



# THE GAME

I knew to love would be to lose my  
mind

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## THE GAME

### PROLOGUE

#### At School

Marang hummed ignoring the world as she scribbled the lyrics to Rihanna's Take A Bow in class under her metal desk. She tapped her pen oblivious to the number of eyes on her as she lost herself trying to remember the song word for word. She got stuck and bit her pen lid and leaned back on her chair and nearly jumped as the teacher's shrewd eyes landed on her.

Teacher:Marang?

Marang:ma?(trying to make her voice steady)

Teacher:I asked a question..

Marang panicked as she looked around. Everyone's

eyes were on her and she had no idea what question was asked, she bit her lip and pretended to be thinking.

Marang:uhm...The answer is the aorta?(unsure)

The teacher shook her head as she fixed her stick and Marang swallowed a heavy lump.

Teacher:you weren't paying attention..

Marang:sorry mam, it won't happen again.

Teacher:of course it won't. Heta!

Marang stood up and fixed her grey skirt, her walk of shame to the front was embarrassing and what was more embarrassing was when she gave mam her hand and she told her to hold the desk.

Marang:but mam...

Teacher:in my class everyone pays attention. Is that clear everyone?

Whole class:yes mam!(chorusing)

She got two lashes on her buttocks and she regretted not wearing those tights today, could've saved her the pain right now. She walked back to her seat and she sat on the corner of the chair letting her bum cool down from those lashes. The teacher looked at her and she forced herself to pay attention and pushed her lyric book underneath the desk. She'll complete the songs lyrics at break time.

The lesson went on and she was bored for the next 30 minutes it has been on. Science has never been her thing and her grades showed. Once the bell rang, her other form 3 classmates walked out. Probably going to get the drink and bread. She shuddered, she wasn't spoilt or anything but she didn't drink funa, the drink served.

She shifted in her seat and finally rubbed her sore bum and she grimaced. M.C.O tonight to ease the pain. She pulled the book out and placed it on her

desk. She hummed tapping her pen on the desk trying to remember the lyrics. She ended up singing aloud.

Marang: "Don't tell me you're sorry cause you're not.

Baby when I know you're only sorry because you got caught

But you put on quite a show "

She bit her lip and wrote that down. As she wrote down, her book was snatched and she looked up.

Marang: you're disturbing me tlhemma..

Phemelo rolled her eyes and read the lyrics. This again. Marang never focused on anything and as her friend she had to force her.

Phemelo: be serious with life Rangz, we are writing this year. Don't you want to go to senior school.

Marang: not everyone is smart as you Phem. Kopa buka yame (can I have my book?)

Phemelo:Marang!!

Marang:It's hard paying attention and being still for an hour or for even 30 minutes...

She said as she tapped her pen on the desk.

Marang:my book mma...

Phemelo:No..

Marang sighed exasperated. She checked the time on her watch. Only 20 minutes left till another lesson. At least it was something she was looking forward to. Art lessons were fun and she didn't have to sit still and be quiet. She temporarily forgot about her lyric book as she thought about what she was going to draw next. Phemelo snapped her fingers as Marang's reverie came to an abrupt end.

Phemelo:we are studying starting from nako ya afternoon study till half four.

Marang:more hours of silence?

Phemelo:Rangz you have to go to senior school...

That was all she said and she walked away with Marang's lyrics notebook and Marang held back tears as Phemelo stashed the book in her backpack and held her backpack tightly. Marang tried to not let the tears fall but it was hard. She didn't have to take her book to prove her point, she had understood everything clearly. She sang Ariana Grande's Problem so as to not think about it.

At the bus rank

The bus from Gaborone finally stopped and the young lad stepped out and went to the side of the bus where he got his luggage. He had to find a taxi home, the five hour journey was exhausting and he needed to rest without having his parents on his neck about him studying hard and getting distinctions. He was barely coping and this just ending semester had been so hard on him. He even

wondered why he never had the bright idea to move out of his parents' house. Oh because he was saving his money for the myriad plans he had after graduating next semester. He rubbed his neatly shaved beard and he finally found a taxi. The taximan loaded the luggage in the trunk and he got inside.

Taxi man:hello. Bana ba mmadikolo ba tswetse?(UB students have closed?)

He nodded as he buckled up.

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THE JOURNEY BEGINS AND WELCOME TO THE GAME



# THE GAME

#1

The taxi came to a halt in front of the house and the young man paid the taxi driver, tipping him for his services. The trunk opened and he stepped out of the car, going to get his baggage.

He thanked the driver and he pulled his bags to the gate. The taxi sped off and he pressed the intercom button. The gate opened and he dragged his bags across the pavement on his way to the house. He knocked on the door and his mother opened the door.

Her:Josh?

Joshua plastered a lazy smile on his face.

Joshua:mother..

Ma Josh:you didn't tell us you're coming, I would've

asked your sisters to get your room ready.

Joshua:no need to bother them..

His mother hugged him.

Ma Josh:you're tall and..

Joshua:mother now now let's not over exaggerate...

Ma Josh:Okay.

She moved away from the door and Joshua pulled his luggage inside the house he grew up in. He made his way to his bedroom and after setting the bags down he proceeded to open the windows. It was kind of stuffy. His mother stood by the door and folded her arms. It was hard to let it sink in that her first born was a grown ass man who can move out of her house if he wished to. She really enjoyed babying him.

Ma Josh:I was making lunch.

Joshua:okay. Let me settle in first.

His mother nodded and walked away, closing the door as she walked away. Joshua looked at his bags. He rubbed his face, he needed a shower and to rest.

At school

Marang frustratedly looked at Phemelo who was so focused on her books. Marang bit her pen and tapped her tough shoes on the floor.

Marang: what's the point of this exercise again?

Phemelo: shhh....it's study time. Bala mma..

Marang rolled her eyes and just looked at her notebook. The drawings on her science notebook caught her attention and she smiled. They looked so neat and pretty. She went page by page looking for blank spaces to fill and she surprisingly drew all the necessary diagrams. The bell came to her rescue and afternoon study was over.

She shoved her books into her messy bag and zipped it.

Phemelo:Marang!

Marang:I have to go home Phem. See you tomorrow for Saturday study..

Phemelo closed her books and pushed her glasses back, she suddenly had a bright idea.

Phemelo:how about we go to the library tomorrow?

Marang gawked at her. Was she insane? It was stuffy and too quiet for her liking, she detested libraries from her first library lesson and she hadn't dared go to the public library in town. Not that she knew where it was.

Phemelo:come on, you have to do well..

Marang:I don't have transport money. You go..

Phemelo:ke tla go pega ee(I'll pay for you)

Marang:You don't have to Phem..

Marang glanced at her watch. She had to go home now.

Marang:Bye. I'll see you tomorrow.

Marang picked her backpack and walked away while Phemelo stewed on what she could do next to make Marang study. She has been her friend ever since she started form 1 when she was fresh from a private school. Marang was the only person who didn't mind the difference in social statuses, hell it was as if the social statuses didn't exist between them. On God she had to make sure Marang passes and goes to Senior school. A mere C grade won't be that hard would it?

As soon as Marang had made it out of school. She started her normal hour long trek home. It wasn't a secret that she lived a bit far from school. She didn't know why people hated her neighborhood, okay she knew but she was used to it. She sang to herself while lost in her regular daydreams. Made the walk home seem much shorter when it wasn't in reality.

At Phemelo's parents

The taxi stopped in front of the yard and Phemelo got out and pushed the gate. The dogs ran to her feet and she rubbed their heads with a little smile on her face. She walked to the door and found the help there.

Phemelo:hiii...

Helper:hello. Your food is in the microwave, your parents said they will be late today.

Her smiled dropped.

Phemelo:oh..they always are(whispering)

Helper:what was that?

Phemelo:nothing. Thank you. I'll go to my room now.

She made her way to her room and removed her spectacles before rubbing her eyes. She should wrap up her homework and what difference will it make if she tells her parents that she wants to go to the

library? They won't even miss her.

She sighed and started to carefully get out of the uniform. She changed into shorts and instead of doing homework she grabbed her phone and found a text from someone she thought forgot about her. She replied and just like that it took her back to those days with her private school friends and her crew. She laughed texting back, much more comfortable on the bed.

At Marang's place

Marang wiped the sheen of sweat on her forehead and grimaced. She had to clean and cook for her grandma, she placed the school bag down in one of the two rooms they used as their house. She looked at the disorganized room and walked to her grandmothers room. It was just that. Two rooms.

Marang:mmmaiye?

Granny:you're back? How was school?

Marang:it was okay. Ke dire motogo?

Granny:rest first.

Marang:let me get started on it and I will tell you about it motogo o dira...

Marang walked to her room and she changed her school uniform into her dress. It was pretty and Phemelo had given it to her, actually Phemelo gave her a lot of decent clothes that didn't fit her anymore because it was impossible for her to buy clothes with her grandmother's pension money which was used for food. She ran her palms on the pink dress and walked out of the house with a bowel to get water from the outside tap. Once it was full she walked back to her room where she lit the small electric stove, she frowned. There had been no electricity in the morning.

Once she placed the hart pot on the stove she made



her way to her grandmother's room.

Marang:Let me clean first as we talk. What happened while I was in school?go nale motlakase..

Granny:your aunt passed by and bought electricity..

Marang:oh..did she buy food?

Granny:she says month end..

Marang nodded. Knowing her aunt made false promises and her aunt didn't even like her.

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Monday it is guys

## THE GAME

#2

At Marang's place

Marang gave her granny the plate of porridge and she sat next to the be.

Granny:thank you.

Marang smiled and went on to tell her grandmother about school.

Granny:I hope you're studying..

Marang sighed as she edged closer to her granny.

Marang:tota school is not for me...

Granny:but you have to study and you build a big house..

Marang smiled wistfully. It would be nice to get her grandma out of this small place but she had a lot of

trouble concentrating. From a young age it was hard and she kept herself distracted with music or just drawing stuff that didn't make sense at all for her. She just nodded as her grandmother told her that she will be there for her graduation one day.

Marang:Why doesn't aunty move in with us?

Her grandmother sighed as she weakly handed Marang the plate.

Granny:she has her own life and she works odd jobs here and there..

Marang:oh. Wasn't she close with my mom?

Granny:when your mom went to university your aunt was jealous, that cut their deep rooted sisterhood. Unfortunately your mom dropped out because she fell pregnant with you...

Marang smiled a bit.

Marang:you told me that before.

Granny:she lost the sponsorship and she never talked about your father.

Marang:I have distant memories of her though, she was really pretty.

Granny:like you. You're my only grandchild, I just want the best for you.

Marang:I'll try. At school I mean..

Granny:okay(coughing)I need to rest...

Marang:I tired you out. I'm sorry.

She fixed her grandmother's blanket and she walked to her room and got the broom. She needed to clean then wash her school uniform for tomorrow's Saturday study.

An hour later Marang used her small Nokia torch phone to make a callback to Phemelo. After the callback was delivered she sat down and looked around the small crowded room she called her own. It was nothing much really but she had no idea why she found it hard to concentrate. She was sure Phemelo thought she was doing it intentionally when

she was not. She sucked in a deep breath and looked at her phone waiting for Phemelo to call.

At Joshua's parents

A knock interrupted Joshua's quiet time. He quickly wore his t-shirt and opened the door.

Joshua:it's you?

His sister Seeletso grinned as she hugged him.

Seeletso:miss me?

Joshua:no. Why would I?

She rolled her eyes as she let herself inside his room. She sat on the bed and took off her school shoes.

Seeletso:UB o ntse jang ?(how is UB)

Joshua:you always ask the same question...

Seeletso:I'm interested. You do know that I wanna study there...

Joshua chuckled.

Joshua: not happening. You're smart enough to study abroad, don't limit yourself like that.

Seeletso shrugged as she looked at her white socks.

Seeletso: Okay enough about me, a girlfriend?

Joshua: you have got to be kidding me, I'm not talking to you about that.

Seeletso: but good to have you back.

She walked out holding her shoes in her hands, her little sister was watching tv in the sitting room and besides she had homework to get done.

Meanwhile Joshua sat on the bed. Was it a mistake to be here?

Outside the gate slid open as Joshua's father's car

drove inside. Ma Josh walked to the kitchen where she filled a glass of water as the front door opened.

She walked out and plastered a smile on her face.

Ma Josh:hello honey.

Ra Josh:hello..

Ma Josh:let me take the bag and the coat.

She helped him get out of his white doctor's coat and she took his bag before kissing his cheek, smelling the faint lingering perfume she was sure was not hers.

Ma Josh:Josh is home.

He went quiet for a few minutes before he nodded and his wife walked away.

Ra Josh talked with his youngest daughter for a few minutes before he made his way to Seeletso's room. He opened the door and found her busy with her books. She looked up.

Seeletso:hi dad..

Ra Josh:hello and let me leave you to it.

He closed the door and walked to his son's bedroom.

He sucked in a deep breath before opening the door.

Ra Josh:your mom just mentioned that you are back.

Joshua:hello to you father. I just arrived and no, I did not fuck up this last semester or so I hope.

Ra Josh:you know we want the best for you..

Joshua humphed. His mental health was hanging by the thread and his father didn't care about that. As long as he got that MBBS degree was okay.

Joshua:Yes, you always say that..

He never knew that him paving his own path in the medical field would be so draining that his dad would want him to be perfect at everything.



His father sighed and walked out and headed to the bedroom where his wife sat on the bed. He undid his tie as she looked at him. She badly wanted to confront him, the evidence has been there these past few months and just because she was a stay at home mom doesn't mean he had the right to do that to her. Ra Josh noticed his wife's forlorn expression.

Ra Josh: anything wrong?

Ma Josh: no, nothing is wrong. Let me go warm up your food.

She stood up and walked out.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo watched the minute hand move as she ate her dinner alone. It was lonely, having everything and being everyone's dream child but her parents couldn't make time for her.

She finally picked her phone and saw Marang's callback. She called Marang who picked up.

Phemelo:hey, what's up?

Marang:are you okay?

Phemelo:yeah(sitting up right)just tired(fake yawning)

Marang:okay. I'll go to the library tomorrow...

Phemelo:really?

Marang:we won't be long akere? I have to do laundry ya mmaiye and cook for her. We'll water the gardens after the morning study ends?

Phemelo:yep. And you are coming to water ka Saturday?

Marang:Ee...

Phemelo:Can you water for me..

Marang:sure...

Phemelo:thank you love. Bye.

Marang:bye bye...

Phemelo hung up and went back to her messages. She sent the message that she will be free on Sunday and Saturday afternoon. She placed her phone down and waited for what seemed like an hour. They were really going to be home late. She sighed and rubbed her eyes and stood up, taking her half full plate to the kitchen.

She should sleep, they were not going to be here anytime soon. Her loneliness crept in and the mere fact that she had no siblings and she didn't want to bother Marang, she had problems of her own to deal with. Real life problems.

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## THE GAME

#3

The following morning

At school

The two girls made their way to the gardens after a 2 hour morning study session.

Marang:I'll be walking back home...

Phemelo:I packed clothes, we can't go with our uniforms tla ga gotwe we are tarnishing the school name.

Marang:right..

As they entered the garden they picked the watering cans and made their way to the tap. Phemelo sighed

softly. If only her parents cared about what she really did instead of agreeing and working as if they didn't birth a whole human being. At times she wished she was born in a different household really. She pushed her glasses back and looked at Marang who had a face full of pimples, she slowly touched her smooth cheek.

Phemelo:don't those pimples bother you?

Marang:gatwe ke stage or whatever the teachers say. They will fade or not. Does it make much of a difference mme?(touching her forehead and feeling the oily pimply skin)

Phemelo:they do say that.

Marang:ee.

She shrugged. Phemelo's skin was clear because she was obviously a year older and she afforded these skin care products she always saw on the Clicks advertising papers that were always on the gates whenever month end was fast approaching.

Phemelo smiled. She wished she was that nonchalant, she wouldn't be able to show face with those much pimples marring her face. Marang was so simple and content with herself it was envious. Hair cut really short and she was short too. She got water after Marang and they got busy with their gardens. After they were done, Marang was the first to break the silence.

Marang:we are walking..

Phemelo:it's not far is it?

Marang:an hour at most...

Phemelo:go letsatsi mme(it's sunny)

Marang:Kana you can go without me...

Phemelo:no, never...we'll walk ee...

Marang:Awesome..

At Marang's place

After an exhausting hour of walking on Phemelo's part, she was surprised that Marang was still fine.

Phemelo:I didn't know you do this everyday, I th-

Marang:mmh...tla o dumedise ke tle ke apole uniform(come greet so that I remove my uniform)

Marang opened the door and Phemelo was shocked. Okay, they have been friends but she has never come see Marang, hell she didn't know things were that bad.

Marang:Mmaiye..I'm back..

Granny:How was school?

Marang:the same...uhm I came with my friend, her name is Phemelo..

Phemelo awkwardly said her greetings. How was Marang managing all of this alone?

Granny:that's the friend you talk about?

Marang:ee mma...we are going to the library to read mme go nale motogo wa maabane,ke o tlise?(there is yesterday's porridge, should I bring it?)

Granny:yes my child.

Marang:Phemelo let's go...

Granny:no, let her stay...

Marang looked at her grandmother who started coughing and at Phemelo. She sighed and walked out. She should bring warm water for her too.

Granny started quizzing Phemelo who answered the old woman's questions.

Granny:Thank you..

Phemelo:Uhm, I didn't..

Granny:For what you're doing for Marang, she doesn't have a lot of friends and a good friend like you is good for her.

Phemelo:It's nothing really...

Marang walked in still in her uniform and handed



Phemelo the plate and water. She helped her grandmother sit up right and fixed her pillow. She helped her grandmother to drink the warm water before she took the glass away and handed her the plate.

Marang:le siame?

Granny:Ee, thank you my child...

Marang:I'm going to change clothes..Phemelo..

Phemelo got the hint and walked out followed by Marang, she stood outside and Marang walked into the other room. Phemelo followed her and her heart dropped. Why didn't Marang tell her?

