I deleted his number. I can’t be with him Ntando. He put our family through hell my being with him is wrong on all levels everything mom and dad went through would have been for nothing. I will not be another case of Stockholm Syndrome” I argue and she laughs.

“Okay wena Stokololo” she says annoyingly I shove her making her laugh. We put our bags in the trunk and drive home. On the way we get a call from aunty Isenathi.

“Hey aunty you on loudspeaker and I’m with Chume” Ntando answers.

“Hey babies how are you guys?” She asks.

“Hey aunty” I say.

“We good how are you? When are you coming to this side? Where’s aunty Mange?” Ntando asks her.

“I am actually at the airport. Mange should be flying in tonight. I wanted to ask about your mother Biko told me they discharged her today.” she reports.

“Yep we are going to see her as we speak. Dad said to take it easy and not bombard her with everything. He asked us not to mention Nichume’s abduction” Ntando responds.

“Oh” Ise says “I guess the plan is to not send her back to the hospital so soon after she got out. Chume how are you my love? Biko told me” she says I’m not even surprised.

“I’m okay I guess. I guess I’m not allowed to tell mom this too” I say and Ntando looks at me confused.

“We’ll talk when we get home okay you kids drive safely okay” Ise says and we say our goodbyes. Ise is mom’s little sister together with Imange they are twins.

“What’s aunty Ise talking about?” Ntando asks.

“It’s nothing Ntando we should call Yethu and find out when he’s going to land this side”

Red Lace 34

MIHLALIKAZI TSHAWA MNGUNI

I am nervous at the thought of the triplets coming over; I do not know what to expect. I asked Khaya to leave earlier than intended because then I won’t get the opportunity or the chance for us to have proper conversations without him. We won’t be able to get to know each other better because he will probably intervene and have them omit certain information which I don’t want. I want us to be transparent with each other and just be free with each other that’s all. I keep looking at the time nervously thinking they are going to walk in any second now. It’s crazy because these are my children and I shouldn’t be this nervous but I can’t help it. Khaya told me we all get along; I have a great relationship with all of them so I’m counting on that to save me from this fear. I mean these are teenagers. You never know what to expect. When I was 17 a man I thought loved me blackmailed me with a sex tape that was aired on my wedding day with Bandile. So really anything can happen. They walk in and I am taken aback by how pretty they are; they look just like my little sisters. I can’t tell who is who but one has curly hair with blond highlights at the tips and the other has brownish-blond braids. They seem as nervous as I am it’s

just the girls for now. The one with the curly hair is dressed a bit more fly than the other she's wearing sweatpants that hang low with a crop top sweater and a pair of heels while her sister wears a brown two-piece sweat set with white Adidas sneakers. They both look cute in their styles.

"Mom" the one in heels says throwing herself into my arms. I don't hold back and hug her just as tight as she is hugging me. Okay she's very welcoming so that's a start. She takes a step back "I am Ntandoyenkosi Athini and that is Nichume Siphosethu" she introduces stepping aside so that her sister can come over. Nichume is a little shy and skeptical before she takes a step closer and throws herself in my arms.

"Hey ma" Chume says her hug is not as tight but it's just as warm. We stay in each other's arms for a little longer before we break the hug.

"How are you mom?" Chume asks sitting beside me and Athini sitting on the other side putting me between them.

"I am okay. How are you ladies?" I ask because I don't know what to say. Knowing that I have 18-year-olds for children is not exactly easy.

"We're okay mom we are just glad you're home and you're okay" Athini responds.

"It feels good to be out of the hospital. How was school?" I ask them facing Chume and she shrugs her shoulders.

"School was wonderful. We thrilled you are home mom" Chume says and I smile.

"Have you guys eaten?" I ask and the girl's just nod responding that they are good.

"We know and we understand you lost your memory but we not going to tiptoe around you. At least I won't. You're our mother. Visiting home shouldn't be this awkward between us and I know and I'm trying to understand how you are feeling but we have a great relationship with you you are our best friend and it would be really nice if things would just be a little normal and less weird and awkward." Athini says and I chuckle. Yep she is definitely mine.

"Oh I'm trying baby but I don't know how to do this. I want to slip into the role I played before my accident but it's not that easy when I have no memory whatsoever of you guys but I am willing to try to do better or act more normal towards you guys whatever normal is" I explain and Chume takes my hand and she rubs it in appreciation.

"Okay no problem then. I will fill you in on everything that you need to know about us. We have the entire weekend to ourselves." Athini says and I laugh. I love that she is this open and so free-spirited. It's good to see that she took my personality when I was her age or maybe she took Mange's. Nichume seems a little closed off but I'm hoping that by the end of this weekend she and I will be good.

ADELOLA IBRAHIM

We are driving away from my home. Dad made sure to choose a secluded area; a place that wouldn't be easily accessible. I had to inform security that someone was coming to fetch me. There's this one security that I get along with and usually lets me get away with stuff so it was easy for Yethu to even enter the premises. Dad is busy with my apparent grandfather so it's easy to sneak out of the area. We drive off towards the city.

"Please stop here" I ask him and he halts to a stop. We are nowhere near town nor are we anywhere near my home. We are literally in the middle of nowhere.

"Is everything okay?" He asks turning to me to give me his attention.

"There's something that's been bothering me since the last time we hooked up" I start off and he looks at me waiting "Ntando are you an immortal or half immortal?" I ask him and he chuckles his chuckle turns into a full-blown laugh.