Phemelo:Thi-why didn't you tell me?

Marang ignored that statement.

Marang:you can change Phem.

Phemelo removed her glasses and searched for the case where she put her glasses safely inside. She

started to unbutton her shirt as she looked at Marang who had already dispensed her shirt. Her small breast pointed through the now almost yellow vest and she sighed. Marang removed her skirt and Phemelo paused unbuttoning her grey trousers, the panty Marang was wearing was torn and it had lost colour, hell she could even see the bushy pubic hair. She had no idea. Had she ever shaved before? It was too much...

Marang ignored Phemelo's stare as she picked the jeans that were a bit loose on her. She wore those and an oversized t-shirt and some sandals.

Phemelo:Marang this is no way for a human being to live, I'll talk to my parents an-

Marang:Phemelo I didn't bring you here to judge me and don't make me a charity case..

Phemelo:I'm not..I'm just trying to help. Your grandmother isn't supposed to be living alone and it's not safe, what if...

Marang:we are okay..I'm done..

Phemelo sighed as she placed her shirt on the thin mattress on the floor and she removed her pants. Her black bra showed as she crouched to get clothes from her bag. She took out her phone and placed it on the mattress. She took out her skinny jeans and she wore those, tucking in her vest and she took out her denim jacket. She was okay. She removed her grasshoppers and socks, neatly taking out the plastic bag in her bag and put the shoes and socks inside. She took out her pumps and wore them.

Phemelo:I'm done...

Marang:let me go say bye and we can go.

Phemelo:okay...

Marang left Phemelo there and Phemelo's heart ached for her, this was messy and even though the windows were open, there was this dreadful smell lingering in the air. Did she even have pads? She searched her bag and took out her two emergency pads and placed them under her now thin pillow. She

picked her bag and phone. She sent the text that she was on her way, well she couldn't necessarily say no to meeting her former primary school mates.

Marang returned and picked her bag.

Phemelo:are you okay with wearing those clothes?

Marang:mhmm...they are okay. Let's go.

Phemelo got out first and Marang followed. Marang locked the door and put the key safely in her back pocket.

Phemelo:is there a stop?

Marang:yes. Put away your phone, there are thieves around.

Phemelo put it in her bag and zipped it up.

They walked to the taxi stop and Phemelo hailed a taxi for them. They got inside as the taxi man fixed his rear view mirror.

Phemelo:Hello, the taxi rank please..

He nodded and drove off, he stopped along the way picking other customers.

The drive to the rank was silent as Marang looked out the window. Once they arrived, Phemelo paid for the both of them and waited for her change and Marang got out first.

The taxi man looked at Phemelo.

Taxi man:hello, o bitswa mang?

Phemelo:Sethunya..

Taxi man:Nice name, o montle..

Phemelo:thank you..ke kopa chenchi malome..

Taxi man:oh..if you and your friend need a ride you can call me, here is my number.

He scribbled it on a piece of paper and gave it to Phemelo who reluctantly took it and long with her change.

She got out of the taxi and found Marang waiting for her.

Marang:that took long,let's go.

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## THE GAME

#4

At the library

They both sat down and Marang blatantly ignored the stares that came her way, she took out her books and placed them on the table as Phemelo looked at her. Phemelo took out her neatly covered books placing them on the desk.

Phemelo:(whispering)if you need any help just shout...

Marang chuckled.

Marang:I can't exactly shout here but thank you.

She dropped her head and glanced at her notebook not knowing how to proceed with this study session. She had to at least try..

Marang sucked in a deep breath and tapped her foot on the floor and whispered with a low voice to herself as she moved her finger across the notes. They were incomplete because she got distracted easily and she never came about to finish them. She took out the textbook and she tried to read that but within ten minutes she looked up at Phemelo. She was already annoyed.

Phemelo looked really focused and Marang bit her lower lip and lightly tapped her pen against the textbook.

Meanwhile Phemelo looked at ease as she pushed up her glasses, taking short notes here and there. Marang looked around and sighed. She was really trying here though.

Almost an hour later Marang was at her wits end. She was done with this. Phemelo finally took a break and reached for her phone. She found messages



from her former classmates and she smiled. They were by the park that wasn't far from the library.

Phemelo:Rangz I'll be back, I have to meet some people..

Marang nodded as Phemelo stood up.

Phemelo:Won't be long okay?

Marang gave her a thumbs up as she walked to the door. Phemelo looked around and started walking towards the park. She dialed the number.

Phemelo:where are you guys?

There was some background noise and laughter.

Voice:Giiirl, we can see you...You're still blind as hell...

Phemelo:F you Raine.

Raine:whatever,get your blind ass here(laughing)

Phemelo:I'm coming..

She crossed the road and looked through the park gate, she walked to the entrance and smiled. She found them.

Phemelo:guuuyyys!

Raine:Hey you, look at you, all pretty and shit..

Phemelo blushed as they all hugged. Her primary school friends here. This was nice.

Raine:and we are having a picnic, want to join?

Phemelo:why not?

As she sat down, she remembered that Marang was waiting for her.

Marang:I'll be back guys, excuse me...

She stood up and walked away, maybe she should ask her to join them. That would be a good idea.

Half loaf is better than nothing.

See you guys later.

## THE GAME

#5

At the library

Phemelo walked out with Marang who was only too happy to be out of there. Marang glanced at her watch to check the time and well there was still time.

Phemelo: I'm meeting a few friends by the park, do you want to join me?

The thought of being around people whom she didn't know her wasn't a pretty picture. She was assuming that it might be Phemelo's private school friends. Marang herself didn't speak perfect English and she didn't have an accent or that air of luxury if she may call it that.

Marang: I would be intruding, I'll go home...

Phemelo sighed. Well she shouldn't even force her. She touched her back pocket and removed a P20 note and handed it to Marang. She pushed back the scrappy piece of paper that had the taxi man's number written on it.

Phemelo:For taxi..

Marang:Taxi ke P6, I'll return your change okay?

Phemelo:You don't have to, you can buy ice cream. You'll be alright?

Marang:Yeah...thanks and bye..

Phemelo:don't forget to water my garden tomorrow. See you on Monday.

Phemelo walked towards the park and Marang kept on walking as she looked down at her toes that showed on the sandals she was wearing. She should probably use the change to buy more electricity for them at home. She upped her pace.

At Joshua's parents

Joshua was outside as his father's Hilux parked near the garage.

Seeletso walked to the car and looked at their new pit bull.

Joshua: this is a dangerous breed..

Seeletso: that means the gate should be closed. Plus no thieves.

Ra Josh: we're getting the other one tomorrow, once they breed we are going to sell the puppies.

Joshua: And di tura blind..

Ra Josh: exactly...

Their youngest walked towards the car and Ma Josh just picked her up. She was six years but they treated her like a baby.

Ma Josh: do you want to name her?

Sara:the dog is a she?

Joshua:yeah...

Sara:Scooby..

They all shook their heads. She watched too much Scooby-Doo...

Ma Joshua:it's a girl...

Sara paused and bit her bottom lip and she smiled a few seconds later.

Sara:Daphne

Joshua:Oh God!

Seeletso:bathong!Daphne it is...

Her mother put her down as her father and Joshua put the dog down.

Joshua:ladies stay away..

They moved to the porch as they watched the men tame the dog, maybe it wasn't that hard because it

was a female and not a male one.

Joshua rubbed the dog's head and it moved towards him.

Joshua:you can come touch it..

Sara was the first one.

Sara:hello Daphne..

Ra Joshua withheld a smile as Ma Josh sighed. Did he really want to destroy them by cheating? She didn't want to be the insecure, nagging wife if it turned out he wasn't cheating. Men were usually turned off by the fact that women accuse them of cheating and she might push him into the hands of another woman. They have been together for so long and she wouldn't want to destroy their peace. She forced a smile as Seeletso walked to the dog.

Seeletso:it won't bite..

Joshua:not at all..atumela!

Seeletso:if it bites me, you're paying me with your student allowance.

Joshua:extortionist..

Seeletso:whatever!

She touched the dog with a finger and giggled. They never grew up with dogs and now they got a dog when she was a teenager. It was going to take time to get used to.

At Marang's place

Marang saw an unfamiliar Vitz parked outside the gate. She frowned as she saw the people in the car. Her heart skipped a beat as she saw the scary man with a scar on his right cheek. She opened the gate ignoring him and walked to the house where she found her grandmother's door open. Her heart rate picked up, what if something had happened and she had said she was studying?

She held her chest and swallowed a heavy lump as she pushed the door open. The relief that washed



over her face when she realized it was her aunt could be visible.

Aunt:you see why it's not safe to live alone. Marang leaves you alone going to God knows where.

Marang:dumelang.

Her aunt ignored her as her grandmother returned the greeting.

Aunt:I can take you to go live with me..I have a better place now..

Granny:I'm okay with my only grandchild here, besides I don't have much time left.

Marang:mmaiye le raya jang?(granny what do you mean?)

The old woman coughed.

Granny:Il'm old and I have lived my life, did what teenagers did, had my children and got to see and raise my only grandchild.

Marang:Bu-

Granny:Let me stay, you can buy food and Marang takes good care of me..

Aunt:o tswa Kate Marang wa teng?(where is she from?)

Granny:she was studying...

The aunt rolled her eyes laughing.

Aunt:a ntse a tsaya bo D le bo E a bo gotwe studying?mama o le hora gore ngwanangwana wa lona(when she gets Ds and Es and you say studying. Mom your grandchild is deceiving you)

Marang said nothing as tears burned at the back of her eyes and something lodged in her dry throat. She could see where her aunt was going with this conversation.

Aunt:Anyway, I will let you do as you please, I was trying to help..Marang let me talk to you.

Marang stood up and followed her aunt outside the room.

Her aunt folded her hands and looked at Marang.

Aunt:I see you for what you are...

Marang:ma?

Her aunt sighed and looked at the guy in the car. She sighed. Maybe another day, when it's really tough and Marang would do anything to survive. It was time she used that thing between her legs to put food on her family, her mother couldn't expect her to believe that Marang doesn't know men. A child who fails and she leaves saying she is studying?all a hoax.

Aunt:I'll pass by one of these days.

The aunt walked away heading to the gate as the scary men kept his eyes on Marang's young undeveloped teenage body. Her aunt opened the door and Marang felt shivers run down her spine. She walked to her grandmother's room and she opened the windows again.

Marang:I'll go warm water for your bath and will

phaleche be okay?with milk?

Granny:yes. Thank you..

Marang was about to walk out when her grandmother called her again with her early childhood nickname, she only used it when she wanted to say something serious.

Granny:Shosho sit down so that we can talk..

Marang sat by her bedside and looked at her grandmother as she coughed.

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## THE GAME

#6

At Marang's place

Marang shuffled on her seat.

Granny: Shosho what do you want to do when you finish school?

Marang had never really thought about it, she was barely surviving high school.

Marang: I don't know, school is hard and I'm failing at school...

Granny sighed.

Marang: But art is nice, maybe I can try to do art..

Granny nodded. She shouldn't force her to do any career that she doesn't like at all.

Granny:As long as you're happy..

Marang:I'll draw and sell to the rich people, that money might help at home and I will build a better house and look for a house nurse.

Granny:that would be nice..

She said, Marang being oblivious to her sad tone. Granny knew that sadly she was slowly losing the little stamina she had and sooner than later she was going to die.

Marang:mmaiye let me go boil that water..

The old woman nodded as she laid down and closed her eyes.

At the park

Phemelo threw her head back laughing at the jokes that were being shared, it's been a long time since she laughed like this. She was genuinely happy with

her decision to come here.

Raine:We should hang out more often.

Phemelo:Definitely..

She looked at the time and wistfully looked at them.

Phemelo:I should go. My parents are probably waiting for me..

That was an outright lie, a whole lie.

Raine:a hug Melo...a hug..

She grinned at her primary school nickname. She had gotten so used to Marang calling her Phem.

Raine:Do you have friends?

Marang:a good one, she was just in a rush, she would've met you guys...

Raine:Well it would be nice to meet her.

Phemelo:tell you what, I'll talk to her and we might go out for movies. Uhm go nala that movie night ko

JMS Akers next weekend?

Raine:yess....okay we'll all be there.

Phemelo:awesome.. They hugged as she smiled. She got her bag and checked her back pockets for the change she got earlier.

Phemelo:I guess that this is a goodbye then guys..

Raine:we'll talk.

Phemelo:most definitely.

She waved with a huge smile on her face and walked away, this has been a really good day.

As she walked away she held the number. She probably should not call him. He was weird and she has never dated before in her entire life and boys might distract her. She had exams coming up in a few months and she was already trying to get Marang to study. She decided to call Marang while she was on her way to th rank.



Phemelo:Hey Rangz, did you arrive well on time.

Marang:ee...and thank you for the transport money.

Phemelo:It's nothing. I'm on my way home so I'll call you when I arrive okay?

Marang:okay Phem, bye.

Marang hung up and continued with what she was doing.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo finally arrived at home and she saw her parents' cars. She sighed with a heavy heart and walked inside. As usual the dogs ran to her and she giggled and ruffled the furs of the dog.

Phemelo:hey boys, hey..

She walked to the house and found her parents on the couch.

Phemelo:hello and bye...

She walked away holding her bag.

Ma Phem:Phemelo where are you from?

Phemelo stopped in her tracks.

Phemelo:the library.

Ra Phem:apparently you didn't come home after school.

Phemelo chuckled in disbelief.

Phemelo:You don't care...

Ma Phem:and that's no way to speak to your parents.

Phemelo:you have never been there for me. Ever...

Ra Phem:we are always busy..

Phemelo:Then go back to being busy...I'll be in my room.

She walked away as they called her name.

Ra Phem:we are taking your phone..

Phemelo:please do if it makes you feel better about yourselves...

With that she opened her bedroom door and she slammed it shut. She blinked a couple of times so that she wouldn't cry. She took a deep breath and leaned against the door, she slid down the door in slow motion. Why?

At Marang's place

After Marang had finally bathed her grandmother and waited for her to sleep she went to her room and she connected her headsets which only rang one side to the phone. She went through the radio stations and she laid down on her bed. Would it be bad to dream that she had been born into another household? Obviously she adored her grandmother

but she wasn't exactly happy about her home situation. Not that she would admit it to anyone, people tended to use one's weaknesses to their advantage and she didn't want that. Her favorite song played on the radio and she sang along to the song. If only the wheel of life could turn to favor her. If only life was the game she could control and play at her own free will to her best advantage.

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Another one shortly

## THE GAME

#7

The following day

At Marang's place

Marang checked on her grandmother as she picked up the dirty clothes in her grandmother's room. Obviously she had always immediately washed the soiled clothes so as to avoid an eminent smell in the room. This was the woman who has taken care of her for the longest time. She wouldn't do it any other way.

She walked to the back of the house and filled the metal tub she used for bathing with water using a bucket and she walked to her room and got her

uniform and the discolored white socks. She should've soaked them the day before. She sighed and threw the clothes down. She sighed. She hoped her grandmother lived long enough for her to see her be successful even if it has nothing to do with academics.

She better get busy with the laundry, she still has to go to school to water her garden and Phemelo's garden.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo finally got out of bed and as she walked to the door, the door opened and she was face to face with her mother. She sighed. She rubbed her eyes yawning, she needed to get ready. Last night Raine said they can go out for ice cream. She had nothing to do at home most especially with her stuck up parents who always acted as if she was not their child.

Ma Phem:where are you going?

Phemelo:I just woke up. I have to go to the bathroom.

Her mother moved away from the door awkwardly as Phemelo walked to the bathroom and closed the door. She sighed and looked at herself on the mirror. She was not about to go through this drama. Not here and now. She had to get ready to go out with Raine. She spent almost an hour in the bathroom and after her bath she walked back to her bedroom where she found her bedroom empty. Thank God there were not there.

She got ready and she dialed Marang's number. Marang answered after two minutes.

Marang:Phem...

Phemelo:hey...I was just checking to see if you forgot.

Marang:I haven't, ke dira washing at the moment okay? When I'm done I'll go.

Phemelo:thanks a mill friend.

Marang:sure. I have to go. Bye.

Marang quickly hung up and resumed with her washing, she was cooking too for her grandmother. After that she had to make bath water. This was her life.

Meanwhile Phemelo wore her jeans that showed her developing hips and a nice crop top displaying her flat stomach. She tied her relaxed hair back and wore her glasses before spritzing the perfume. Obviously they were going to take photos and maybe post them on Facebook. She wouldn't want to appear crusty on the pictures. She looked at her smartphone. When was the last time she was on Facebook? She had no idea but she will be back after the exams most probably.

She took her bag and counted the notes she had. As



much as she had earned for her parents' love they always threw money her way to compensate for their absence. Money she rarely used but she would now. It's not as if anything would change.

She walked out and made her way to the lounge where she found her mother on the carpet with a lot of files and papers in front of her while her father was on the couch going through a file.

Phemelo:I'm going out...

Her mother looked up as she pushed her own glasses.

Ma Phem:it's a Sunday.

Phemelo:and you guys are working...

Ma Phem:we have a case to solve and this puts food in the table..

Phemelo:exactly..I'll be back before my curfew..

She walked out and Ra Phemelo looked at his wife

and daughter before he resumed with what he was doing. She rarely went out even though they had set a curfew for her. She was always cooped up in her room.

Ma Phemelo's lips moved in an attempt to say something but she just kept it to herself and glanced at her papers. They had to solve this, they'll deal with Phemelo later.

At Block 3

Marang's aunt pushed her hair back as she stood up and pushed her little black dress down.

She wiped her mouth and looked at her boss.

Man:you said in a week.

Aunt:I'm working on it.

Man:we do not have time. The girls are short and we need a fresh young thing.

Marang:of course sir..

The man with the scar looked at the aunt as she fixed her hair. The little girl was fine. A serious scrub and she would be one of the best things for his clients.

Man:how old is she?

Aunt:15..

Man:old enough..you can go.