"Wait you serious?" He asks me and I nod. What does he think? "Why would you ask me that? You know I'm a basic mortal" He says and I shrug my shoulders.

“I don’t know that Ntando. I tried to manipulate you the other day and it didn’t work. That only happens with immortals or half-immortals” I explain to him and he shrugs.

“Or maybe you just don’t know how to use your manipulation skills then babe” He says and taps my nose playfully. I roll my eyes at him but he is smiling like an idiot.

“So? What’s the actual deal?” I ask him.

“Maybe I’m just resistant to it Lola is it possible that mortals can be resistant to this manipulation thing?” he asks me clearly annoyed by this entire thing.

I shrug my shoulders and proceed to say “nevermind tell me something to distract me”

He smiles. Ntando has the most charming smile a man could ever have. His parents must have planned him because there’s no way a man can look this good he says “or I could just show you or do it instead” He suggests wiggling his eyebrows at me I am confused at what he is suggesting. He leans in to kiss my parted lips. His kiss is slow and sensual. I place my hands on his chest “Don’t fight me Lola” his lips are still attached to mine “I like you Lola I’m falling for you” Yethu says between our intense kiss. I kiss him harder to avoid whatever this conversation might be. Yethu and I can’t be together because we are from two different worlds amongst other things and my father would never allow me to marry an immortal. We marry for business purposes this side and not for love or infatuation. He removes my safety belt and pulls me to him. We break the kiss because there’s very little space for what we want to do. I am very much horny for this man. I have been wanting him since the first time we had sex so of course I’m not about to deny myself of this pleasure.

“Let’s move to the back” He says and then he gets out of the car and opens the door for me. He sits inside and I get on top of him and grind on his crotch area. While kissing him this time around I will take care of him and show him just what I am capable of. I kiss him and trace my way down to his neck and help remove his t-shirt. He is more than willing. At least the feeling is mutual and his hard cock is evident enough. I help remove his sweatpants and he allows me. I kneel on the seat and lower my face down to his hard cock. He does not push me down to his cock or meet me halfway. I hate when someone does that. It’s the few things my DM and I ever fought about.

I wrap my fingers around his shaft and as I give him a handjob I feel him coming alive. I take his tip into my mouth and boy does this turn me on so badly. He allows me to go down on him at my own pace. I start sucking him off going all the way deep until I can barely breathe and I can feel him all the way to the back of my throat. He moans out loudly enjoying the feel of my mouth on his cock. I pull back and lick his tip around the mushroom and he lets out a choked groan when I lick one particular spot that looks like a line from his hole and down to the base of the mushroom head. He lets out another moan.

He’s big and he doesn’t necessarily fit into my mouth. My mouth alone stretches enough to accommodate his size and his length. He hits the back of my throat making me gag. He releases his pre-cum into my mouth. The saltiness makes me want him more makes me want him inside of me. I slip my free hand down to my sweatpants and start playing with myself to ready myself for his pipe. I hold his length and then take his balls into my mouth to suck his balls giving him a sloppy wet hand job while I suck each one of his balls and lick him from the base up to his hole and back down to his balls. The groans leaving his lips are a major turn-on. God this man will be the death of me.

He pulls my head back and then he sits back on the seat pulls my face to his and gives me a sloppy wet kiss. I continue giving him a handjob his dick fully erect and very much big. My eyes betray me. I am horny and very much excited to get on his dick. The thought alone excites me. I remove my pants together with my underwear and get on top of him and then lower myself on his dick. I am so wet so ready and very much aroused. His dick disappears inside of me and he lets out a breath. Yethu lets out a muffled groan enjoying the feel of me as I sit on him and he fills me whole. I cry out in pleasure enjoying just how much he fills me up. I bounce up and down on his dick. Right now it feels so damn good like the best thing ever and I want nothing

more than this dick filling me up inside stretching me so very much and shifting my womb. It's everything and more. He doesn't fuck me; I take control riding him moving up and down because they taught sis how to please a man. I can't even go too high because of the car's roof. He doesn't assist me by making me bounce on him. He gets it. Nothing beats having a man that understands that you need to be allowed to do as you please on that dick. All he does is spank my ass in between when I go up and down on him. He randomly kisses my neck in between and my chin. Car sex is probably the most difficult sex to have because of the limited space but it's the best because of how intimate it is and how it allows us to be this close to each other. I stop bouncing and start grinding on his dick moving back and forth front and forward and moving in circles. His pubic hair feels so good against my clit it's rubbing on me so very well only increasing my orgasm. I can't help but cum all over his dick with a yelp of pleasure. Yethu doesn't stop when I come he continues and makes me bounce on him a bit more but faster that way I know he's about to release; he pulls me off him and he cums on his thighs. I take the liberty of getting off him and sitting beside him.

"Damn girl!" He says and kisses the side of my head. I rest my head on his shoulder. Just as we are sitting like that his phone rings.

"Dad calling" his car speaker says. I get off his shoulder and sit up.

"I have to take that. He's supposed to land today" he reports. He takes a few tissues from the back and wipes himself. "There are wipes in the cabin hole" He says and pulls his pants and briefs up. "I'll get them for you okay" He says and he kisses my forehead. It's these stupid little gestures that will make you catch feelings unprovoked! He gets out and goes to the front he takes his phone and hands me the wipes while answering his father outside the car.

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

I land in Joburg and the first person I call is my wife to let her know I have landed. I call Yethu who answers at the second call.

"Dad" He answers he's nearly breathless trying to catch his breath. The last thing I want to imagine is him having sex because I know it's not sport.