The aunt walked out and walked to the bedroom she was given by this man. This was what she did to survive and of course she was lying, she wasn't going to move her mother but it wouldn't hurt the old lady to think that she really cared. Marang was nothing but a liability when she could do something to help out at home. She sighed as removed her shoes and walked to the bedroom. She washed off the makeup and stared at her reflection in the mirror. She paused as she looked at her eyes that were so similar to her late sister's. She shook her head, Marang was old enough to help put food on the table.

It's not as if she knew her father and her mother was dead too.

Maybe she should check on them again today. Buy electricity as a cover, get Marang to think about it.

At Marang's place

Marang shook her grandmother. She shook her for a few times as her heart rate picked up.

Marang:Mmaiye!!!!Mmaiyeeee!!

The old lady coughed and Marang held her chest with tears in her almond shaped hazel browns.

Marang:o sharpo mama?(shaky voice)

She fell to her knees and touched her grandmother's forehead. Her temperature was okay, she was breathing and that was all that mattered. The old lady coughed as she tried to sit up but her whole

body was aching. She had been so close, so close.

She touched Marang's head and smiled sadly.

Marang:I can stay and make sure you're fine..

Granny:Shosho you see that trunk?

She showed her the trunk and Marang nodded.

Granny:the key is in that worn out briefcase..open it.

Marang did as she was told and she found the key.

She opened the trunk and found a collection of books and pictures.

Granny:those are your mom's pictures from when she was young. (Cough)she looked a lot like you..

Marang looked at the photos and she glanced at the contents of the trunk, it was just photos and stuff like that. She smiled sadly. It still meant something to her.

Granny:come here..

She made her way to her and the old hands touched her fresh young hands.

Granny:I want you to be the best and do your best in everything you put your mind to.

She nodded.

Granny:Shosho I love you okay?

Marang:I love you more..

Granny:you can go to sch-school(cough)the garden.

Marang:I can stay with you..

Granny:It's okay..Go.

Marang stood up and kissed her cheek and walked out holding back tears. She wasn't going to be long.

She walked to the other room and wore her flip flops. She wasn't even going to be long today. It was still

around midday so by 3pm she would be back.

She took her small phone and locked both doors. Marang sucked in a deep breath and started walking. The sun was strong and she was sure she was going to get more dark today.

As Marang walked she tried not to think about her grandmother. She was going to live and be okay, she should have hope right? Hope has never killed anyone so it wouldn't hurt to have that tiny bit of hope that her grandmother will be alive, well and kicking.

At Milkylane

Phemelo pouted as Raine snapped more selfies.

Raine:you're so pretty Melo, I'm sure you have a boyfriend?

Phemelo choked on her milkshake and leaned back coughing.

Phemelo:why would you think such?

Raine:you don't have one?

Phemelo:Never had one...

Raine:tell me you're kidding?(raising an eyebrow)

Phemelo:I am not...

Raine:B-but you're 16..

Phemelo shrugged and drank her milkshake as Raine updated her WhatsApp status. Phemelo picked her phone and went through the statuses.

Phemelo:we look pretty bathong...

Raine:We do..after this we need food.

Phemelo:food is a necessity..(laughing)

They clinked their milkshake glasses as they started talking about random things.



At school

Marang was done watering and as she was by the school gate, her heart started pumping fast as she saw a dog. She wasn't sure what breed it was but it had a big mouth and looked scary. She hated dogs. She walked slowly as the dog walked forward. Why didn't they close the gate? These rich people like making life tough for some of them.

She walked slowly still looking at the dog that was looking at her. It started barking and she yelped. She wanted to run for her life. Like really run as far as her short legs could take her.

The dog started running towards her and she lost it and screamed running. The dog barked ferociously at her.

Marang:mama weee! lyooooooo

She ran and turned to find the dog on her trail, like really near her leg. Tears filled her eyes as she screamed for help.

Marang:bathong thusang!!! E tlo ntoma mma weeeee!(screaming)

When she thought she had lost it and stopped, she felt teeth go into her leg and she cried some more...

Meanwhile Joshua had been ignoring the screams he had been hearing and he heard a loud one.

He got up from the couch and the gate was open, his father probably didn't close it when he went to get the other dog. He looked around for Daphne the Pit bull but didn't find it.

Joshua:shit!

He walked out and looked ahead and saw the dog with an unfamiliar figure..

Joshua:shit!shit!

## THE GAME

#8

At Joshua's streets

Tears blinded Marang as the dog finally stopped seething and she looked at her leg, it had bitten her. Through blurry tears she could see a figure approaching but as she looked at her leg, she saw blood..

The figure came close and she swore she heard the person curse under his breath. Tears ran down her pink cheeks, her leg felt exposed and she could feel the warm air hit her exposed flesh, she tried to move her leg and she creamed through the tears. Joshua cursed yet again, she needed stitches and it looked bad.

Joshua:Hey..Can you move your leg?

He cursed again as Marang tried to process his voice. It was a different kind of deep, not like her male teachers deep but something foreign. His English also had an accent. She was going to embarrass herself, she should try to get up and limp back home. She touched the road and tried to move but helped in pain.

Joshua:I wouldn't do that if I was you..Wa go ithonkgela..

Marang:It's okay..

Joshua:no it's not..

He could see she was in pain. He looked around and the dog was near, obviously it won't come near her because he was around.

Joshua:Let me do this...

He bent down and gently picked her up from the side of the road as she cried her eyeballs out. He didn't know how to comfort her and it was their fault for not closing the gate. Now an innocent was injured

and most probably she will have this phobia for dogs because one had bitten her when she was growing up. He looked at her face and he could see the pimples spread across her face and how red her cheeks were. He looked at her short legs and could see the blood from her leg on his white t-shirt and her leg. It was bad and he had to take her to the hospital.

He held her against his chest and Marang finally realized she was in his arms and they seemed strong. She wiped her tears though her leg hurt and was currently bleeding.

Marang:I'll wa-walk...(shaky voice)

Joshua paused. She had a sweet and childish voice if he can put it as such. Marang looked at the stranger with red eyes. He was being a Good Samaritan and she appreciated that but he didn't even have to do this at all.

Joshua:You're hurt and you'll strain your leg. I said that..

Marang's lips parted in an attempt to say something but she kept quiet Joshua silently walked towards their house with the pit bull walking behind them. He broke the silence.

Joshua:Sorry about Daphne...

Marang's brows furrowed in confusion. Who was Daphne?

Marang:D-Daphne ke mang?

Joshua:oh...the pit bull, it's new and we were careless, we forgot.

Marang felt stupid. Of course people gave dogs names. Just because she hated the despicable creatures didn't mean that there weren't other people who adored the beasts. Look at her leg. Her eyes went to her leg and she cringed. Would it be alright?

Marang:I'll try to walk...I'm sure it's nothing and will heal in a few days.

Joshua:You need stitches and some shots, the dogs weren't vaccinated as of yet, so just to be on the

safe side...

Marang closed her eyes as tears fell once again down her cheeks. This was all too much, she could've avoided such by just staying at home with her grandmother. Speaking of her grandmother, this was going to delay her to her journey home. She rubbed her chest as they walked through the open gate and the dog followed as if it didn't just bite a human being. Joshua walked inside the house with the little girl in his arms and his mother looked up.

Ma Josh:wh-what happened?(shocked)

She noticed the bleeding leg and the blood that was smeared on Joshua's white t-shirt.

Joshua:Daphne... Seeletso?

Seeletso made her way to the lounge.

Seeletso:what?

Joshua:close the gate..

Seeletso looked at the small body in Joshua's arms and her eyes went to her leg and she gasped.

Seeletso:did that mutt do that?

Joshua:yes..

Seeletso:this is bad..

Joshua:Can I have your car keys?

Ma Josh:We are really sorry...

She paused and looked at Marang whose eyes were trying to shut close, everything was blurry and was appearing in doubles and triples. Her eyes shut close and Joshua looked at her.

Joshua:the shock, losing some blood and she was crying. She will be fine. I need to take her to the hospital.

Ma Josh:bathong, we should also ask for her parents number to apologize. Kana it's our fault the dog bit her, if we had closed the gate all of this could've been avoided..



Joshua:I'll take her to the hospital..

Ma Josh:should I go with you guys?

Joshua:you can tell father what happened...

His mother handed him the keys and he walked out with the little girl passed out in his arms. He unlocked the car and called Seeletso once more.

Joshua:ntlele kobo(get me a blanket)

Seeletso looked at the girl. She looked like a 12 year old. The dogs probably traumatized the little girl and to think they had ignored the screams thinking it was something else. That went to show how ignorant they were.

Minutes late Seeletso came with the blanket and Joshua asked her to lay it down at the back. She did as he said and he laid the little girl down, smoothing down her skirt and closed the door.

Joshua:I'll be back..

Seeletso nodded as Joshua started the car. Seeletso bit her lower lip, waiting for the car to be out of the yard before she made sure Daphne was in the yard and she closed the gate. It has not been over a week since they have owned a dog and now this. Wasn't this a sign from the gods to not get dogs.

Meanwhile in the car, Joshua sent a quick message to his dad and he placed his phone down. He looked at the back wondering how old she was. She looked like a 12 year old and they just gave the poor child one thing to fear all her life. He was a doctor in training of course he knew she wasn't dead, she will be okay and they had to make sure she was.

At town

Phemelo laughed at something that Raine said as they walked towards the taxi rank.

Raine:you'll talk to your friend? About Saturday?

Phemelo:I will...

She glanced at her wrist watch. An hour before her curfew.

Phemelo:I have to dash Rainey Raine...

They shared a hug.

Raine:See you on Saturday and call me when you arrive home safely.

Phemelo:you do the same.

Raine:I will...You still live at the same place?

Phemelo:Don't think about it..

Raine shrugged with a little smile on her face.

Phemelo:bye love..

Raine let her go as Phemelo got inside the taxi and dialed Marang's number. It rang unanswered for a while before it was answered.

Voice:Hello...

Phemelo went silent.

Voice:Hello?

She quickly hung up and checked if she has dialed the right number. It was Marang's number alright. She leaned back on the seat and fixed her seatbelt, waiting for the taxi to be full before it finally started moving.

At the hospital

Joshua held the phone that looked more like a toy in his hand. When was the last time he held a tiny phone like that?

He waited in the room as the little girl finally woke up. She held the sheets tight with alarm in her eyes. He understood, she was in a different environment and

probably needed her parents here with her to hold her hand through it all.

It finally sunk in for Marang and she relaxed a tiny bit.

Joshua:I don't know your name..

Marang:Marang..

Joshua:How old are you? Should I call your parents?

Marang:Ke 15..

Joshua:huh..

Marang:15 years old...and it's okay, I live with my grandmother, ke ka mo tsenya stress, she is bedridden. Gatwe yalo akere?

Joshua silently nodded.

The doctor opened the door.

Doctor:Well we'll make this quick and thank you for bringing her as soon as you can.

Joshua nodded yet again as Marang tapped the table by her bedside as the doctor spoke. Joshua

quietly observed her behavior and once the doctor was done, he realized she hadn't been listening.

The doctor walked out to get his things. Marang looked at her leg and it had been bandaged. She was okay, they should take her home.

Joshua:did you hear the doctor?

Marang:huh? Uh...I think so..

she said as she tapped the table humming before she rubbed her temples.

Marang:tlhogo yame ya opa(I have a headache)

Joshua:they'll give you something for that..

Marang:Pills?

Joshua:yes..

She sighed. She hated pills in general. The doctor came back and she saw what was on his tray. Her

eyes widened and she looked at Joshua. She didn't know his name but why?

Doctor:This will hurt a bit..

She moved back against the bed.

Marang:uhm...can I think about it?

Doctor:we have to do this before the end of the day, I want you to sit still..

Joshua moved to her bedside and he could see the fear building up in her as her eyes shone with unshed tears.

Marang:They won't hurt me?

Joshua:it will hurt, stay strong...

How? Her day was getting worse each moment. He silently held her small hand in his and she squeezed his as the doctor finally removed the bandage over the wound that had been cleaned. The dog must be a very strong one or it had kept it's teeth in her leg to

have created such deep lacerations. It needed just two or three stitches though.

Doctor:just two or three..

She nodded. The needle pricked her skin and she whimpered in pain, her little hand holding onto her saviour's hand. In less than two minutes the doctor was done.

Doctor:see?

Marang let go of Joshua's hand and wiped her tears as the doctor fixed the injection needle.

Her chest constricted as her gaze fell on the needle. She detested those. She held his hand again much more tighter, he didn't say anything but just held her hand.

Doctor:you have ten more shots to get each day, being bitten by a dog.

Marang failed to say something, ten more needles going into her skin?

She watched the doctor wipe a small area on her leg



next to her wounds and she looked at the handsome stranger. Handsome? When did she come to that conclusion? As the needle sunk into her skin she bit her lip hard fighting the tears that still rolled down her cheeks.

Doctor:all done, I can bandage it for now, make sure to come everyday..

He started to dress the wound and wrapped it in a clean bandage and walked out. Joshua looked at the little girl once again and he held back the urge to wipe her tears, he let go of her hand and slipped his hands into his jeans.

Joshua:You did great. You're scared of needles?

Marang nodded as she closed her eyes. The headache wouldn't go away. She closed her eyes again for the second time that day.

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## THE GAME

#9

At the hospital

Joshua checked his watch and it was a few minutes after six. The injection really took her out. He held the pills the doctor had prescribed. Of course his family will cover the medical costs, it was all their fault that this little girl was here stuck in this place. He quietly observed her, if you could overlook the pimples marring her face you could see that she was beautiful even with her short hair, he stared at her as her full eyelashes moved up and her eyes fluttered open. Her eyes were swollen as she tried to sit up right and she rubbed her eyes.

Marang:Ke nako mang?(what's the time)

Joshua:past six.

Marang:oh...I should be home..

Joshua:let me help you, they brought crutches too..

Marang:I'll have to use them?

Joshua:Yes...

She sighed as she pulled the thin sheet back and looked at her leg, her garden. It was one of the things she was doing well in school other than art.

Joshua stood up and slipped his hands underneath her legs picking her up.

Joshua:I'll let you down slowly and try to balance with one leg okay?

Marang:okay..

He did just that and grabbed the crutches,helping her hold them.

Joshua:Try to walk. Make it as slow as possible.

Marang held the crutches tightly trying to walk with them. It felt alien to her to have to walk with sticks. How will she take care of her grandmother? Will she be able to wash the laundry or even help her

grandmother bath and get out of bed?

Marang:I need to go home..

Joshua:I know. The doctor brought these pills and you have to take them as per the instructions.

Marang nodded as she made her way to the door.

Marang:re ka tsamaya(we can go)

Joshua walked to the door and opened it for her, Marang walked out. These crutches felt weird and she didn't know how she was going to adjust to them.

Joshua walked closely by her side as he signed her out. Okay he made them treat her under the ruse that she was his cousin. It wasn't that hard.

Joshua:How does it feel?

Marang:weird...(pausing)Did you tell me your name?

Joshua:Joshua...

Marang:Joshua who?

Joshua:Joshua Colton..

That was fancy.

Marang:You're taking me home akere?

Joshua:Direct me there..

He opened the car door for her and took the crutches, helped her sit down and placed the crutches at the back of the car. He closed the door and walked to his side of the car. He started the ignition as Marang faced the other way, she watched the sky turn dark, it was winter time hence night came earlier. She hummed as Joshua started the car. Joshua took note of he behavior as he switched the speaker on and connected his phone to it. He played a random song and Marang faced him as she remembered the song, she heard it a couple of times on the radio using her small phone. Speaking of her phone she searched her pockets and looked at

Joshua.

Marang:Have you seen my phone?

Joshua handed it to her and she placed it on her lap. She rubbed the back of her neck as she looked at him.

Marang:The song is really nice, can you start it over?

Joshua did that as he reversed out of the parking space as Marang softly sang along. He drove silently for a few minutes listening to her sweet voice before he interrupted her.

Joshua:O nna Mae?(where do you live?)

Marang:Block 1

Joshua knew the neighborhood, he guessed. She will direct him to the right house.

At Marang's place

The aunt was getting impatient as she made small talk with her mother. Where was Marang?

Apparently her mother said Marang was going to water the gardens. She always knew Marang was a little bitch, where was she? It was already late. Her mother was coughing when a car's front lights flashed and she touched her mother's hand as she stood up. A man got out of the car, plainly ignoring the car she had come in. The same man she had come with the last time. Of course Marang was to agree, she was already sleeping around, what difference would it make if she would do it for money now?

The man got inside the car and drove inside the yard. She took note of the fancy black Mercedes Benz.

Meanwhile inside the car Joshua looked at Marang.

Joshua: Give me your number..

He handed her his phone and Marang held it like delicate glass. It looked so expensive, if she broke it she won't be able to fix it.

Marang:Ke tobetsa ha Kate?(where should I press?)

Joshua went to the keypad and handed it back to her. She pressed the buttons and gave him back his phone.

Joshua:Let me help you out and apologize. You walk to school?

Marang:Yes..

Joshua:Le tsena nako mang?(what time does school start?)

Marang:it's okay, I'll walk...

Joshua:You are in no position to walk...

Marang looked at him. There was no need to argue with him. He got out first and he acted indifferent as his eyes scanned where she lived. He wasn't the type to make others uncomfortable.



He got the crutches and opened the door for her, she held the crutches and he held her slender waist as she tried to stand upright. She found her balance and made her way to the house as Joshua followed behind holding her pills. When she finally reached her grandmother's room she saw her aunt who snidely looked at her but she plastered a fake smile looking at Joshua.

Aunt:Marang we were so worried about you, what happened?

Marang cringed hearing the fakeness in her voice.

Joshua:I would like to apologise, we had let our dogs out and it bit her. We are taking care of all the medical costs.

Aunt:are you okay sweetie?

Marang nodded as the aunt moved from the door and she walked into her grandmothers room.

Marang:Mmaiye are you okay? I was bit by a dog but I'm okay.

Granny:who brought you here?

Marang:the owners..

Granny:Can I see them?

Marang stuck her head out.

Marang:my granny would like to see you..

Joshua walked inside. He never knew that some people lived this way. He had no idea.

Granny:young man?

Joshua:ma? I'm Joshua and on behalf of my parents we are deeply sorry. Le tla re itshwarela, ne re sa dire ka bomo.

The old lady nodded with a small smile.

Granny:it's okay, as long as she is okay..

Joshua:of course..

Joshua gave Marang the pills and he bid them farewell. He got inside the car and drove out. The aunt quietly observed till the car was out of sight and waited for Marang to head to the other room.

She followed her and closed the door.

Aunt:o lebetenyana wena akere?

Marang:mmangwane ga le mpuisse sentle...

The aunt snatched one of the crutches and Marang lost balance and fell down on the floor.

Aunt:What dog bit you, when you get out of expensive cars. Ga ke mama, ga ke sematla...

She hit the bandaged leg with the crutch a few times and Marang screamed in pain.

Aunt:Mxm...very soon o tla beleta o dira madi...mxm!!

She threw it on the floor and walked out as Marang bawled her eyes out. It hurt and why did it feel as if the stitches were coming undone?

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## THE GAME

#10

At Marang's place

Marang wiped her tears with little fists as she heard an engine. Her aunt was probably leaving and she had no idea what she had done for the woman to speak to her like this. She glanced over to her aching leg and saw a red spot. More tears filled her eyes and she rubbed them before they could cascade down her cheeks. She tried to move but it was excruciatingly painful for her to move her leg just an inch to get to the crutches. She bit her lower lip and cried in agony trying to stand up. The red spot got bigger and she was sure she was bleeding underneath the white bandages. She got her crutches and bit her lower lip till it was red as she tried to stand upright to be able to balance herself well. It proved to be difficult and she threw the

crutches down and crawled till she reached the wall. She held the wall for support and slowly stood up regardless of the pain. She held the wall for stability with her injured leg lifted mid air. She walked out of the room and made her way to her grandmother's room.

Her grandmother weakly looked at her, she heard her cries.

Granny:a-are you okay?

Marang:I fell down and hurt my leg. Should I make you something to eat?

Granny:I'm okay. Sit down.

Marang steadily made her way to the plastic chair next to her grandmother's bed. She sat down and gently put her foot down. The red spot was getting bigger. She just held back tears and shook her head. She will heal and be okay. She looked at her grandmother who coughed violently a couple of

times.

Marang:I should get you water...

Granny:you'll hurt yourself..I'll be fine(coughing)

Marang stayed put as the cough died down and her grandmother looked at her.

Granny:Shosho I want you to always try to do your best okay?

Marang nodded.

Granny:you're a smart girl. I just know it. I love you.

Marang:I love you more.

Marang just agreed when she knew she was the exact opposite of smart, she squirmed in her seat as she smiled sweetly at her grandmother.

Once her grandmother fell asleep, Marang limped out of the room and locked the door as she headed to the room she slept in. She removed the t-shirt she was wearing. She smelt it and sighed. Most probably

everyone was being kind and didn't mention that she was reeking in sweat. She held the wall and slowly sat on the thin mattress. She pushed her skirt down and pulled the blankets over her half naked body. Cold air hit her and she knew she was going to get warm throughout the night. How she was going to get ready for school tomorrow was beyond her.

At Joshua's parents

After Joshua had settled the matter with his parents, he headed to his room and laid on his back on the bed. He had knew that there were people who had it bad in life but what he saw at Marang's place was too much for a 15 year old. On top of that he noticed something odd about her behavior, being the doctor he was he was sure but maybe it could be something else.

That needed more tests to be run on her and the poor child was already traumatized by the events of the day. He grabbed his phone and just went through



his social media. He should set an alarm and take her to school. Imagine walking like that to school and also for her second shot, she had more injections to get and she hated them. He placed his phone by the bed lamp and switched it off, his whole resting and finding that peace that one finds when they fall asleep.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo giggled as she replied messages. She checked the time. She won't be late the following morning, she can be sure about that. She thought of calling Marang but maybe she was asleep. Or her phone was stolen?

Who would steal such a cheap phone though? No offense but who would because there was nothing there. She turned on her side as she typed again. Her bedroom door opened and she quickly flipped her phone and closed her eyes feigning sleep. Her

mother stood there for a few minutes before the door closed and there was silence in the room as Phemelo waited.

After what seemed like a whole lifetime she opened one eye then the other. There was no one, she picked her phone and replied to the texts. She had a life now. Raine sent a message.

Raine:sleep

Phemelo:I can't..

Raine:we have school tomorrow dumb ass..

Phemelo:whatever..

Raine:but since you're awake....can I call?

Phemelo stuck her head out of the blankets. It was safe.

Phemelo:yes but I will be whispering. The parents dawg...

Raine:okay..

Phemelo's phone rang immediately and she answered.

Phemelo:hello(whispering)

Raine:So I upload our pictures on my status Melo..

Phemelo:and?

Raine:There is this guy who was like that shawty is kinda cute and shit...

Phemelo:go on...

Raine:he wants your dials...

Phemelo:Uh..I don't date though...

Raine:Ke le form 6...

Phemelo:yoh! The A level dudes? The smart ones?

Raine:yes...

Phemelo:uh...Haish..Haish he wants my number?

Raine:yes duh! You're pretty..

Phemelo:I'll think about it Raine.

Raine:okay. I won't put pressure on you..

Phemelo:I think we should sleep now.

Raine:suuure (giggling)

Phemelo rolled her eyes chuckling and hung up. Immediately as she hung up Raine sent four photos.

Raine: that's the guy and his Facebook name and IG handles sis...night.

Phemelo clicked on the pictures and went through them. She smiled alone looking at the dimples.

She went to search him up on Facebook and she nodded. He was decent. Lies, those dimples made him look cute and stand out. She will sleep on it. No hasty decisions on her part.

At Block 3

Marang's aunt sat on the bed. She just got angry that Marang was stepping out of a fancy car that she had never stepped out in her whole adult life. She looked at her cracked nail polish and sighed. She will apologise the next day. Kids never hold grudges and she will say it was a mistake. She will coerce her to do this, for her beloved grandmother. Marang would do anything for her grandmother.

The door opened and her boss walked in.

Man:how far?

She swallowed.

Aunt:she is almost there, you saw her get out of a fancy car, obviously this won't be a problem..

Man:it won't...

She looked at him. She had used Marang to plead

for her own debts and life and she wasn't guilty about that. It was a dog eat dog world out there. Her boss had seen Marang and had liked what he had seen, obviously he tasted all the new girls and her dear niece was already sleeping around. This wouldn't be a problem.

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## THE GAME

#11

The following morning

At Marang's place

Marang woke up around four when her alarm started ringing. She stretched her arms and pushed the blankets away. She looked at her leg and the whole bandage had blood on it. She sighed as she looked around the dark room. She had to boil some water and try to iron her uniform. Wait she didn't even get the clothes from the washing line. She groaned as she tried to stand up, she crawled till she was close to the wall and she picked her crutches. She tried her best to be stable and she unlocked the door.

Marang walked to the back of the house where she was able to get her oversized school trousers, the shirt, tie and the jersey that was torn at it's shins. She limped back to the house and threw the clothes on the bed. She took the bucket and limped back outside to get water.

Minutes later she had done her best to boil the water and she was on her knees as she connected the iron and started to iron out her uniform on the bed. By the time she was done the water was boiling. She had to create space to fit in the metal tub like she always did. This injury was a major drawback on her part and she hated that she was struggling and her leg was hurting. This was all a hassle, maybe she shouldn't go to school today. That would give her time to just lie down and not strain her leg.

At Joshua's parents

Joshua rubbed his face as he headed to the



bathroom to freshen up. It was a little after 5 and he could hear Seeletso's very horrible singing voice this early morning. At least Marang had a saccharine voice that was soothing, he was sure she would be getting ready for school and he was going to take her home and after school take her to the hospital for her shot.

Half an hour elapsed and he headed to the kitchen. What if she didn't eat anything? He didn't find anything suitable for eating where she lived even if he was in the room for a few minutes. He opened the fridge and took out a few fruits and yoghurt. That would do for breakfast right?

Seeletso walked inside the kitchen as she got her lunchbox from the top shelf.

Seeletso: morning.

Joshua: morning...

Seeletso: why are you up this early?

Joshua:I have a few things to take care of..

He looked at the items in his hands and walked out leaving Seeletso there to ask herself questions. Meanwhile Joshua grabbed the car keys and walked out. He was sure she was still getting ready for school.

Once he was in the car, he looked at the back and got out to get the blanket, it needed a good wash. He came back empty handed and finally started the car. He was sure he remembered where Marang lived. The gate opened and Seeletso waved as she watched the car reverse out of the yard. He didn't even offer to take her to school.

Meanwhile in the parents' room Mma Josh lain awake as she turned to gaze at her husband. She was sure he was cheating on her but why? She did everything right, what was she lacking?

She got out of bed and headed to the bathroom where she splashed water on her face. She needed to breathe. She walked out and changed clothes, maybe she should tell the taxi man not to take her to school this morning.

She grabbed her sleeping husband's car keys and her phone. She dialed the taxi man as she walked to the lounge.

Ma Josh: morning, I'll take Seeletso to school this morning..(pause) You'll pick her up after school. Have a great day.

She held her hip as her daughter ate her cereal while watching television.

Ma Josh: I'm taking you to school this morning..

Seeletso: It's not yet time mom...

Ma Josh: It's a few minutes to six.

Seeletso:exactly...we'll leave at quarter past six,  
please!

Ma Josh:You'll find me in the car when you're done.

Seeletso:I love you too...

Her mother smiled as she unlocked the car and got inside, she looked around and she opened the small compartments. She saw a box of condoms and she held back tears as she closed them. She didn't know why she was hurting herself like this. Was it because she decided to be a full time mom instead of practicing her marketing degree? It was not as if she was dumb. She leaned back and closed her eyes waiting for Seeletso.

At Marang's place

Marang sat on the bed as she removed the wet plastic from her leg. She had covered her bandage with plastic to avoid water wetting it and making it

worse. She heard the gate open and on instinct she tried to stand up but she hurt herself and she bit her lower lip with tears in her eyes. It seemed as if her aunt had made it worse for her. She extended her hand to get the big Vaseline and applied it to her body. She applied some to her face and she wore her panties. They were a bit loose but nobody saw that so it was okay. She pulled her uniform and got dressed. She delicately wore her trousers and once she was done she crawled to the wall and held herself against it holding the crutches. She opened the door and saw the familiar car. He got out with his hands in his pockets.

Joshua: Morning, are you done?

Marang: Uhm..

Joshua walked towards her and frowned seeing the red bandage. She was bleeding.

Joshua: What happened?

Marang: I fell yesterday...

He bent down to quietly observe her bandaged leg and held it in his hand. Marang winced.

Joshua:sorry..it needs to get checked out right away before we have to deal with an infection.

Marang:okay. I haven't packed my school bag and I didn't make food for my grandmother.

Joshua looked at her confused.

Joshua:where is the lady who was here yesterday?

Marang:my aunt does not live with us...

Joshua:You're going to be late.

Marang shrugged. She was always late so it was nothing new.

Marang:You can go, I'll walk after I'm done.

Joshua:Did you take your pills last night?

She looked at the ground.

Joshua:Marang you're honestly being careless with your health...

Marang:I forgot and I hate pills. Let me get my things rea-

He held her small hand and picked her up, she

couldn't exactly kick because of her leg.

He opened the passenger door and placed her on the seat.

Joshua: Eat those while I get the first aid kit from the boot and see what I can do with your leg.

Marang: b-

Joshua: Marang ke motona mo go wena, ja.. (Marang, I'm older than you, eat)

Marang: Ee rra..

He smiled as she reluctantly picked the fruits.

Marang didn't know which one to start with, he honestly didn't have to do this. They apologized for the dog bite, it was okay.

She peeled the banana and took a bite from it, some of the luxuries they didn't have here at home. Joshua came back with a first aid kit and bent down as she opened the box. He got the gloves and wore them. He gently started to undo her bandage.

Joshua: When did this happen?

Marang:uhm a few hours later after you dropped me off.

Joshua:are you sure you fell? The stitches are undone..

Marang bit into the banana once more and looked at him with the banana in hiermouth. Joshua averted his eyes. She was a child eating a mere banana. He started cleaning it all over again as Marang winced, it hurt.

Joshua:Are you full?

Marang nodded.

Joshua:you had a single banana..

He looked at her and she picked another food item.

Joshua:spoon se somewhere gone hoo..

She picked it up and opened the yoghurt as he opened a fresh roll of bandage...

His phone rang and she picked it up handing it to him. He declined the call and threw it at the back.



Joshua:Almost done...but you need to get fresh stitches, I'll show you later gore o gatisa jang and how to wrap the bandage autwe?

Marang:Ee rra..

She stopped eating and wiped her mouth. Maybe she should leave some for her grandmother and that way she won't be too late for school.

Marang:Let me check on my grandmother, is it okay I give her some of this?

Joshua nodded. He picked her up, such a lightweight.

Marang:I won't be long, just a few minutes then I'll pack my books. Still fine?

Joshua:Take your pills first before you forget.

He placed her down and handed her the crutches and she limped into the room she slept in. She found the plastic that had pills and she checked the time on her phone. Marang frowned seeing the missed from Phemelo. So early in the morning though. She

attempted to close the door but the figure by the door made it impossible.

Joshua took it all in.

Joshua:Where did you say your books are?

Marang:It's fine. Sorry for the mess, I was to clean after watering the garden at school b-

Joshua:It's okay...Wa attender eng?

Marang tried to remember her timetable. She always forgot it.

Marang:I have it somewhere...

Joshua took note of that observation too. Marang looked around and found it.

She limped to it and read the paper that was pasted on the peeling paint wall.

Marang:I have Science, Maths, Art, Social studies le Agriculture...

Joshua looked for the books and he opened them, the notes were incomplete. Almost all of them, at this point he was 80% sure his suspicions were correct.

Marang:Art my portfolio, ke gone akere? It's at school..

Joshua:Done..I'll put this in the car.

She nodded and limped out after him. She unlocked her grandmother's room and sat on the plastic chair by her bedside.

Marang:Mmaiye!Morning...

She shock her but nothing. She shook her again this time half screaming half crying...

The door opened and Marang looked at him. He was more of a stranger but he was here...

Marang:she isn't moving..

He checked the old woman's pulse and her heartbeat then looked at Marang.

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## THE GAME

#12

At Marang's place

Joshua shook his head as more tears streamed down Marang's pimpled face.

Joshua: There is no heartbeat or pulse. I'm sorry.

Marang covered her face with her small hands and walked like a little baby as Joshua dialed for an ambulance. Once they confirmed that they were on their way, he covered the old woman's face with the blankets and he looked at Marang who was sobbing.

He helped her up as she tried to wipe her tears but more continued to fall down her cheeks.

Joshua: Marang?

She rubbed her eyes, her chest hurt so much. What was she going to do at this point? Joshua helped her up and pulled her small body into his as she cried into his chest.

Joshua sighed. She must've been really close with her grandmother.

Joshua:It will be okay..

She just continued crying. He led her out as she limped. He could see this was too much for a teenage girl especially one that had her whole life ahead of her

Joshua:Do you need water?

She sniffed and he sighed. He shouldn't even get so invested in this young girl's life, he was eight years older than her, she was even younger than Seeletso.

Joshua:Marang? Who should I call?

He did not know what to say honestly to her as he rubbed her back. There was no way she was going

to go to school at this point. She couldn't stop crying and he just comforted her as he waited for the ambulance to show up. There was nothing that can be done if the grandmother is gone.

At school

Phemelo kept her eyes on the door hoping to see Marang walk in but the bell rang for the end of the morning study. She sighed. Marang was always late but not this late. She was worried about her at this point, what was wrong?

The class teacher walked in and looked around. He spotted that one of his students was absent.

Teacher: Morning class, where is Marang?

Everyone looked at Phemelo. She honestly had no idea. She kept quiet as the monitor handed the teacher the pink book and he signed it before the

students walked out for their usual Monday morning assembly. Phemelo could only hope that Marang would come to school today, it was so unlike her to skip school even if she didn't take it that seriously but it was so unusual.

At Marang's place

The ambulance took the body as she watched. Joshua was the one who spoke to them and he looked at Marang who was now pale. The paramedics got inside the car and drove off.

Joshua:Who should I call?

Marang couldn't form any words. Calling someone meant that it was really true. Her grandmother was gone, was she going to stay alone? How would she survive? Was she going to be those kids that didn't have a roof over their heads?

Fat tears rolled down her eyes and Joshua just held



her again. She cried some more as more tears wet his t-shirt . She was too young for all of this.

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## THE GAME

#13

At Marang's place

Marang finally stopped crying and she looked at Joshua with red rimmed eyes, he rubbed her tears with with his thumb and let out a sigh.

Joshua: Is there anyone I should call?

Marang's small heart shattered all over again, she wasn't even close with her aunt. She didn't like that woman and to think she is her mother's sister was somewhat appalling. Standing like this put strain on her leg and she held on tightly onto him and he led her to the car where she was guided on where to sit.

Joshua: Do you have your aunt's number?

Sadly she did and she was the only adult who was

her family. Not that she cared about there but wouldn't it be better that her aunt takes care of the funeral arrangements and she will fend for herself once it's over.

Marang:Pho-phone..

Joshua nodded and looked at her once, twice before he walked to the small room where he looked around and found her small phone on the bed. He picked it up and held the small thing in his hand. He closed all the doors and headed to the car. He got inside and he closed the door.

Joshua:What's her contact name?

Marang:Mom's sister..

He scrolled through her contacts and found the name. He grabbed his phone and pressed the buttons on his phone. He rang the aunt up. The phone rang unanswered for a few minutes before it was answered.

Aunt:Hello..

Joshua:Hi, am I speaking to Marang's aunt?

Aunt:Yes!Yes! What's happening? Is she fine? Who am I talking to?

Joshua:The person who brought her yesterday..

Aunt:oooh!Joshua right?