"Were you exercising?" I ask him and he chuckles.

"Something like that. What's up?" he responds and I chuckle.

"I hope you are all packed and on your way to the airport. You better not miss your flight. You know how much this means to your mother" I remind him.

"I won't forget dad. My flight leaves at 4:30 pm." He says and I look at the time it's already 3:30.

"Yes and you should be on your way to the airport already. You know Joburg traffic Yethu" I scold.

"Yes dad. I take it you landed safely?" he says dismissively.

"Yes I am on my way to Olayemi's house now" I respond.

"Alright. See you Sunday then." He says and we end the call. I laugh alone thinking about the conversation we just had. I hope he's using protection. We do not have the energy to handle other grandchildren right now.

I get to Olayemi's place and the guards let me in we go to his study. He offers me something to drink and sits opposite me.

"So?" He asks.

"Here" I say throwing the file across the table to him. He sits quietly and goes through it.

"This man was here earlier. So his story checks out?" Olayemi asks and I shrug.

"You'd need to run a DNA test. A letter shouldn't be enough to prove whether or not he is your father-in-law" I warn him and he nods.

"I just need to get through this funeral so that I can deal with all of this" He says I lean in to place my glass on the coaster.

“How are you holding up?” I ask him. We have not spoken about how this has affected him. “I’m coping. Some days are better than others. The kids are not dealing with this loss. We are all just trying to get by. How is your daughter with our grandchildren?” he jokes making us both laugh.

“She’s trying to cope with everything” I respond and he nods.

“Adeyemi tells me she dumped him said they couldn’t be together and stuff” he says and I shrug.

“To be dumped they would have to be dating first” I say.

“Would it be such a problem if they got together? I mean they are having children together.”

Olayemi suggests and I shrug my shoulders.

“It’s not up to any of us. If my daughter wants to be with him then it’s on her.” I say and he laughs.

“Who would have thought that you and I would be sitting and talking like this?”

To Be Continued

Red Lace 35

NICHUME SIPHOSETHU MNGUNI

We’ve spent the last few hours just catching mom up with everything that has happened in the past few years. We took out an album and sat on the floor going through the pictures with her with hopes they would spark something but to no luck. She’s been very welcoming of everything I excuse myself to get more juice in the kitchen. I am startled by a knock; I walk over to the door and it’s aunty Ise. We greet each other and share a warm embrace.

“You’ve matured gracefully. You look gorgeous” she says and I giggle blushing.

“Thank you aunty you look beautiful yourself. Why didn’t you bring the family?” I ask her and she shakes her head no.

“I didn’t want to overwhelm your mother with them but everyone is good. They sent their greetings” she says and I smile nodding. I offer her something to drink and she asks for champagne because that is all she drinks anyway. We head to the lounge after I pour her a glass and hand it to her. Mom is happy to see her little sister. They hug and catch up a bit. Ntando and I excuse ourselves to give them space. I get to my room and my phone has two missed calls. I recognize the number. It’s Adeyemi’s. I contemplate calling him back for a good 5 minutes and decide against it. I take off my sweater and stand in front of the mirror and look at my stomach. Soon I’ll start showing. Before that I need my mom to remember. I don’t know how I’m going to reiterate everything to her because she is going to want to know how I ended up pregnant. My phone rings and this time it’s another number. I decide to answer it this time.

“Hello?” I say

“Princess” the person says I take a minute to process the voice “don’t tell me you’ve already forgotten me. Your favorite Dungeon Master” he says and I chuckle.

“Akin?” I ask and he laughs.

“The one and only I am in Cape town and I remembered you were from around here” he says.

“What are you doing here?” I ask him. I can’t even hide my excitement. He is happy to hear from me just as I am hearing from him. Akin and I are good friends no doubt.

“I’m running a few errands for the Master. I’m here to fetch the idiot your sister has been entertaining” he says.

“Wait what? I don’t understand” I admit confused.

“Your sister has been entertaining Okoye’s son under his father’s instructions. You know he goes to your university right?” Akin asks and I shake my head no.

“No I was not aware. I’ve never seen him since I got home. Ntando never mentioned anything about entertaining a DM” I say.

“Maybe she was unaware that she was entertaining one. I’m flying back to Joburg tonight. Is it possible to see you?” he asks. Akin and I have no beef. Frankly he’s a good person.

“I’d love to but unfortunately my mom had an accident last week we using this weekend to bond with her. Will you be coming back this side anytime soon? Apparently I’m going to need a bodyguard from the mansions” I mention and he chuckles at the last part.

“I’m sorry about your mom. Why would you need a bodyguard? I thought after three months you’d have removed everything that screamed mansions?” he asks and I let out a sigh.

“I would have but apparently I am carrying two immortals — well half immortals inside of me” I say.

“You pregnant?” Ntando’s voice asks with audible disappointment. I thought I had closed the door fully. “Is that what aunty Ise was talking about? Nichume how far are you?” Ntando asks.

“Akin I have to go. We’ll catch up later okay? Is this your number?” I ask him.

“Yes hope your mom gets well. We will definitely talk about you and your super babies” He says and I chuckle as we end the call.

“So?” Ntando inquires waiting for a response.

“Yes I am pregnant. I am 18 weeks; almost four months with twins.” I point out.

“You have to tell mom!” Ntando says and I shake my head no.

“Athini! You are not going to tell mom it is not your news and mom does not need this just yet.” she looks at me shocked I never use her second name unless needed.

“You crazy! Does dad know? What am I even asking? Of course he knows I thought we were close Chume” she says guilt-tripping.

“I thought so too. Why are you messing with a dungeon master Ntando? You have a boyfriend who loves you!” I say and she is confused “the guy from campus that you’ve been messing with” I point out.

“I am not messing with him. We only went out once. He is not a dungeon master” she says with a sarcastic chuckle.

“Ntando how naïve can you be? After what happened to me one would think that you would be more vigilant of the people you allow into your life. You are so gullible!” I say angrily and she shoots me a look it's only then do I realize that I have just insulted my sister “Ntando I am sorry I did not mean for that to come out the way it did” I say apologetically.

“It's okay Nichume I’m stupid” she’s clearly offended by what i just said and walks out of my bedroom banging on the door. I let out a sigh and throw my phone on the bed. That shouldn’t have happened. I wear a hoodie and take my phone heading downstairs to mom and Ise.

“You okay?” Ise asks the minute she sees me. I nod and sit down beside mom.

“I’m glad you’re awake mom”

OLAMIDE IBRAHIM

Word on the street has it that Cathrine is the one that killed my sister-in-law. During our last encounter I gave her a necklace with a tracker and the tracker has placed her in Durban and the harbor. I need answers. She needs to explain everything to me and tell me the truth this time around. Yes I liked her and had feelings for her but I love my sister-in-law more. Isabelle did not deserve to die like that. She was a good person. I am with my guys. It's 5 of us. We are at the harbor and I am tracking her. Whoever took her only has two guys watching her. Clearly they did not think anyone would look for her. I get to the container she is in. My men take care of the guards while the other two and I go in and get her out of the container. She is sitting on the floor with her mouth covered with tape and her hands tied in front of her. I walk over to her and rip the tape off her mouth. She stretches her mouth.

“How did you find me?” she asks with a huge smile; probably happy thinking this is a rescue.

“That” I say and gesture at the necklace with my eyes. She looks at it.

“You put a tracker on me? Well thank you but still Olamide” she confronts me and I shrug.

“Do you want to get out of here or not?” she nods after I have asked. I pick her up and take her to our van. I put her in and get in after her.

“Please take this off of me” she says and I chuckle.

“You thought this was a rescue? Cathrine you killed Isabelle. Surely you didn’t think you would get away with it” I remind her. Her eyes pop out in shock

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” I remind her. Her eyes pop out in shock almost as if they are going to fall out.

“Olamide I can explain” she pleads.

“You can explain to my brother because that is who we are going to”

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

I am sitting alone in my study going through the file Khaya had given me earlier. I am shocked to see that Cathrine has been working with Isabelle's father. Why would he have her kill his daughter if really Isa was his? I have so many questions but no answers whatsoever. I take out my phone and call Adiche.

"Master" he answers clearly awake. This is what I love about having men that are not married working for me because it means I can reach them whenever I feel like it.

"I need you to come over to my house. I have something I want you to look into" I say to him.

"Alright give me 5 minutes" He says and I drop the call. Adeyemi walks into the study. I acknowledge him closing the file before.

"Can I help you?" I ask him. He pours himself a drink and sits opposite me.

"Are you okay?" He decides to ask after settling on the chair. I raise an eyebrow "I know how much you loved mom you worshiped the ground she walked on. Not once have you stopped working since she died. You've been keeping yourself occupied with planning her funeral dad." He points out. I watch him curiously. Adeyemi and I are not one to sit and braid each other's hair so this for me is shocking.

"What do you want me to do son? Sit around mopping over her death? She's not coming back and I've accepted that." I retort. He raises an eyebrow.

"I'm just saying it's okay to grieve your wife dad. Burying yourself in your work won't make things change. Your daughters need you" he says and takes a long swig of his drink.

"What's this about huh? Is this about that Mnguni chick huh? Is you becoming a father making you soft son?" I retort annoyed not wanting to entertain this conversation. Opening up to Khaya was enough for me.

"I can see you are hurting. All I'm saying is don't bottle up the emotions. Goodnight" Adeyemi says and gets up from the chair. He returns the glass to its place.

“What do you want me to say huh? It hurts that she’s gone it hurts that I will never see her again. It breaks my heart knowing that they brutally murdered her and I was not there to protect her I..”

“Do you blame me for her death?” Adeyemi asks taking me by surprise “I mean if I hadn’t messed with Nichume and got her pregnant then maybe mom would still be here today” Adeyemi says and I take a suitable moment to process what he is saying. I have never not once blamed him for Isabelle’s death. The man that was supposed to be watching her I skinned him alive because had he been at his post she would still be here. Nichume’s ritual and Adeyemi’s return was necessary.

“Let that be the last time you ever say that. Do you hear me? I don’t blame you. Yes you fcked up with that girl but I do not blame you for Isabelle’s death. If it was meant to happen then it would have happened regardless of what you did with that girl regardless of the ritual.” I say hoping that my words offer some kind of comfort. I did not imagine that Adeyemi blamed himself for Isa’s death. A knock disturbs us.

“Come in” I call out. Adeyemi is headed for the door when Adiche walks in.

“Son don’t carry this burden. You did not kill her” I say to him and he nods and walks out of the office leaving me with Adiche. Adi pours a drink.

“And that?” He asks turning to me.

“He blames his actions for his mother’s death he thinks if he hadn’t fcked Nichume then none of this would have happened” I explain and Adi sits opposite me.

“That’s a lot hey” Adi says and I nod. “You called me” He says after a while.