Joshua:Correct. I'm with Marang..

Aunt:Ma-rang? Isn't she supposed to be in school?

Joshua:That brings me to the reason for that.

The aunt pretended to be really interested just for the sake of this man who called. Marang not in school? She wasn't even smart so maybe she realized thy school wasn't important to her.

Joshua:Her grandmother just passed on this morning..

She paused. Her mother passed away?

Aunt:She what?(shocked)

Joshua:An ambulance came, e ile Nyangabwe

Hospital.

Aunt:I'm on my way..

She hung up and Marang stared out the window, she failed to imagine life without her grandmother. Tears choked her and she covered her face with her hands as she started crying again. Joshua knew there was nothing he could do.

Joshua:Let me take you to the hospital so they deal with your leg, we'll come back.

He started the car and reversed.

At Block 3

The aunt was hurt that her mother was no more, it was inevitable really. Nothing could be done to save her but that meant...

She smiled as she wore her shoes and thanked her ancestors. She was Marang's only guardian and as thus they will allow Marang to stay with her. Things were coming along better than she expected. Ooh she should probably go to Marang's school, deliver the news and then start making quick funeral arrangements. They knew no one and most probably less than ten people will be present at the funeral.

She smiled again. So she was going to get her niece to do this with no hassle at all since she will be playing the role of provider and Marang will have no choice but to agree. Perfect.

She tied a head scarf and grabbed her handbag heading out to catch a taxi to Marang's school first before heading to the hospital to identify the corpse and have it sent to the cheapest mortuary . She dialed the number that just called her.

Joshua:Hello...

Aunt:I'll take care of it, tell Marang I'll be home probably by the lunch hour after everything is sorted. Let me talk to her.

Joshua handed Marang the phone and she sucked in a deep breath.

Aunt:nana I'll be at home by lunch time okay? Everything is going to be okay. Bye.

She hung up and Marang handed Joshua his phone.

Joshua:let's go see the doctor and get you something to eat okay?

She just nodded as he helped her out of the car. She was going to get more injections and get stitched up all over again. They made their way inside the hospital with Marang who tried to keep it all together by putting on a brave face. Her grandmother is in a better place right now right? She had been in pain

and her body saw the need to let it go and release her soul but it hurt. Hurt her and she wasn't sure she was going to forget it, the moment she tried to wake her up and she didn't respond. How her small heart pounded in her chest and the tears that left her eyes on their own reflex.

Joshua:Marang?

She didn't even realize she was crying and she sniffed wiping them away with the sleeves of her school shirt. He just continued walking till they got to the doctor's office. He helped her sit on the bed and rubbed her hands. He honestly did not know how to comfort her and he decided to let her hands go. He was getting rather too attached to her when she is only a child. The doctor spoke with Joshua while Marang's mind was a million miles away.

This particular visit she just flinched when they were stitching her up again and no sound escaped her lips when they injected her. The wounds were dressed



up and she was given a bandage. Her mind was not there really and she didn't hear a thing.

All she noticed was when they were in the car and Joshua was already reversing out of the parking spot.

Joshua: I'll get food and drop you home is it okay?

She absentmindedly nodded and leaned back on the car seat.

At school

By Phemelo's fourth period the class teacher walked inside the class with a straight face and spoke with the social studies teacher before he faced the class.

Teacher: Can I have your attention?

All students faced him and many curious as to what he wanted to say.

Teacher: It is with grave sadness to announce that

Marang our fellow classmate just lost her grandmother this morning.

Phemelo looked down. She should check on her after school, she needs the emotional support.

Teacher: she has been excused from attending lessons this week and as a class, we can help her ka go ntsha matshidiso a P2. We will take the money to her.

The whole class nodded and the teacher walked out. Silence filled the classroom and the social studies teacher just said they will have the lesson another day. The monitor stood up with a paper and pen and started collecting the money from the students.

Phemelo closed her eyes and said a silent prayer for Marang. She needed the strength.

At Marang's place

Joshua saved his number on her phone and handed it to her.

Joshua:You'll be okay alone?

She nodded as he placed the plastic full of food in her room.

Joshua:Don't forget to take your pills and I'm sorry for your loss okay?

Marang:okay..(low voice)

Joshua paused by the door took one good look at her and walked out. Marang covered her face as she cried some more.

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A WEEK LATER

## THE GAME

#14

At Marang's place

Phemelo waited for people to clear out before she made her way to Marang. She just hugged Marang who had red eyes. Her eyes were even swollen, must've been from all the crying.

Phemelo:It will be alright.

Marang:I guess(breaking the hug)

Phemelo sighed seeing Marang's aunt approaching.

Phemelo:If you need anything you can call me okay?

Marang nodded and Phemelo squeezed her hand before walking away.

Marang blankly looked at her aunt who was now all

smiles, her leg was coming along fine and she had removed the stitches and in that week she had finished taking all her shots, sometimes taking two per day. Just yesterday she saw it fit to tell Joshua it was okay and they didn't even have to worry now about her leg. She was all good and healed.

Aunt:Most of the things in the house are old and useless, this evening you are moving in with me.

Marang:Can't I stay here, I won't bother you with anything...

Aunt:You are staying with me and it's final(faking a smile)

She walked away and Marang sighed as she walked to the room that she occupied. She found a black refuse bag inside and frowned. Her aunt walked inside the room.

Aunt:Pack what you need, I'll be burning some of the things here and will put this house up for rent.  
Packer monyana.

She walked out and Marang started packing her things. Her aunt did apologize for all the hurtful things she had said that day and she had said it's okay. She packed everything inside and the little clothes she had. She used her school bag to pack her books before she sneaked off to granny's room. She opened the trunk and got the photos that were inside. She made sure to fit them inside her school bag. She looked around the room she has known for years. She couldn't exactly refuse to go, her aunt was her only custodian at the moment and she was still 15, they would never allow her to live alone when there is a living relative.

She sat on the thin mattress and held her small phone in her hand. She was going to go back to school on Monday and she wasn't sure how she felt about that. She was never going to concentrate though she never really concentrated on anything.

At Joshua's parents

Joshua passed by the kitchen where Seeletso was making something to eat.

Seeletso:want something to eat?

Joshua:I'm good.

Seeletso:Ever since yesterday you've been offish..

Joshua:it's nothing. The results are about to be out soon.

Seeletso:mxm. You're smart(laughing)you probably bagged a 4.5 GPA..

Joshua:school is hard..

Seeletso:that's what all smart people say while some of us are really struggling.

Joshua picked an apple from the basket and took a bite. Okay Marang was okay and well but he couldn't stop thinking about her home situation. What was she eating? What's going to happen?

Those were the questions he refrained from asking because he was nothing to her, or her. She had said it was okay and thanked him for everything. She was a damn child too for crying out loud. He probably needed to get laid or something. He slid his phone out and went through his contacts. His finger stopped on Dani's name. She was probably hopeful for a relationship when he made it clear that he wasn't really interested in one. School was demanding and he had his own issues to deal with, adding another human being's issue to top the ones he already had looked like a good way to apply for suicide.

He went to Facebook and saw the picture she posted on her story. His heart reacted to it and replied to her story with a simple 'Hey stranger'

He walked out leaving Seeletso in the kitchen. In seconds she had replied with a heart emoji and a text



Dani:You've been scarce..

Joshua:Back in town with the family.

Dani:As in Francistown?

Joshua:Yep..

Dani:I'm here as well, go bora gore.

Joshua:Tell me about it, we should meet.

Dani sent a text on WhatsApp agreeing for a meet up. Joshua contemplated pushing the limits by asking for one today and she easily said yes. Free pussy for the night? Most definitely.

At Marang's place

Two hours later the Aunt found Marang on the thin mattress.

Aunt:We should go.

Marang:Okay. Where are we going?

Aunt:Just where I live.

She picked her heavy school bag and placed it on her back before she took the black refuse bag that had her clothes inside. Her aunt didn't even help her carry it but she followed her to the white Vitz she recognized from that time she came back to school. The boot opened and she placed her bags inside. She closed it and got inside the car. She rubbed her arms a bit as she saw the scary man with the scar on her face, her heart stopped beating for a second.

Marang:Dumelang.

He nodded.

Aunt:You can call him uncle.

Her aunt simply said and the car drove off.

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## THE GAME

#14

At Marang's place

Phemelo waited for people to clear out before she made her way to Marang. She just hugged Marang who had red eyes. Her eyes were even swollen, must've been from all the crying.

Phemelo:It will be alright.

Marang:I guess(breaking the hug)

Phemelo sighed seeing Marang's aunt approaching.

Phemelo:If you need anything you can call me okay?

Marang nodded and Phemelo squeezed her hand before walking away.

Marang blankly looked at her aunt who was now all

smiles, her leg was coming along fine and she had removed the stitches and in that week she had finished taking all her shots, sometimes taking two per day. Just yesterday she saw it fit to tell Joshua it was okay and they didn't even have to worry now about her leg. She was all good and healed.

Aunt:Most of the things in the house are old and useless, this evening you are moving in with me.

Marang:Can't I stay here, I won't bother you with anything...

Aunt:You are staying with me and it's final(faking a smile)

She walked away and Marang sighed as she walked to the room that she occupied. She found a black refuse bag inside and frowned. Her aunt walked inside the room.

Aunt:Pack what you need, I'll be burning some of the things here and will put this house up for rent.  
Packer monyana.

She walked out and Marang started packing her things. Her aunt did apologize for all the hurtful things she had said that day and she had said it's okay. She packed everything inside and the little clothes she had. She used her school bag to pack her books before she sneaked off to granny's room. She opened the trunk and got the photos that were inside. She made sure to fit them inside her school bag. She looked around the room she has known for years. She couldn't exactly refuse to go, her aunt was her only custodian at the moment and she was still 15, they would never allow her to live alone when there is a living relative.

She sat on the thin mattress and held her small phone in her hand. She was going to go back to school on Monday and she wasn't sure how she felt about that. She was never going to concentrate though she never really concentrated on anything.

At Joshua's parents

Joshua passed by the kitchen where Seeletso was making something to eat.

Seeletso:want something to eat?

Joshua:I'm good.

Seeletso:Ever since yesterday you've been offish..

Joshua:it's nothing. The results are about to be out soon.

Seeletso:mxm. You're smart(laughing)you probably bagged a 4.5 GPA..

Joshua:school is hard..

Seeletso:that's what all smart people say while some of us are really struggling.

Joshua picked an apple from the basket and took a bite. Okay Marang was okay and well but he couldn't stop thinking about her home situation. What was she eating? What's going to happen?

Those were the questions he refrained from asking because he was nothing to her, or her. She had said it was okay and thanked him for everything. She was a damn child too for crying out loud. He probably needed to get laid or something. He slid his phone out and went through his contacts. His finger stopped on Dani's name. She was probably hopeful for a relationship when he made it clear that he wasn't really interested in one. School was demanding and he had his own issues to deal with, adding another human being's issue to top the ones he already had looked like a good way to apply for suicide.

He went to Facebook and saw the picture she posted on her story. His heart reacted to it and

## THE GAME

#15

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo lay on her bed wondering about Marang, she didn't stay long at the funeral, she was sure she needed her space with no one trying to offer pity and sympathy.

The door opened and she stared at her mother.

Ma Phemelo:how was the funeral?

Phemelo:I didn't stay long but it was okay.

Her mother awkwardly looked at her daughter. She walked out and Phemelo sighed. She dialed Marang's number and it said it was unavailable. She rubbed her temples and sat cross legged on the bed as she talked to Raine. Well Raine understood that



they couldn't go to the movies because she had to be there for Marang who was going through a hard time.

She texted the cute form 6 guy back and she smiled as she changed positions and laid on her back.

### At A Guesthouse

Well Joshua searched his pockets making sure he had a condom with him as he waited for Dani.

Dani walked back inside the room with a smile as he looked at the board game they had played to pass time. Dani had a killer body for sure but then her pictures were better than seeing her face to face. It was something he was used to and would not mention because he would hurt her self-esteem.

Dani:So where we?

Joshua:You were supposed to go to jail!

Dani:(laughing)Aaah aah Joshua...let's start over.

Joshua:As you wish but I'm going to win again Dee...

Dani:Whatever!

They restarted their Monopoly board game as Joshua smiled looking at her. She got shy as she tucked her hair behind her ear.

Joshua:What?

Dani:Nothing, let's play..

He started to sort out the Monopoly money and Dani stole glances at him. She wondered why he couldn't ask her to be his girlfriend, he was a really handsome guy, the August Alsina kind of guy, with that huge ass tattoo on his back. She wondered if there was a white person in their family because his hair was soft. Her lips parted softly as she took him

all in. Joshua lifted his head to look at her as she bit her lip.

Joshua:Anything wrong Dee?

Dani:no, nothing. Are you done?

Joshua:Give me a few minutes..I need to reshuffle the cards too.

Dani:Wena you might cheat.

Joshua:sore loser Dani...

She rolled her eyes as she pushed his shoulder and he held her hand in his. She looked into his eyes and got lost in them. Did he know he was the only guy she slept with and always waited for him to call her? She understood he was a med student and was busy bu-

Dani:What are we?

Joshua:Dani, we talked about this, isn't it better that I go so I don't complicate your life..

He let go of her hand and she held it.

Dani:No, I understand (swallowing)

Joshua:Are you sure?

Dani:Yeah..

He dipped his head down as he brought his lips on hers and she placed her hands on his chest, feeling the hard flesh underneath. He was great lover in bed.

Joshua slipped his hands underneath the crop jersey she was wearing and he felt her breast that were held by the bra. He broke the kiss as he took a step back and removed his sweater alongside with the tee, revealing his chest. How he maintained such a body when he claimed being busy was something she couldn't fathom.

Dani:started working out?

Joshua:to relieve exam stress..Come here...

She walked to him and he held the back of her neck,his jeans revealing his Calvin Klein briefs, he should grace a magazine cover to advertise men's underwear or something..

## At Block 3

Marang looked around the small room she was allocated. She was told to be comfortable but it didn't sink in. She wasn't even comfortable. It felt so odd being here. She wanted to change her clothes but she was scared to do so. She looked at the single bed, she has never slept on a bed before let alone had a clean room like this. She looked around and placed her stuff at the corner of the room. She removed her shoes and got underneath the comforters. It was warm too.

She stared at the white ceiling, it was so unlike the corrugated iron she was used to seeing every time she slept at home. Her phone battery was dead and she will just wake up on instinct tomorrow morning for school. She will navigate her way to school early morning.

Hours passed and she failed to sleep. She got out of the warm bed and went to switch off the light in the room. She paused at the door as she heard voices. She placed her ear on the door but she couldn't hear anything clearly, the voices were muffled. She shrugged and went to bed.

Meanwhile the aunt talked to the man with the scar.

Aunt:I think she already trusts us, children are gullible.

Man:So she will agree?

Aunt:she doesn't have to. She is going to Gaborone akere?

Man:That's where there is more business and your debt will be repaid.

She sighed a sigh of relief. No more looking behind her shoulder where money was concerned. She will be a free woman.

Aunt:Okay but o dira form 3, she can't transfer and a

kidnapping would be too suspicious, how about here?

Man:I will run it with the boss. She can service a few client here till she finishes.

Aunt:Besides she won't go to senior school. O sematla thata..

The man nodded as he walked away to call the boss, he usually had the first taste of the girls. The man had seen that the girl had potential as small and tiny as she was. If they could fix her up here and there all will be well.

## At the Guesthouse

Joshua rolled on his side as he removed the condom and Dani breathed heavily. He wanted to go home. He got his pants and walked to the bathroom where he rolled toilet tissue around the condom and checked his jeans for his phone. He dialed Marang's number and it didn't go through. He splashed water

on his face and wore his jeans.

Meanwhile Dani laid on the bed with questions. There was a name he had muttered while he was on top of her and she didn't know whether to ask or not. He never did that. Like never ever.

He walked back in the room and he sat by the edge of the bed. There were no more kisses.

Joshua:I have to go.

Dani:I thought you were spending the night.

Joshua:I'm afraid not..

He found his tee and sweater. She watched him put them on as she pulled the sheets up.

Dani:Who is Marang?

Joshua:No one. You probably heard wrong.



He kissed her cheek.

Joshua: I paid for tomorrow's breakfast okay, have a wonderful night.

He walked out of the room and Dani sighed.

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## THE GAME

#16

At Marang's place

At that late hour, Joshua parked his car in front of the house he knew Marang stayed at and opened the gate. He looked around the neighborhood and it was so quiet. He walked to the two roomed house and rapped on the door.

Joshua:Hello! Marang!

He knocked for some time and he sighed as he stopped knocking and rubbed his knuckles. What if she was alone? He stopped himself from thinking such. She had her aunt with her.

Joshua:Marang!

He sounded like a mad man right now, why was he looking for a school child? He walked away and made his way to the car. Besides her school is near their house. He might walk her home or shit like that.

The following morning

At Block 3

Marang woke up on whim and she rubbed her eyes. This was the best sleep she has had in ages. She stretched her little body and got out of the bed. She was still wearing yesterday's clothes and it didn't bother her that much. She switched on the lights and opened the door. She looked around and tried to remember which room was her aunt's. When she finally remembered she also tried to juggle her memory to remember where the bathroom was but she couldn't. She sighed and walked barefoot to her aunt's room.

Marang:ko-ko!(knock,knock)

She knocked for a few seconds and the door swung open. Her aunt rubbed her eyes and looked at Marang.

Aunt:What?

Marang:Where is the bathroom?

Aunt:sutela ko morago, o nkgalegano(move back, your breath stinks)

Marang consciously placed a hand over her mouth as she moved back. Her aunt tied her gown tightly and closed the door behind her.

She led Marang to the bathroom and Marang then remembered.

Aunt:Don't forget..we have a bathtub, shower, sink and toilet. They should be clean after use. Wa lapisa!

She nodded. She didn't want to ask about how the shower worked.

Marang:Thank you.