“Look at this” I say sliding the file over to him. He opens it and browses through it.

“Where is Olamide right now?” he asks.

“I have no idea because they hold his girlfriend captive in Durban” I spit out bitterly. I cannot believe my brother would scheme behind my back with Cathrine of all people. He knew how much I loved her. He knew how much it hurt me when she upped and left.

“Do you need me to find him?” Adi asks and I shake my head.

“Not yet. I want to deal with everything after the funeral” I say.

“Taylor has been asking about her husband” Adi says and I look up at him and shrug my shoulders. “I haven’t told her anything” he adds quickly.

“Okoye will not be returning. You need to take on his duties and appoint someone who will work alongside you and take on your responsibilities” I say to him and he frowns confused.

“Okoye has been betraying me from since as long as I can remember. He’s been going against me and doing things I’ve specifically told him not to do. He got his son to try and get with Khaya’s other daughter behind my back again.” I tell him and shock him but he is quick to mask is.

“So where is he now?” Adi asks.

“I left him for dead. Khaya picked him up and they are doing as they please with him. You will not tell anyone this information Adiche” I command and he nods understandingly. “Adeyemi got that girl pregnant. She was the one responsible for killing all those elders. She was led by the twins she was carrying” I confide because carrying everything on my shoulders has been draining.

“What?” Adiche is shocked I nod my head “So the Prince is going to be a father?” he says with a side smile “You are going to be a grandfather” he points out and I nod with my own smile. “Congratulations” he says clinking his glass to mine. I smile.

“Yeah. Now Khaya and I are forced to not kill each other for the sake of the twins” I point out and he chuckles.

“And who is protecting the girl? If word comes out then hell will break loose” Adi says and I nod.

“Yemi wants to go to Cape town and protect her himself but I told him after the funeral at the moment it's just some guards and her father’s people” I say and he nods.

“Would Khaya consider her moving to Joburg? I mean she needs to be close especially when she is close to birth”

To Be Continued

Red Lace 36

NICHUME SIPHOSETHU MNGUNI

I knock on mom’s door and I hear her tell me to come in. She can walk with the help of a walking stick just that she’s not fully steady on her feet yet. Her head was the most after part of her body from the accident. I open the door and walk in. She’s sitting up and going through the album. She pats beside her. I walk over to the bed and get in next to her. I rest my head on her shoulder.

“I noticed the tension between you and Athini” mom says. It's so strange hearing mom call Ntando Athini because the only time she ever calls us by our second names is if we’ve done something wrong.

“We had a petty argument nothing hectic” I say not wanting to worry.

“Nichume I am your mother. I need you to stop tiptoeing around me. Something is bothering you. You can always tell me what's going on.” Mom says I don’t respond for a while.

“Aunty Yoza said to take it easy and not flood you with everything all at once” I respond. She nudges me with her shoulder and so I sit up giving her my full attention.

“I know I have no memories of you guys but I think I know when something is bothering my baby. Talk to me sweetly” she encourages. If I didn’t know about her amnesia I would be convinced she was faking it.

“Three years ago I was taken from school” I start off and she looks at me dropping the album.

“What do you mean?” She asks with worry and confusion.

“A friend of mine and I were going to Braam when an uber guy kidnapped us...” I narrate everything but leave out the details where I was taught how to pleasure a man because I don’t want her to worry too much and besides she knows all of this information it’s just buried somewhere in her memories. “Last week I found out I am almost four months pregnant” I say and place the sonogram in front of her.

“Twins?” she says with her voice breaking. She is in tears and I hate that I’m the reason behind it but I need my mother right now. I need her to tell me that I made the right decision by deleting Adeyemi’s number. I nod at her question. She pulls me into her arms.

“What did you decide on?” She asks. I tell her about the ritual and how I have no choice but to keep these babies. I am just tired of keeping everything in. I even tell her about the babies making me kill elders. At this point I might as well tell her everything.

“Oh Nichume come here” she says and pulls me into her arms hugging me tightly.

“You’ve been through so much baby” she says hugging me and comforting me. I don’t know why I am crying right now.

“We are going to get through this together”

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

Olamide walks into my office he steps aside and I see Cathrine behind him. I am shocked to see her in chains looking scruffy. She is still beautiful don’t get me wrong she’s just dirty and looks like she hasn’t had a bath in ages.

“What is this?” I ask Olamide getting up from my chair.

“She’s the one behind Isabelle’s death” Olamide explains and I roll my eyes at him bored.

“Yes I know that but what are you doing with her here in my office?” I explain walking around the table that separates us.

“I know you Olayemi. You are paranoid. I don’t know what you think you know but I did not betray you. I did not go behind your back. I have always had a thing for Cathrine and over the years whenever she reached out I would always help her out. She knew I loved her and she always used that to her advantage. I was stupid to fall for it.” Olamide explains I still look at him and then at Cathrine without uttering a single word.

“I did not know she was going to kill Isabelle when I met up with her. The most we did was fxck and I tried to officialize things with her until I found out she was behind my sister-in-law’s death. I would never betray you brother. I loved Isabelle. She was a great person. What Cathrine did do her was unjust.” Olamide mutters. He seems nervous. Maybe it's because I am quiet and none responsive as he had probably hoped. I am weighing my options here. Can I really trust him? He is my brother. He’s never gone against me before. He would never do anything to betray me right?

“What did she tell you?” I ask him and he shakes his head no.

“She hasn’t spoken since I got her. I thought you would appreciate questioning her yourself” he says and I look at Cathrine who is in shock. Did she honestly think my brother would betray me for her? Stupid if you ask me.

“Alright let's go with her to the basement” I say to him and he picks her up places her on his shoulder and follows me to the basement. He places her on a chair in the middle of our torture room. I rip the tape off her mouth and she groans in pain.

“Olayemi I can explain” she says pleading.

“Okay I’m listening” I say and taking off my blazer and hanging it on the door. I turn to her.

“I did not kill her intentionally” She says I walk over to the weapons and take a pair of pliers turning to her.

“Go on” I say and she gulps down air “It will do you good to be honest” I remind her.

“It won’t matter what I say you are going to kill me either way” She spits out angrily

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I nod.

“You’re right but I needed answers answers you never gave me all those years ago” I say “So start talking” I command and she keeps quiet. I chuckle and pull a chair to sit in front of her. I nod at my brother who undoes one of her hands. He ties it to the chair handle on her sides. “Your nails are pretty they still look new. Pretty sure you’ve only had this manicure for about a week if not less” I tease bringing the pliers in front of her nails.

“Olayemi please” she pleads desperately. I start with her little finger and peg the pliers on her nail. “Yemi I am begging you” she begs with tears rolling down her cheeks. I pull the nail and I see it ripping out of its place. She starts bleeding instantly. I drop the nail on the floor. “Okay I’ll tell you everything. Just please stop torturing me” she begs. I nod and put the pliers on the floor.

“Start from before you left how you killed all my babies”

“I never killed our children Olayemi. Your father and Adaoma knew how powerful I was. They knew that you and I would have the most powerful children and that threatened the mansions.” She narrates

“How did you keeping our children threaten the mansions?” I ask her.

“If the children lived then you would have found out you were an Immortal your father pretended to be human so that he could easily control the elders however he wanted. Your father orchestrated everything. I loved you Olayemi I would have never killed our children on purpose. Adaoma was behind the killing of our kids. They sacrificed them to increase their power but with every child that died I would only become stronger and my connection to the ancestors increased.” She explains she is in tears. I am not sure what to believe right now my father was not a good man but Adaoma? Isabelle’s mother was a good woman and I cannot imagine her doing what Cathrine’s accusing her of. “If you don’t believe me then look into my bag there’s a phone with a number saved as ‘Elder Leah’” She says I nod at Olamide who looks into her bag. He shows me the number on the phone.

“Why should I believe you?” I ask her.

“I have nothing to lose I have no reason to lie about anything” She says and I nod at Olamide to make the call.

“Continue” I say to her.

“I didn’t want this power Olayemi I never wanted to be this powerful mistress. With this power came more than just manipulation I can contact dead elders I can get into a person’s mind and let them into mine” She says “Come let me show you” she says I am a little skeptical but I bring my head closer to hers “bring your forehead to mine and I will show you everything” She says and I do just that. She closes her eyes but I keep mine open and I see Adaoma giving her things to induce her pregnancy how she would make her miscarry and then use the blood from her to perform rituals. I see everything as clear as day it's like I was there even though I wasn't. I continue to hear a conversation between Adaoma and my father talking about how they needed to convince me that Cathrine was killing my babies everything she is showing me corroborates everything she has just told me. I pull back away from her.

“You said you are powerful enough. Who is to say that you did not recreate those memories to convince me not to kill you?” I ask her and she shrugs.

“Do you want us to conjure up your father or Adaoma?” She asks.

“Yes”

MIHLALIKAZI TSHAWWE MNGUNI

I've been tossing and turning unable to sleep after what Chume told me. I've been asking myself multiple questions such as: how could Khaya keep this from me? What kind of mother was I to allow my daughter to be captured? How did we overcome all of this as a family? How did Khaya and I make it through because if I am anything like the Mihlali I remember myself to be then I would have never allowed anything to happen to her and he and I would have probably ended. Bandile must be turning in his grave over me marrying such a man. When I met Khaya he was into shady businesses he was well trained by my grandfather Lwando Mbana so knowing that information I can't believe I still went on and married him. Khaya once assured me that anyone that wanted to avenge themselves over what my father did to them he made sure to be rid of them so that no harm would come to me. Was it my fault she was captured? Was it because of Khaya's side activities? I slide out of the bed cautiously to not wake Chume up. I take my phone and use the crutch to make my way to the lounge. I sit in the dark trying to process everything that Chume told me. A sob escapes my lips I clasp my mouth so that I'm not loud but I can't help the tears. I can't help how painful my heart is right now. Knowing that my daughter went through all of that. How did we heal from this as a family? They all seem fine and have moved on from it. After a good 10 minutes of crying I call my husband.

“Shouldn't you be sleeping? Or are you and the girls only going to sleep now?” Khaya asks I try not to sniff too loud but I can't help it. I even have hiccups from the crying “shortcake talk to me” he says with so much concern in his voice.

“Nichume told me about the kidnapping” I say and he goes silent “Why would you keep this from me?” I ask him “You told me we had a no-secret marriage why would you keep something this big from me Khaya?” I confront him.

"I didn't want to burden and overwhelm you with those news Mihlali-" I cut him off mid-sentence

"She is my daughter Khaya! Memory or not she is my child and I deserved to know about all of this. It was not a burden! If anything I'm burdening you here with children that are not yours!" I say angrily but it's too late to take back the words that have just left my mouth. "Khaya I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that"

"Wow Mihlali. That's how you feel? Our family went through a dark time and I didn't want you to relive it. I kept it from you to protect you" he says.