Her aunt walked away and Marang walked behind her as she headed to the room she called hers. Everyone was asleep right? She looked for her panties and the washing rag she always used. She found them and walked to the bathroom. She pushed the door and it was slightly ajar as she learned how to use control the water. It was hot too, it would've been okay too even though it was cold, she never had a problem with that.

She found the stopper and half filled the bathtub. She removed her clothes and threw them on the floor then climbed inside. She looked around and found a bar of soap. The person wouldn't mind would they? She used it and it was nice being in the bathtub. Marang washed her body thoroughly as the water turned to a brown colour, when she was done she stood up and got out of the water. She released the stopper and she waited for her body to dry. She

wore another pair of panties and started washing the other one she had on before the bath. She wore her clothes and walked out with her wet underwear and washing rag.

She closed the bedroom door. Maybe her life here will be okay.

At School

Just ten minutes before the bell rang for morning study Marang walked inside the class. She had no idea what day it was and what subject she had to attend. She immediately spotted Phemelo and went to sit next to her.

Phemelo:Hey, you good.

Marang:I think so. Ke day mang?

Phemelo:Day 5

Marang:I guessed right..

Phemelo:I have last week's notes and stuff. I can give you them at home,

Marang:I live with my aunt. I'll show you..

Phemelo:okay. Well I have a friend...Okay I reconnected with my former classmates.

Marang:when?

Phemelo:don't you remember? The time at the library?

Marang couldn't remember it but she just pretended she did.

Phemelo:We'll Raine was wondering if you would like to go out for movies..

Marang:Who is Raine? Raine as in pula?

Phemelo:Sort of. So would you?

Marang:It's okay, besides I just started living with my aunt. I doubt she will agree.

Phemelo sighed disappointedly. This was probably not the right time to tell Marang that she had a boyfriend too. Marang was not the type to understand and she was clueless about a lot of stuff.

Phemelo:I hope you're aunt is treating you well..

Marang:So far so good I guess...

The bell rang indicating that it was time for morning study and like always, Marang's mind was distracted from the task she tried to force on herself. She wasn't able to concentrate and she found herself daydreaming while humming. Phemelo shook her head and wrote her notes. If Marang didn't want to study it was on her, she had tried her best. She always hated that Marang for all the years she had known her she had always seemed distracted or uninterested in conversation to the point that she had gotten used to it. She probably wouldn't vibe with Raine anyway. She shrugged.

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## THE GAME

#17

At Joshua's parents

Joshua checked his watch, he was sure it was almost time for school to be out for the students. He wore his slides and grabbed his phone as he walked out leaving his melancholic mother in the house. Her mind was miles away and she hated the conclusion she had come up with.

Joshua stepped out of the house as the cool winter breeze hit him. It was going to be dark soon and he wanted to spot Marang. He covered his head with the hoodie as he pushed the gate open. Both dogs were at the back when he closed the gate thereafter.

He walked to the school gate and stood at a distance as students started to walk out of the gate, he slipped his hands in his pockets as he scanned the kids walking out. He waited till he spotted Marang from a distance with a girl beside her.

Meanwhile Phemelo ranted on as Marang's mind wondered off to home with her aunt. She tried to remember what her aunt said in the morning but she couldn't remember. She shrugged and looked at Phemelo who stopped and folded her arms.

Phemelo:You're not listening to me..

Marang:Sorry, sorry...

They continued walking as Marang looked around, she stopped outside the school as Phemelo spotted her taxi.

Phemelo:Bye..

She hugged Marang and walked to her taxi. Marang

started her journey home and Joshua discreetly walked behind her. Marang upped her pace as she felt like she was being followed, Joshua did the same and caught up with her just as he wrapped his strong arm around her waist and she screamed twisting her head to look at who was holding her. He laughed letting her go as she placed a hand over her heart and he removed his hoodie looking at her.

Marang:Joshua??

Joshua:Hey, how is the leg?

Marang:You scared me(breathing in and out)

Joshua:Sorry, let me walk you home..

Marang:It's not far..

Joshua:You moved?

He asked her as if he never passed by her house yesterday.

Marang:ng, I live with my aunt.

Joshua:Okay! Let me help you with the bag.

Marang:It's heavy..

Joshua took it off and Marang felt the weight being lifted off her shoulders. She could smell his expensive cologne on him, he smelt good.

Marang:thanks. So why did you wait up?

Joshua:I wanted to see you...

Marang kicked stones as she walked alongside him.

Marang:You just wanted to see me? Is it not heavy?

Joshua:No, keep walking. You should be home before dark.

Marang:I don't remember my aunt telling me what time I should be home(thinking)or I forgot?

Joshua:Do you remember most things?

Marang:Not really. Everything seems hazy most times..

Joshua:For how long?

Marang:Why ask?(looking ahead)let's turn...

Joshua:Just...

Marang:For as long as I can remember.

She looked at him as he held her bag like it was nothing.

Joshua:okay, did you eat?

Marang:at school? Yes...

Joshua looked at her as she walked ahead, she was so naive it was scary but he hoped she would keep such innocence. She crossed the road and stood at the other end.

Marang:Cross the road tlherra..

He did and she waited for him.

Marang:We are almost there mme, it's getting late..

Joshua:Let's go, I want to see where you live..

Marang turned as she walked facing him.

Marang:I never got to ask, what do you do?

Joshua:A student.

Marang:Where? You're too old for Mater Spei..

Joshua laughed.

Joshua:Varsity Marang!

Marang:UB? Everyone always talks about it. Is it big?

Joshua:It is, actually,tla ga o thula..

She turned and skipped ahead and Joshua followed. She slowed down as she approached the house. She saw a car.

Marang:That house. I live there, I have no idea why o botsa..

She got the bag from Joshua who locked eyes with her and she looked down.

Marang:I should go...

Joshua:Answer your phone.

Marang:(confused)okay..Bye.

She walked towards the house and Joshua bit his lower lip. He waited to see here walk inside the yard before he started walking away.

# THE GAME

#18

At Block 3

Marang walked inside the yard cautious of the unknown car that was parked outside the yard. She knocked on the door for a few seconds before she pushed open the door. She walked inside and looked around before heading to the room she was given. She sat on the bed and looked around. Her bedroom door opened and her aunt walked in.

Aunt:Marang what did I say?

Marang:Ma?

Aunt:(angrily)what do you mean ma? I told you to wash the bathtub after bathing wena o sia leswe hela.

Marang:I'm sorry.

Her aunt rolled her eyes as she walked out. So that was what Marang forgot to do today. At least she didn't get too angry to beat her. She undid the tie and removed her shirt. She should probably wash it for tomorrow and ask about the iron. Is she expected to cook? She should ask.

She placed her full uniform on the bed as she went to the plastic to take out the pink dress that she had always liked from Phemelo. She wore it and looked for her charger and small phone. Her eyes scanned the room looking for an adapter and when she saw it she charged her phone. She didn't know why Joshua said she should answer her phone.

Walking out of the room barefoot she made her way to her aunt's room. There was no answer and she turned to find her Aunt behind her.

Marang:I wanted to ask if I should cook..

Aunt:There is food, do the dishes. You have to do a lot to earn your keep.



Marang:okay. Thank you.

Marang walked to the kitchen unaware of what her aunt meant when she said she should earn her keep.

She found food on top of the stove and removed the covering plate. It was a lot and it the food she never got to eat when she was with her grandmother. She picked her plate up wondering where she was supposed to go eat. Everything here was all the nice things she never got to have and if washing dishes was the only thing she had to do then she would do it.

She walked to the lounge where she found two men, the men with the huge scar and a stranger.

Marang:Dumelang.

Both nodded and she sat at another couch. She ate her food silently as the men conversed between

themselves in hushed tones. After she was done she walked out, unaware of the stranger's eyes glued to her backside. She washed the plates she found in the sink along with hers as she hummed, tapping her foot. The process would be much faster she mused. But why did Joshua wait for her?

She asked herself over and over. Her leg was fine, yes he asked about it but it didn't seem like he was interested in it. Maybe he wanted to be her friend. Maybe.

Not a lot of people wanted to be friends with the dumb girl in class. She shrugged except Phemelo. She was smart but she never did get that Marang couldn't be like her, she wiped the dishes with the dish cloth and opened the shelves looking for where the dishes are normally placed.

After packing the dishes she wiped her hands and walked out heading to her room. She had homework but she knew she wasn't going to get through it and

Phemelo would explain in a hurry and she wouldn't get it. She sighed opening the door and lightly closing it as she opened her school bag for her art project. She placed it on the bed along with the crayons and pencils. She sat on the bed and hummed to herself as she started to envision her project as she finished the drawing.

Meanwhile in the lounge.

Man:That's her.

Aunt:She is only 15 Mr Russel.

The aunt said as she looked at him.

Mr Russel:She is perfect. Innocent and perfect.

The aunt smiled.

Aunt:She is in her room.

Mr Russel:Excuse me.

He stood up and walked to the bedroom which was slightly ajar. He looked at her through the hole as

she softly hummed while coloring in. Was she five?  
He gently pushed the door open and Marang looked up, the person just distracted her.

Marang:Dumelang.

Mr Russel:Hello, what's your name?

Marang:uh Marang..

She said as she went back to her drawing. She picked up a colored pencil and filled in the drawing, ignoring the man at the door. The man looked at her again. Her innocence was perfect, he could already see the money he was going to make from this young girl.

Mr Russel:can I sit?

Marang moved a bit and looked up at him.

Marang:O-Kay.

He sat down next to her.

Mr Russel:what are you drawing?

Marang:For my art project...

She then continued as she was and he looked at her fresh yellow legs that were exposed by the dress that rode over her thighs. Perfect. They will work on her face, nothing a few face products wouldn't fix and they would be done.

Mr Russel:did you aunt talk to you?

Marang:about?

Mr Russel:what you should do.

Marang placed her drawing down and bit the corner of her pencil.

Marang:gatwe I should wash dishes to stay here..

She said innocently. Was there another thing she should do too?

Mr Russel:She'll talk to you later on.

Marang:Okay.

He stood up before he couldn't control himself and have her, he knew no one would stop him, he basically owned her now just that she didn't know.

Marang closed the door as the man walked out and checked how far her phone battery was. It was just enough and she switched it on.

At Joshua's parents

Joshua noted down everything he noticed about Marang, he guessed his suspicions were right but he had to run a few tests but would she agree? He chuckled at that. She would, her innocence scared him but it was interesting. Most girls her age knew a lot of things but she didn't. It must be the lack of exposure to the internet and as such her knowledge was limited and she was still okay.

His phone rang and he looked at the caller Id. He

wanted to drop the call but it would seem rude especially when he knew he was the one who will be calling when he wants pussy for the night.

He answered his phone as he scrolled through his research on the laptop. He placed the phone between his ear and shoulder as he wrote down a few things on the paper.

Joshua: Dani hey.

Dani: Hi Josh, I was just asking if you're okay and you arrived safe.

Joshua: I did Dee, thank you for asking.

Dani: and I probably turned you off when I asked about Marang, I probably heard wrong. I'm sorry.

Joshua: It's okay. Water under the bridge.

Dani: Are you busy tomorrow?

Joshua: I'm helping my father at the hospital tomorrow...

Dani:Oh okay...well goodnight Josh.

Joshua:Goodnight Dee.

She hung up and bit her lower lip, she knew where his father's hospital was. Maybe she should take him lunch or something. That would be a good idea. Show him she was much better than sex. She went onto Google and googled recipes.

Meanwhile Joshua leaned back as he thought about Marang, obviously he would be leaving in a month going back to Gaborone and she would be here. He sucked in a breath. She was a child and he wasn't going to do anything to her. He dialed her number and it rang unanswered for the first ten seconds before she answered. Her childish like voice was what he heard first and he smiled.

Joshua:Hey..

Marang>Hello(whispering)

Joshua:Why are you whispering?



Marang:I don't want my aunt to say I talk to men at night.

Joshua:Do you?

Marang:No..

Joshua:Keep it that way.

Marang:go raya gore ke drope?(sos I should hang up?)

Joshua laughed and she laughed too.

Joshua:O ka swaba Marang, go leditse nna ha..

Marang:Sorry..

Joshua:How are you?

Marang:How do you speak sekgoa sa makgoa?

Joshua:wa bo o bua eng kante?

Marang:Your English is accented..

Joshua:It's still English..

Marang:It has bokgoanyane(it is so English)

Joshua:Bathong Marang!

Marang:It's true, you said you go to UB?

Joshua:mhmm..

Marang:Which course, ke course akere? Which one are you doing?

Joshua:I'll tell you on Saturday.

Marang:Why?

Joshua:I want to see you on Saturday.

Marang:Why?

Joshua:I'll tell you on Saturday, should I pick you up?

Marang:Why?

Joshua:Should I pick you up or not Marang?

Marang:uh, okay..

Joshua:Thank you. Goodnight okay sweetheart?

Marang:Night.

She hung up and stared at her phone for a few seconds. Her phone beeped and reported airtime. That was P100 airtime. That was a lot just for

airtime. A message reported shortly after.

Joshua:Call if you need anything.

She replied back.

Marang:The airtime is a lot...

Joshua:It's not. Goodnight Marang, sleep.

Marang:Ng ng, a mantsi Joshua..

Joshua:But I'm not taking the airtime back, it's yours.

Marang sighed.

Marang:Okay. Goodnight.

She placed her phone down and stood up, she walked out of the bedroom heading to the bathroom. Meanwhile her aunt walked inside her room and saw the phone. She picked it up and went through Marang's call log and went to her messages. She held the phone and waited for Marang to come back.

Minutes later Marang walked back to the room wiping her wet hands with the hem of her dress and found her aunt in the room.

Aunt:Marang?

Marang:Ma?

Aunt:Wa jola?(are you dating?)

Marang:Nnyaa mma..

Aunt:Bua nnete ke itse ke go rathe ka phone ye..(tell me the truth before I hit you with this phone)

Marang shook her head before a hot slap landed on her cheek and she held her cheek with tears in her eyes.

Marang:mmamane ga ke jole(crying)

Aunt:What's this?(showing her messages of her with Joshua and the call she was on with Joshua)

Marang:we are friends..

Aunt:friends le mosimane?

She landed another slap on her face and Marang's tears rolled down her cheeks, they were burning and

it was painful. Her aunt threw the phone against the wall and looked at Marang.

Aunt:I give you accommodation and you do this?  
You are so ungrateful waitse Marang, that's why o le sehema jaana. O diiwa ke basimane lebetenyana ke wena..

Maran just cried holding her cheeks.

Aunt:Mxm!

The aunt was about to walk out and she stopped at the door.

Aunt:Setse o itse go robalana akere wena? Russel is coming tomorrow morning. You'll do whatever he says. Are we clear?

Marang kept quiet.

Aunt:Ka re ra utlwana?(shouting)

Marang:Ee mma!(crying)

The aunt walked out and Marang sobbed alone in her room.

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## THE GAME

#19

At Block 3

The following morning

Marang rubbed her swollen eyes as she got off the bed, she looked around the room and spotted her phone. She picked it up, picking up the battery and sim card and back case and put the Nokia small phone together. She switched it on and it started lighting. She breathed in a sigh of relief as she checked the battery. It was working fine.

She sent Joshua a message.

Marang: "Don't call me or text me. I'm deleting your number."

She sent the message and deleted his number. She sat on the bed and looked around, she rubbed her cheek and more tears made their way to her eyes. She wiped them away with her hands and got off from the bed. She went through her books looking for her class timetable, she started packing her books into the bag before she decided to go take a bath.

She didn't even take more than ten minutes in the bathroom and she looked at yesterday's shirt, she forgot to wash it too. She sighed and took it walking to the bathroom.

When she got there she wet the collar and rubbed the bar soap on the collar before she washed that part only. It will dry off quickly she mused and walked back to the bedroom where she placed the shirt on the bed and wore her pants and socks.



She checked her small phone and there was no message. He got the message. She was sure of it.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo laughed talking to the phone as she poured her cornflakes into the empty glass bowl.

Phemelo:when? Saturday?(laughing)

She was unaware of her mother standing by the kitchen door as she giggled talking to her boyfriend. Phemelo walked to the fridge grabbing the carton of milk and she poured it into the bowl.

Phemelo:Bona, we'll talk later kwaaa..(laughing)

She hung up and placed her phone down. She turned and was face to face with her mother who was folding her arms.

Phemelo:Morning.

Ma Phemelo:Phemelo are you dating.

Phemelo shrugged.

Phemelo:I was talking to a friend.

Ma Phemelo:Let me see your phone.

Phemelo:mama what happened to right to privacy or you don't trust me? Have I ever given you guys any reason not to trust me? Oh kana you never make time for me. You are always busy with cases and leave me to my own devices. Is that fair that you're suddenly interested in my life when you and dad have been distant parents? Is it fair that you want me to do wrong but when I was doing good you never cared? Nna mama le nkutusa bothoko..

She left the plate there and walked out holding her phone. Her mother just rubbed her temples and looked around. A part of her wanted to tell Phemelo that she was trying to conceal the fact that she was dating but a part of her knew they had neglected their child. She rubbed her arms and walked out heading to the bedroom. Maybe they should sit her

down and try this parenting thing again. Maybe.

Phemelo sat on the bed with a heavy sigh. That was close. So close. At least her parents were not the violent type, they have never laid a finger on her. She locked her phone and placed it on the bed. Of course they won't be able to unlock it unless they produce her fingerprint. She thanked God for the technology of nowadays. A part of her told her she was playing a dangerous game, mixing school with boys especially when she was writing her form 3 finals but the rush and excitement was addictive.

She heard the taxi hooting and she grabbed her school bag, she will eat at school since her mother interrupted her. She ran out of the room and walked to the door. She opened it and the dogs immediately jumped over her.

Phemelo:shoo! I'll see you little things later.

She closed the door and pushed the gate open, stepped out and pushed it close. She got inside the taxi.

Phemelo:Dumelang.

The taxi man nodded and drove off.

At Block 3

Russel's car parked outside that morning just as Marang finally wore her shirt.

He stepped out, Lebo had said she told Marang yesterday what she has to do. It was solely up to him if he wanted to move her away from this compound or what, he laughed knowing the power was in his hands. He knocked on the door and Lebo, the aunt opened.

Lebo:She is still in he room, should we give you guys privacy?

Russel:No need..

He walked to Marang's bedroom and closed the door. Alarmed Marang looked up. It was the man from yesterday, she didn't hearing his name. Russel Locked the door and looked at Marang.

Russel:I'm sure your aunt told you..

Marang just nodded as her small heart skipped several beats.

Marang:I have to go to school.

Russel:There is no need. Sit down.

Marang:(shaky voice)I have school, I'm late..

Russel:Little girl sit the fuck down!

She sat down as her heart beat out loud. She didn't know why he was in here. Russel folded his shirt and looked at her, he wondered if it would be better to get her hooked on some cocaine and take her to Gaborone for a few months before talking to some

of his contacts and they take her out, I mean she is an orphan and is not even registered as one currently. Lebo did give him all the information on her. It was odd that she never found her birth certificate but a fake one could be arranged.

Russel:Apola..(get undressed)

Marang:Rra?

She looked at him and at the door. He was at the door.

Russel:Get undressed!

Marang:I can't...

He shook his head. Training was what was needed here, he walked towards her and he pulled the shirt as the buttons snapped and he forced her to remove the shirt. Marang realized she was not going to be able to win a fight against this man and if her aunt let him in then....

Russel found the fly of her pants and pushed her pants down. Marang tried to pry his hands off, no one touched her like this, not even her grandmother did this when she was younger.

Russel: Sit still tla ga ke go klapa (sit still before I slap you)

Tears rolled down her cheeks as he pulled down her panties revealing her bushy apex, she felt so exposed and uncomfortable. Russel moved his head back, there was a weird smell coming from her bushy apex. He will deal with that later, tell Lebo to shave her or something.

He undid his belt and it hit the floor as Marang pushed herself into a corner with tears in her eyes.

Marang: Please! I'll never talk to him please (shaky crying voice)

Russel just pushed his pants down as Marang cried some more and much louder some time. She closed her eyes as more tears escaped, her chest tightened with fear and anxiety as she screamed and a hand was placed over her mouth.

Russel:They won't help you, I own you...

He said as he forced her to open her legs. He stroked his d\*ck as he looked at her pink p\*ssy and he got more hard and Marang cried till her chest hurt. He held her neck roughly and forced her head into the pillow while stroking himself. Her small butt was exposed to him.

He pushed her down onto the small single bed as she cried, her tears wetting the sheets. She screamed and cried when she felt him penetrate her butt hole, stretching her and it got more painful. Her helpless screams tore through the house but there was no one there to rescue her.

Russel:Fuck! This is tight, relax...



Marang cried as he moved behind her and he tightened his grip on her neck making it hard for her to breath.

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## THE GAME

#20

At Block 3

Russel came all over Marang's butt and moved away, he found a handkerchief in his shirt pocket and wiped himself before he threw the handkerchief her way.

Russel:Clean up!

He said as he started to get dressed and Marang cried feeling the pain on her backside. Her sons quieted as she heard the belt buckle and the door opening. She sobbed in that position he left her, as slow as she was that was wrong.

Meanwhile in the lounge, Lebo talked with Russel for

a few before they came to an agreement and she smiled.

Russel left and Lebo looked at the man.

Lebo:I'm going to the school to notify them and call her in sick..

Man:Let me take you there and lock the door.

Lebo:Let's go..

They both walked out and the man locked the door. In the bedroom Marang failed to move her body as there was pain everywhere, she heard the car drive off and forced herself to get off the bed as she cried when she thought she had no more tears left. She tried to look for her panties and moaned in pain as she wore them. She looked for her small phone. She didn't know the police number line or they will say she deserved it for speaking with Joshua? Was that her punishment?

She sat on her stomach wincing and she rubbed her

tears with her fist. She went to her call log and called Phemelo. She was in school, she hung up and went to her call log where she found Joshua's number, it was unsaved because she had deleted it earlier on.

At the hospital

Joshua smiled as he went through some patient files his father had given him, he had decided not to think about Marang's text in the morning. He had decided he will ask her face to face about it.

His phone rang and he frowned seeing Marang's number, wasn't she is school and weren't phones not allowed in school? Seeletso never went to school with a phone. He answered it and he heard sobs at the end of the line.

Joshua:Hello...

Marang sobbed I long to form words, she didn't want to live here anymore. Why didn't her grandmother

take her with her when she left.

Joshua:Hello Marang?

Marang:He-lp!

Joshua:what's wrong?

Marang sobbed some more and she heard the car outside.

Marang:Help...at home..help...

She hung up and threw the phone under the bed as she cried alone in the room. She sobbed out loud. She heard the doors opening and wished she could die.

Meanwhile Joshua left the files and walked to his dad's office.

Joshua:It's not my lunch break yet, can I borrow your car?

Ra Josh:where are you going with it?

Joshua:You can charge me out of my pay, I'll bring it back in an hour or so..

His father threw him the keys and he thanked him as he walked out.

At Block 3

The door to Marang's room opened and her aunt walked in.

Lebo:wipe those tears, you are a woman now akere...

Marang sobbed and a slap landed on her bare back

Lebo:Sutlha monna!

She quickly wiped her tears and failed to look at her aunt, she felt how heavy her head was and how her rear end was in pain.

Lebo:Good!

She threw a box of hair removal cream at Marang.

Lebo:shaver leswe leo and take a bath..

She walked out and Marang sobbed. She crawled to the bed and pulled her small phone out. She sent a text for help again and sent it to Phemelo and Joshua. She cried again, why did they do that? She was useless but they didn't have to do that to her.

If only her grandmother and mother was alive or better yet she knew her father. She wished she could die.

Minutes later Joshua parked his dad's Range Rover parked outside and Joshua checked his phone. He found another message from her. He stepped out of the car as the aunt opened the curtain and she saw the car. It was big and she recognized the person.

Joshua opened the gate and walked towards the

door. He knocked a couple of times and the door opened. Lebo smiled.

Lebo:Hello, how can I help you?

Joshua:Uhm I was wondering if you can relay a message to Marang.

Lebo:o-Kay.

Joshua:I met up with the doctor who treated her for the dog bite and he said he forgot to mention that there was a high possibility that she contracted rabies.

The aunt's eyes widened.

Lebo:She was bitten by which dog?

Joshua:a pit bull which was not vaccinated.

Lebo:It has rabies?

Joshua:Yes, we took it to the vet yesterday.

Lebo:is it contagious? Like flu?

Joshua:Yes so everyone around her might get rabies



and it is quite deadly on human beings...

Lebo:What should happen?

Joshua:the doctor said I should take her for tests and she should get more injections and everyone who has been in contact with her should be tested.

Her heart skipped a beat. She came here with dog diseases and was going to infect everyone?

Lebo:Wait here, she has been sick and we asked her not to go to school.

Joshua:shame. It must be bad.

Lebo:It is.

She walked away leaving Joshua at the door as he kept a straight face.

The door to Marang's room opened and the aunt slapped her a couple of times as she yelped.

Lebo:clean yourself up, o re tlela malwetsi a dintsa..make it fast..

Marang forced herself to crawl to the plastic and picked clothes as her aunt walked out. She picked the phone and sent another help message. She wore the clothes she picked and her aunt walked in. She threw the phone inside the plastic bag and her aunt dragged her hand.

Lebo:If you dare mention anything, they will kill you. You want that.

She quickly shook her head.

Lebo:Good! Let's go. Wipe those stupid tears.

Marang did so and her aunt let go of her hand.

Lebo:walk normally Marang o motona..

Marang forced herself to walk normally to the door and her aunt smiled.

Lebo:You won't be long?

Joshua:A one hour thing, I'll bring her back or better yet you can come along.

Lebo:I have to prepare lunch.

Joshua:Okay.

He held her shoulders and he could feel her want to wince. He led her to the car as the aunt watched till they got inside. Joshua started the car and drove off minutes later.

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## THE GAME

#21

In the car

Joshua connected the aux to his phone and looked at Marang who struggled to sit properly on the seat. He sucked in a deep breath as he drove off to his parents house. His mother was out for the day, if he heard correctly and well he will come up with a reasonable explanation to his father. He kept one hand on the steering wheel as he looked at her red eyes. He was burning to ask her what was wrong but she will talk when she is ready.

The car turned and Marang looked out the window holding back her tears. She didn't know what he even said for her to be expected to leave like that but she was grateful for that. She covered her mouth

with her hands as a sob nearly escaped her lips. Joshua pressed the button on the house keys attached to his father's car and the gate slid open. He drove inside the yard and the gate closed shortly after.

He got out first and walked to her side where he opened the door for her. He didn't want to push her for answers but he could see the tears in her eyes. He held her hand and helped her get out of the car, she tightly held onto it as he unlocked the house. He did notice that her walk didn't seem normal.

Joshua:What do you want to eat?

She shook her head.

Joshua:You're good?

She nodded and he sighed.

Joshua:Do you want to talk?

What her aunt said came to her mind and she shook her head. Joshua let her be and led her to his

bedroom.

Joshua: Sit down, I'll be in the kitchen.

Marang just stood at the door. She failed to get inside the room. Joshua frowned and held her shoulders and she jumped.

Joshua: it's me, Marang what's wrong?(softly)

She shook her head with tears in her eyes, what if he does what that man did to her? It still hurt and she couldn't get it out of her mind.

Joshua: Marang?

She started sobbing and he turned her around as she sobbed on his chest.

Joshua: what's wrong?

He knew that no one can just send a message, a plea for help out of the blue. He rubbed her back as she cried remembering what happened to her just

this morning. She sniffed and moved away from him as she used her fists to wipe her tears.

Joshua:Come then..

He held her hand and led her to the kitchen where he placed her on the counter then he went through the contents in the fridge.

Joshua:A sandwich is okay?

She sniffed and wiped her runny nose with her fingers. He just made it and poured juice for her. He walked towards her and forced her to look at him.

Joshua:Marang?

She kept quiet.

Joshua:Marang?

His voice was raised a bit and she looked at him with tears as her lips trembled, she tried to respond to him but she ended up wailing. He hushed her and when he was sure she was more calmer he let her

go and forced her to look at him.

Joshua: Look sweetness I can't help you if you don't talk to me. You called and sent a text asking me to help and I'm here kana ke go buse?

She quickly shook her head as tears rolled down her cheeks.

Joshua: Then talk to me.. Talk to me so that I can be able to help you.

Marang: H-he...

She didn't know how to tell him, maybe it was all her fault that it happened.

Joshua: Come..

He picked her off the counter and led her to the lounge where he made her sit on the couch. He left her there and went to get the food and placed the tray on the table.

She was zoned out and she couldn't utter a word



without crying.

Joshua:Marang can you write it out for me  
sweetness?

She nodded and started humming facing the other way to hide the tears. She was surprised that she wasn't asleep because she had a headache.

Sleeping would make her forget and she didn't know why she couldn't forget this like she did all the other things. She wanted to push the memory back so that she had no recollection of the painful thing that happened today.

Joshua came back with a notepad and a pen, he handed them to her and she just held the pen and her tears reached her chin and fell on the notepad. She bent her head and breathed deeply as she wrote the first sentence, all those feelings came back.

The way her heart pounded, the way he didn't care

and pulled down her pants and panties, and held her neck.

His thing getting inside her butt so painfully. She clenched her teeth in pain as how her screams tore inside the house haunted her and there was no one to help. Her chest constricted as her hand shook and the pen fell on the carpet. She started weeping and Joshua pulled her to him. Something big happened and he was going to find out if she couldn't tell him but he wasn't taking her back home.

Joshua:It's okay, don't talk about it now...

Her mucus mixed with her tears as she cried more. Why couldn't her aunt help her? Why? Was it because she was dumb and didn't get good grades like other kids?

Joshua hushed her till she finally closed her eyes and he placed her head on his lap. What to do? She couldn't say and he badly wanted to find out. He sighed and ran his fingers along her arm. He paused as his fingers lightly pressed her neck, it was red and

bruised. How come he didn't pick it up when she got in the car?

Joshua:Shit!

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## THE GAME

#22

At Joshua's parents

He quietly assessed her neck and he pushed the dress back a little bit to see her back, that looked like hand prints.

The cogwheels started turning in his mind and he cursed. He hoped it wasn't what he thought it was. He picked her small body up and made his way to the car with her in his arms. He went back to the house and walked to his bedroom where he got a fleece blanket and he thought twice about walking into Seeletso's room. He threw the fleece on the couch as he picked the tray up and went with it to the kitchen. Maybe she will be hungry later and he won't have time to go to the shops so he might as

well put the food in the lunchbox.

When he was done he picked the fleece and lunchbox and made his way to the car. She was still sleeping at the back, he covered her up and closed the door before he jogged to his side. He got inside the car and reversed as the gate opened.

At Block 3

Russel parked his car outside, well he couldn't wait to have her again. Already she was going to be a hit with his biggest clients. He smiled as he stepped out of the car and knocked on the door and Lebo opened the door.

Lebo:Come in...

Russel walked in and he headed straight to Marang's room.

Lebo:She is not in..

He whirled to look at her and Lebo's heart skipped a beat.

Lebo:She is at the hospital apparently she had rabies...

Russel:What?(angrily)

Lebo:She will be back..

Russel:You're a fool...now she is going to talk and we need that little rascal here..You messed up!

Lebo:She will be back, he doesn't know a thing..

Russel:Bohema!You blundered. You ruined things but I will get that little girl back, fuck!

At the Hospital

Dani stepped out of the taxi holding her mother's Tupperware full of the food she prepared for Josh. Fresh just for him.

She walked inside the hospital and looked around. His father had done well and it was a fully functioning private hospital. She smiled at the receptionist as she tucked her hair back.

Dani:Hi..

Her:Hello, how may we help you?

Dani:I was looking for Dr Colton?

Her:He went out..

Dani:Dr Colton junior(smiling a bit)

Her:I mean him, you have a nice voice.

Dani:Thank you. When will he be back? I brought something for him.

Her:I have no idea. He didn't say when he left here in a rush.

Dani:Is it okay I wait for him?

Her:Of course, have a seat there...

Dani:Dani..

Her:Dani..

Dani placed the Tupperware down first and sat down. She placed the food on her lap and started pressing her phone. He didn't know she was here but a man who works real hard needs to eat. He wondered how he was going to rate the food she cooked.

Outside Joshua parked the car and looked at the small body sleeping at the back, he will explain to his father later, right now he need a female nurse or doctor to run some tests and they will call the police if his suspicions are correct.

He got out of the car and picked her up with the blanket covering her. He covered her face with the blanket, he was sure she wouldn't appreciate everyone looking at her. He locked the car and walked towards the hospital.



As soon as he stepped in, his eyes locked with Dani's eyes and he looked away facing the receptionist.

Joshua:Hi, is there an empty bed?

Her:I think so, let me check..

She got out of the reception desk and started walking across the hallway while Joshua held Marang gently in his arms. He moved the blanket a bit to check if she was still asleep.

Dani:Hi..

Joshua:Hey, you didn't tell me that you're coming.

Dani:Surprise!(smiling sadly)It seems like you're busy..

Joshua:It's a busy day

The receptionist came back.

Her:There is an empty bed, what's wrong?

Joshua:I'll deal with it. Dani I'll be with you in a minute...

He followed the receptionist to the room and he placed Marang on the bed, she looked peaceful but he had a nasty feeling that she will be crying again later on.

Her:What's wrong?

Joshua:(releasing a heavy sigh)I only have suspicions and(pausing) it seems like a complicated case...ke utlwa ke tsenwa ke stress ebile..

Her:How old is she?

Joshua:15..

Her:Isn't she supposed to be in school?

Joshua:You're interrogating me now?

Her:You're speaking in riddles.

Joshua:I'll wait for her to wake up and we'll take it from there..

Her:Okay..

They walked out of the room leaving Marang there and he headed to the reception where Dani was patiently waiting.

Joshua:Follow me..

She stood up with the Tupperware and followed him to a small office,

Joshua:Take a seat..

She sat down placing the lunchbox down on the table.

Dani:I just came here to drop off lunch, I assumed you'll be hungry.

Joshua:That was very kind of you Dee, thank you..

He opened the lunchbox and okay he had to say the food looked scrumptious, his mouth watered at the sight of the food.

Joshua:Wow! Okay it looks divine.

Dani laughed tucking her hair away.

Dani:Do indulge Dr..

Joshua:Not a Dr yet Dee..

Dani:Soon rra, we'll be saying Dr Colton, Dr Colton...

Joshua:Bathong!

He opened the drawer to take a spoon when his office door opened and he looked up.

Nurse:There is a patient and Cher said you put her there.

Joshua:She's awake..

Nurse:She is and is just crying..

Joshua placed the spoon down as he picked his coat and stethoscope.

Joshua:I'm coming.(to Dani)

He stood up and walked out as he talked to the nurse.

Nurse:Those are some wild accusations Josh.

Joshua:I know but that's my closest guess..

Nurse:Will she agree and her guardians?

Joshua:Urg I'll see...

He opened the door and Marang was facing the other way with tears in her eyes. Joshua gave a silent signal for them to be left in peace.

Joshua:Hey Marang..

She turned to look at him and he was wearing a doctors coat and he had that thingy they put around their necks.

She sniffled and sat upright biting her lower lip as the pain in her butt increased.

Joshua:It's okay..

He sat next to her and used his thumb to wipe her tears.

Joshua:Can you trust me with whatever that's bothering you sweetness?(softlyj

Marang:G-go botlhoko (it hurts)

Joshua:At least you can talk now, ha kae? Maybe you might get a shot or two..

She laughed softly in pain and he laughed.

Marang:N-not a-an inj-injection..

Joshua:Okay not that. You hate those, talk to me.

Marang:A ma(pausing to try to stop the tears)he touched me and his thing uhm(biting her quivering lip)

Joshua's heart stopped as he waited for her to take deep breaths while tears rolled down her cheeks, he held her small hand in his and rubbed it in a calming motion.