I take a deep breath to calm myself down "And the pregnancy? How long did you think you would keep that from me? She's going to start showing in the next month or so then what?" I ask him.

"I don't know Shortcake I guess I hoped that by the time she starts to show you would have your memories back. I didn't want you to go through this all over again Mihlali. The first time we found out was the hardest when she went missing it almost broke us and nobody was coping. I'm sorry for trying to protect you from all of this" he says my head is painful and I feel myself dropping the phone as these distorted flashes creep in all at once.

"Hlali" someone says shaking me "Oh my God you convulsing" the person says. Distorted memories keep flashing in my mind Bandile's accident me finding out about the triplets how he died in hospital my babies' lifeless bodies. I cry out in pain

"Hlali hang in there. Yoza is coming." It's Ise speaking.

"Ise what's going on with mom?" a male voice asks it's definitely Yethu's voice.

"I don't know. Yoza is on her way. Bring me water" Ise shouts at Yethu who rushes out of the room.

To Be Continued

NTANDOYETHU BANDILE MNGUNI

Walking into the lounge and finding mom on the floor having a seizure has to be the scariest thing I have ever witnessed. Her eyes keep rolling to the back of her head while Ise tries to keep her up. I'm glad the girls are sleeping and cannot hear all of this Ntando is a heavy sleeper it's Nichume I'm worried about right now. The only reason I even came downstairs was that I needed something to drink I hadn't slept ever since we all called it a night. I've been sitting in my room on a video call with Lola. I hand Ise the water and she tries to help mom drink but to no luck.

"Ise what's going on with mom?" I ask her unable to contain my concern.

"I don't know baby your father called me asking me to check on her. They were talking when the phone fell. Help me sit her on the chair" Ise says and we place her on the couch with a pillow under her head.

"Ise she's not getting any better. Where is Yoza?" I ask panicking. I see car lights and I rush out the door. It's Yoza with uncle Biko. I lead them to the lounge where mom is still convulsing.

"Biko a small cube written phenytoin and an injection. Ise get her on her side" Yoza instructs and everyone does as told. She sets up the injection and then she looks for a vein in mom's arm and injects her with the solution. Slowly mom stops convulsing and she passes out.

"I'll go put her in bed" uncle Biko says and Yoza nods. He carries her off the couch and takes her to bed.

"What the hell happened?" Yoza asks and Ise shrugs.

"Khaya called me and asked me to check on Mihlali when I found her here she was having a seizure" Ise explains and Yoza leans back on the couch with a heavy sigh.

“Mihlali might have just had a focal cognitive seizure it's very common in people who experienced what she did and this might have been caused by trying to process too much information all at once. My guess is someone told her something she was unaware of and it triggered it but we won't know unless we talk to Khaya”

KHAYALETHU MNGUNI

I keep calling Isenathi but to no luck I am not sure who is awake at home and with her not answering I can't help but think that the situation is bad. I didn't fly privately so I can't even go home to my wife. They booked the family Private jet for an international trip so at this point I am stuck in this stupid city. I'm really hoping and praying that she is okay I call again and this time around Isenathi answers after an entire hour of me trying to reach her she finally answers after an hour of me trying to organize something to take me home.

“How is she?” Is the first thing I ask her the minute she answers my call.

“Stable Yoza came by. She wants to talk to you” Ise says and I let out a sigh because here comes the third degree.

“Khaya hey” Yoza's soft voice comes on the call and I have to take a deep breath in before everything “I know you are probably panicking and worried but she is okay. She is out of danger she had a seizure. Could have been caused by too much information making the brain unable to process it and leading to her having a seizure. I have given her medication to help her slow down and pass out. I'll spend the night monitoring her” She explains putting me out of my misery. Thank God for her. She continues to say “I need you to tell me what exactly happened thought?” Yoza asks.

“She called me asking me about Nichume's kidnapping and the pregnancy. I did not tell her but I'm assuming one of the triplets did” I explain “She went off at me for not telling her and now we are here” I explain and I hear her breathe out loudly.

“She's going to be okay that's all I can assure you” Yoza says.

“Thank you where are the triplets?” I decide to ask.

“The girls are sleeping but Ntando is awake” Yoza says and I nod.

“Okay thank you again Yoza. Keep me posted if anything changes I can only get a flight for tomorrow morning” I explain.

“Khaya you don’t have to fly home it’s not as bad. If anything changes I will let you know.” She assures me. We say our goodbye and I walk out of the bedroom to the balcony I can’t sleep after what happened back home. My mind is on my wife. I love Mihlali I love her more than I love myself. Maybe that makes me a psycho but I’m okay with that. When I first met her I only wanted to tap that and avenge myself for what her father did but when I got to know her I wanted more. Her marrying me was the best thing to ever happen to me I don’t know what I would do if she died.

CATHRINE PHIRI

Olamide stands at a distance watching me after his brother walked out to process what his dead father told him. I didn’t lie to Olayemi but I omitted the part where I could have told him that his little chains can’t hold me and that I could easily manipulate an immortal thanks to his father and Adaoma. I killed his wife because of what her mother did to me. I killed Isabelle because he was making him weak and he was falling for it. I killed Isabelle because I knew I couldn’t have Olayemi all to myself. Olayemi is not as powerful as he should be the rituals he performs the sacrifices and the blood-drinking during the rituals is supposed to have made him resistant to any kind of manipulation but as I said his wife made him weak. I’m Cathrine Phiri nobody captures me unless I allow it.

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"Helvetica Neue" Helvetica Arial sans-serif; line-height: 24px; padding: 0px;">“Why do you stand so far? Are you scared of me?” I ask him and he chuckles

“I’m not scared of you you’re weak and harmless.” He says taking two steps closer.

“Olamide I am sorry about your sister-in-law but she had to go. Her mother messed me up her mother turned me into a heartless monster.” I retort angrily.

He comes closer “No! You had a choice and you chose to be a heartless bxtch Cathrine!” He says and I pull my hand snapping the chains off. He moves back shocked. “Wha-How?” He stutters in shock and anger. He takes a step closer to me and I take a step closer toward him and grab him by his throat.

“I am the most powerful mistress to ever live! You didn’t honestly believe these little chains could hold me now did you?” I push him against the wall he’s struggling to breathe and scratching on my hand trying to break the grip “Olamide you and your brother are stupid to think that you two could ever capture me. Imagine how he’s going to feel finding you here dead” I chuckle pressing my nail harder on his neck.

“Cathrine please” he croaks pleadingly. I bring my ring closer to his neck.

“By the time Yemi returns you will choke on your own blood. Have a nice life Olamide” I say and prick his neck with the ring laced with venom. It's a slower killer and it's going to kill him right in front of his brother. I take my handbag and cell phone then head out of the mansion. Grief breeds a ruthless beast and I cannot wait to fight Olayemi with everything I have.

AKINTOYE SAMUEL DANIELS

Nichume is pregnant with Adeyemi’s children? Who would have thought that he would really succeed in his stupid plan? I managed to get Okoye’s son; we flew back to Joburg together and Adi took him in as soon as we got to the mansions. I was unaware how much Nichume’s pregnancy bothered me until I found myself tossing and turning unable to sleep. Getting captured by Khaya didn’t break me it didn’t scare me or leave me traumatized because I was never the one they wanted. I just so happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time and that is why I hold no grudges. The most they did to me was beat me up the first day they got us but the rest of the days they mainly

focused on Adeyemi. Khaya should have killed him for making her pregnant. Nichume is an angel she didn't deserve the rape and Adeyemi making her pregnant with his children. I get off the bed because clearly I am not going to sleep I head out of the room and make my way downstairs; I am shocked when I Adae standing out back on the porch. Shouldn't she be with her husband? I walk out to where she is; she doesn't acknowledge me when I step out toward her.

"Adae" I say and she still doesn't respond looking out at the garden. "What are you doing here?" I decide to ask.

"I thought I could have a bit of fun with Jane to get my mind off what happened to mom but I can't. I keep seeing her dead body every time I close my eyes my hands feel like they have blood and I can still smell that coppery hint of her blood mixed with her perfume. I see her as clear as day Akin it's like I'm going crazy. I haven't been sleeping for the past week since I found out. I always sneak out of the house to come here and dominate someone" she turns to me "I think I'm going crazy Akin" she says with tears rolling down her cheeks. I pull her into my arms in comfort because I don't know how to comfort her with words. Who is to say I won't say the wrong thing and make things worse?

"Take me to the dungeon Akin make me feel something else" She pleads while buried in my chest I don't respond thinking that maybe I misheard her until she repeats it "I want a threesome I want to feel everything" she begs. I am taken aback by her demand but who am I to deny her? I have never been a fan of threesomes I only ever do them because we have to train the girls to be able to handle anything and everything. I peel her off my chest and make her look at me.

"Are you sure?" I ask her and she looks up at me batting her pretty long lashes and she nods her head.

"Yes dominate me with another Dungeon Master Akin" she demands. I just nod because there's clearly no getting out of this one. We make our way to the dungeon to fulfill her request. We walk into the dungeon with another DM.

We don't waste any time and get out of our clothes preparing to fulfill this woman's wishes.

OLAYEMI IBRAHIM

"She's here at the main mansion Master" the guard reports. After leaving my brother with Cathrine I needed to breathe. Cathrine being able to conjure up my father was the most shocking thing I have ever witnessed in my life but it also showed me just how strong she is and how I shouldn't underestimate her like that. Dad confirmed her story everything left me conflicted. He ended with how I shouldn't trust her. Catherine is capable of things I've only ever read about she possesses the power only the most powerful Mistress to ever live had. We read stories about her when we were young so tonight was the strangest and most shocking thing. After grabbing some air outside one of the guards approached me telling me that Adaego had left the mansion as she always did every other night when she thought I wasn't paying attention. I'm worried about her and I know and understand she needed some time alone to deal with the death of her mother but I need to at least know that she is safe and so I had a guard follow her discreetly. He called me letting me know where she was. Maybe she's been going there for the last couple of days to deal with everything. I'm not sure how I feel about her using sex to deal with the passing of her mother.

"Alright make sure she gets home safely" I say to him and then drop the call. I let out a huge breath before returning to the office. When I walk in I find my brother on the floor panting for air with his skin becoming pale. NO!

"Mide NO man. You can't do this to me!" I say rushing to him and pulling his head onto my lap "Brother please don't do this to me. Don't leave me too." I plead cradling his head with fear and tears rolling down my cheeks.

"Kill her!" he croaks and his eyes go shut.

"Olamide don't do this to me. I still need you please" I plead crying over his lifeless body. Cathrine has taken too much from me and when I catch her this time I will kill her with my own hands. I want to watch the life drain out of her

enormous eyes. She is going to pay for killing my brother and my wife. She is going to pay for this. Best believe.

To Be Continued