Joshua:Sweetness take your time okay?

She nodded and licked her lips.

Marang:He forced, he put his thing inside of me..

Joshua tried to hide the simmering anger as he rubbed her hand.

Joshua:When was this sweetness?

Marang:Phakela(in the morning)

Joshua:Fuck!(under his breath)

Marang:hmm?

Joshua:Nothing sweetness...You're very brave for telling me this okay?

She nodded and he wiped her tears.

Joshua:Is it okay I make a few calls? I was also about to eat something, do you want to eat?

She nodded.

Joshua:Give me a few minutes and you're very brave, we'll get you through this sweetness..

He pinched her cheek lightly and she touched his hand to move it away. Joshua smiled.

Joshua:You'll be okay okay? You're not going back. You have my word sweetness, a few minutes okay?

Marang:Okay.

He walked out and headed to his office. It had already slipped his mind that he had brought the sandwiches from earlier.

Joshua:Hey Dani, is it okay if I share?

Dani smiled widely thinking that he was talking about her.

Joshua:I don't think she ate anything today, is it okay?

Her smile faltered and she nodded.

Joshua:Thank you..

He got the Tupperware as he thanked her again, getting the spoon and he walked out. Dani waited for a few minutes and she got her stuff and walked along the hallway looking for the room. She heard his voice and she saw that the door was slightly open.

Joshua had placed the food by the table and was on the phone while he looked at the girl who was on the bed.



Joshua:Ja tlhemma(Eat please)

He spoke on the phone as he watched her, he put the phone between his shoulder and ear as he got the Tupperware and mixed the food.

Joshua:Marang tlhemma...(on the phone)Yeah, you can come in right now, I'm with her.

Dani's throat constricted as she heard him say the name Marang, he was sweating on top of her saying that exact name. She choked on a very thick ball of nothing as she looked at the little girl who had a lot of acne and was too childish and looked like she was a 12 year old. You couldn't even tell if she was beautiful or not because of the acne.

She watched silently as the ball thickened to the point of her struggling to breath. He placed the phone down and fed her a spoonful.

Joshua:Ska nna bogoma, swallow that or you don't like it?

Marang swallowed and gave him a thumbs up.

Joshua:So...

She didn't wait to hear more, she half ran across the hallway to the door as tears welled in her eyes.

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## THE GAME

#23

At the hospital

Marang swallowed the last spoonful and looked at Joshua.

Marang:You're a doctor?

Joshua:A med student..

He closed the Tupperware and placed it on the table as Marang laid back.

Marang:That is nice.

Joshua:It is, I called the police and they informed me that they will be here in an hour with a social worker...

Marang's heart skipped a beat.

Marang:Am I in trouble?

Joshua:No sweetness, they are coming over here to help you okay? Trust me. Can you do that?

She meekly nodded her head and he smiled sadly. He didn't want to ask her more about what happened but he was going to trust the police on this one.

Joshua:I have to be in my office and get through a few things, will you be okay here all alone?

Marang thought about it for a minute. She might cry and she kept asking herself why couldn't she forget what happened like she normally forgets. Joshua paid close attention to her facial expressions, it was like she was debating with herself as she nodded her head then quickly shook it again. It was going to be one assessment at a time, she just went through something traumatic and he wasn't going to tell her he thinks she has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder when he also had to run tests.

Marang:Can I go with you?

She asked, she only knew him in the building.

Joshua:Okay, let me help you get off the bed,are you taking the blanket?

Marang:Is it for the hospital?

He shook his head.

Joshua:That one is mine..

He helped her get off the bed and she wrapped the fleece blanket around herself and looked at him. She was so innocent and he hated that she was defiled like that, that naivety wasn't gone completely or was it he put a stop to it before it got worse, either way it was going to stick with her for the rest of her life and she didn't need to be reminded of what happened to her.

He got the Tupperware and walked to the door.

Joshua:Follow me...

She walked to him and he let her get out first before he closed the door.

In town

Dani sat down on one of the chairs as she dabbed away a few tears. He called her the name of a child? A child? That was the lowest degradation ever. Sucking in a few deep breathes she remembered that she didn't take her Tupperware and she needs to get it back. That was her mother's and to think she made a meal specially for him.

She stood up and started walking, she will probably catch another taxi that will take her the hospital then one back home. A lot of money gone to waste.

At the hospital

Joshua's father opened the door to Joshua's small office and frowned as he saw a little girl on the chair. She was coloring and humming. He could see the headsets on her ear as she colored or was she drawing? He couldn't be sure exactly.

He spotted Joshua who had his head deep into patient files as he wrote side notes.

Ra Josh:Joshua?

He looked up and placed the file down. Marang couldn't hear anything from the outside world as she hummed tapping her foot to the beat. This particular drawing was nice and she was idly drawing what came to her mind. Forcing herself to forget the man and everything. Trying to push it to the depth of her memory where she will never remember it again.

Joshua stood up and walked to where his father was.

Ra Josh:What's happening? There is a police woman

who is here..

Joshua:They are here?

Ra Josh:What's happening?

Joshua:Can we talk about this outside father? I'll explain it but not in detail..

His father sucked in a breath.

Ra Josh:my car keys.

Joshua handed him the keys as they stepped outside and walked to his father's office.

As they disappeared into the office and the door closed, that was when Dani walked into the hospital once again. She greeted Cher the receptionist once again before she walked straight to Joshua's office. She knocked but there was no response. She opened the door and saw the little girl who was on the chair.



She walked to her since there was no sign of Joshua. She tapped her shoulder and the little girl whom she was sure was called Marang jumped a bit as she turned with her hand over her flat chest.

Marang pushed back the memories and looked at the lady, she was really beautiful. Her skin was clear and she had long hair, she wondered if it was her real hair. It was really long.

Dani:Hi, I'm looking for Joshua.

Marang looked at the phone in her hands. She paused the song like he had repeatedly told her. He wasn't impatient when she had to be reminded where she was supposed to pause, continue or move to another song. He had told her his password and it was too long to grasp. He then said she can place her finger on the screen and it will unlock though she only knew where to find music only. Phemelo never let her use her smart phone, the ones with the glass screens. This one was actually bigger

than Phemelo's.

Marang looked around the room.

Marang:O ne a le ha(he has here)a few minutes ago..

Dani:Sure you didn't see him?

Marang:Maybe he left..(pausing trying to remember when he left)

Dani:I'm Dani..

Marang nodded and looked at the phone. Dani did too. She was holding Joshua's phone.

Marang:Nice to meet you..

Dani:Will you tell him I was here?

Marang:Can you write it down?

She said. She was afraid it will slip her mind and this Dani woman looked so pretty and important. Meanwhile Dani couldn't believe that Joshua would compare her to a little girl. This was actually defilement if he could call a little girl's name while he was on top of her. So gullible.

Dani:Do you sleep with Joshua?

Marang:Ma?

Dani:Are you two having sex?

Marang:No...he helps me..

Dani:Helps you how?

Marang:I don't think I should tell you.

She didn't want to tell this particularly pretty lady what happened. What if she says she deserved it?

Marang looked down and placed her finger on the screen and it unlocked. That particular thing didn't go past Dani as she watched Marang go to the music app and put on the headsets.She has her own fingerprint on his phone?Wow! Unfuckingbelievable!!

The door opened and Joshua walked in his office with his father. Dani fixed a smile and looked at Joshua.

Dani:I came for the Tupperware.

Joshua:Alright. Thank you by the way, she enjoyed the food.

Dani had to restrain herself from hurling the lunchbox towards Joshua's way. He was being such a jerk and couldn't he see that he was hurting her.

Joshua:Marang?

Marang:Rra?(turning)

Joshua:There are a few people here to see you..

Marang looked alarmed.

Joshua:The people I talked about, the good people..

Marang:Oh. I should go?

Joshua:Follow me...

Marang:Should I leave the phone?

Joshua:Come with it. Dani weren't you leaving?

Dani:Oh right. Bye.

Joshua:Bye and thank you once again.

Dani walked out followed by Marang who was still in the fleece blanket and holding the phone too.

Joshua closed his office door and he headed the other way as Dani silently watched him bend down to Marang's level to speak to her.

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## THE GAME

#24

At the hospital

In the hospital room Joshua stood by Marang's side as he urged her on to talk after she was examined by the female nurse. Well they had given them their privacy.

The social worker held back her tears as she started scribbling on her notebook. If a person's only guardian can do that to a child, she didn't know what world this was turning into.

Police woman: Can you describe the person who did this?

Marang looked at the woman and she closed her eyes, she didn't want to remember anything. Nothing

at all and now she had to remember.

Joshua looked at Marang and he hoped and prayed she remembered the person, the nurse would be here in an hour or so with the results from the swabbing she did on her. She said she last took a bath before the incident happened so there was still DNA evidence on her. As thus that meant she was to be given PEP and the social worker said she will deal with counseling.

Marang started to describe the man as if she was drawing a picture of him in her mind. When she was done she was wiping tears away.

Social worker: Everyone here in this room will help you.

The social worker looked at Joshua and silently thanked him. He just nodded. He wanted this little girl to be safe.

Police woman: We have your statement and we'll get

the results, you called for help?

Joshua took his phone from her and went to the messages. He thanked his lucky stars he had saved her as Marang, he showed her the messages and the lady nodded.

Marang:I sent messages to my best friend too...

Police woman:What's her name?

Marang:Phemelo Moseki...

The lady nodded and wrote it down. They were dealing with a case of child molestation, defilement and a whole lot of charges they were going to impose on the aunt and her accomplices.

Police woman:Mr Colton how do you know her?

Joshua:A week ago the dog at home but her so we had to take care of the hospital bills..

The lady nodded. They were going to make sure that this child was in safe hands. Both her and the social



worker could see that she looked like she had been crying and they were just waiting for the file from the nurse in regards to the damage. It doesn't matter if it wasn't vaginal rape, this child did nothing wrong and didn't deserve any of it and they'll make sure that the perpetrators pay for that.

At Block 3

Lebo looked at the watch as her heart started to pound in her chest. Marang wasn't home yet. She went through her call log and found the number that once called her. She believed it was Joshua's.

The phone rang unanswered for the first few seconds before that deep voice answered it.

Joshua:Hello...

Lebo:Hi, this is Marang's aunt, when are you bringing her back? Are they done with the injections? It's getting late and she needs to be home(panicking)

Joshua:We are on the way mam.

Lebo:Thank you.

She hung up and walked to Marang's room. She had already cleaned the sheets and all that. She looked around and wondered where was Marang's small phone. She should burn it or something.

Since she had cleaned the bed she didn't see it, that way Marang won't talk to anyone and she would know better than to cross Russel. She knew better. That man was dangerous and he said he will be here in an hour to take her. He wanted to leave with her and she saw that it was fine, that way she wasn't going to look over her shoulder every now and then.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo threw her bag on the bed and threw herself on it, she was exhausted. She wanted to call Marang so that she can ask why she didn't come to school.

It was weird that she wasn't in school today and she missed her, as much as she didn't pay much attention, she rarely judged.

Phemelo picked her phone and found missed calls from Marang.

Phemelo:That's strange..

She saw the messages and she panicked a bit before she called Marang.

The phone rang for some time before the call was dropped.

At Block 3

Lebo dropped the call and went through the messages. As stupid as she was she had asked for help and it didn't look good on her side. But that Joshua man was serious about the rabies thing, or

was it an elaborate lie too?

She went through the messages and her heart  
dropped just as the door opened.

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## THE GAME

#25

At Block 3

Russel walked in and looked around the room as Lebo tried to hide the phone. Marang escaped and she was smart or rather the person who helped her was smart about it.

Russel:Where is she?

Lebo:Uh sh-

A slap landed on her cheek, as her ear rung and her cheek burned. He slapped her.

Russel:Mosadi where is the child?

Lebo:I-she will be her-

Another slap landed on her other cheek and she staggered losing her balance, hitting the wall in the process. She felt Russel's hands around her neck.

Russel: You will find that child for me and bring her to me you got?

She tried to nod her head with a cut airflow. He let go of her neck and she rubbed it, gasping for breathe.

Russel angrily looked at her, she was the one who ruined it all.

Russel: If she isn't here, I'll find her myself.

He walked out as Lebo rubbed her tears and sat on the floor, she prayed to God that Marang didn't utter a single word or tell a single soul. This was supposed to be smooth and now it just spiraled out of control, this was not how she wanted things to be.

At the hospital

Joshua talked to them outside for a few minutes as the nurse relayed her results. The police woman took note of it all, she was a female and she detested it when men felt entitled to women and how the child's aunt let this kind of abomination happen was astounding. But then women can be each other's worst enemies, but to do that to a child? A child?

Joshua: Can I be kept updated about the case?

Social Worker: We will try our best, I'll see where to place her. Particularly close to school.

Police woman: Yes...thank you for telling us sir. We have enough evidence and I'm sure we will find the house like you directed us.

Joshua nodded as the two ladies left. So she was going to be registered as an orphan, placed in a home and for now she was in the hospital. He didn't deem it wise for her to spend the night here.

He walked inside the room and she was humming to the song that was playing on the headsets.

He sat next to her and removed one headset.

Joshua:How are you feeling?

Marang:I want to forget..(low voice)

Joshua:You're going to get counseling and that lady will make sure you're safe.

Marang nodded.

Marang:I'm hungry.

Joshua:You're not spending the night here though, I got your medication and the social worker wanted you to start counseling as soon as tomorrow.

Marang:I have to talk about it?

Joshua:Yes sweetness.

She sighed sadly and nodded.

Joshua:I know it's too much and we have to deal



with one issue at a time.

Marang:Did I do something wrong?

Joshua:No sweetness..

He had to hold back from touching her cheek and instead he touched his head, he needed a clean cut.

Joshua:There are more tests I want to carry on, if you are up for it anyway..

Marang:It won't hurt?

Joshua:No, get up and let's get you something to eat.

She got up and Joshua thought twice, he didn't have a car and his father was going to leave late. He should borrow the car then bring it back...such a complicated process. He shouldn't be moving her around. She needed to rest and change her clothes too.

Joshua:Stay here okay?

She did and looked up at the ceiling as he walked out.

In the office Joshua's dad undid his tie as he smiled on the phone. Joshua knocked a couple of times before he hung up and tried to keep a straight face as he let him in.

Joshua: I'm asking for too much, can I borrow your car? I'll bring it back and talk to your wife for me.

His father raised his eyebrows.

Ra Josh: Please... Marang has nowhere to go..

He leaned back and rubbed his beard.

Ra Josh: What's going on with you and that girl?

Joshua: nothing..

His father shook his head.

Ra Josh: I would hate it for you to find yourself on a case of defilement when you're still studying before you get your degree. Your future is important so don't ruin it.

Joshua:I won't.

His father handed him the keys.

Joshua:In an hour and please talk to your wife about letting Marang stay till the social worker finds her a home.

Ra Josh:Will she be okay?

Joshua:The social worker and the police seem to have it under control.

He nodded and Joshua walked out. He rubbed his head. It was sad about what happened to the little girl and he was glad that this far Seeletso and Sara haven't went through this sort of trauma.

He dialed his wife's number, she has been acting weird this past week. She didn't find out did she? He asked himself but how would she find out? That would break her, if she did know she would've left him by now and she was still here. She answered immediately with her cheerful voice.

Ma Josh:Hello..

Ra Josh:Hello darling, your son has a favor to ask from you..

Ma Josh:O-k. I don't think I'll like the favor.

Ra Josh:Keel this discreet, I was told in confidence.

She nodded as she washed the dishes, by the time Ra Josh was done his wife was sniffing at the end of the line.

Ma Josh:It's okay, she can stay as long as she likes..bathong people are that cruel(wiping her tears)Let me add an extra plate and see what to do. We'll talk.

She hung up and he sighed. His wife was a good woman. He sighed and that made him question his own actions. Like any other woman she had her flaws but she has been so good to him and the kids, even their bedroom life wasn't dead. She did put effort into everything and he was too infatuated with

the girl of the month than to focus on her, she didn't even complain about it. He started to delete numbers of his side chick and blocked the old ones. She will never find out.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo had a bad feeling about Marang, now her phone wasn't even going through. Her mother walked inside the room and Phemelo looked at her, Ma Phem:Phemelo your dad and I would like to talk to you..

Phemelo:Okay.

She stepped out and Phemelo sighed, she followed suit leaving her phone on the bed. She will respond to Raine's messages a bit later.

Phemelo sat down on the single sofa opposite the

two seater sofa and faced her parents.

Ra Phem:Phemelo?

Phemelo:Rra.

Ra Phem:we are your parents and we want the best for you, we both have busy careers that demand a lot and we haven't been spending time with you.

Phemelo:Yo-

Ra Phem:I'm still talking Phemelo.

She looked down at her shot nails.

Ra Phem:That doesn't mean you should disrespect us as your parents. You still live under our roof and you have no source of income to fend for yourself should you overstep the line between being a child and wanting to be an adult while still a child.

Phemelo:Ee rra.

Ma Phem:We'll try to take this step by step, we are so out of tune with what is happening in your life because we are so consumed by work and as much as what you said sounded rude, you are right. We never spend time with you..

Phemelo nodded.

My Phem: We can start with the little things like having dinner together, I gave the help time off and I made dinner.

Phemelo faked a smile and agreed before she asked to be excused. Now that there were putting effort it seemed weird, imagine dinner with her parents?  
Eeuw no!

At Joshua's parents

Joshua parked his father's car and Marang stepped out holding his phone.

Marang: Uh..

Joshua: Don't worry..

He chased the dogs away from her as he led her to the house.

Joshua:mother!

Ma Josh walked out of the kitchen holding a spoon.

Ma Josh:Hey...I talked to Seeletso about sharing her room.

Joshua:She agreed?

Ma Josh:Yes..

Just then Seeletso walked out in shorts. Marang looked at her, she was pretty. These girls were pretty and smooth.

Seeletso:Hi...(smiling)

Marang:Heelo(low voice)

Seeletso looked at her brother.

Seeletso:Josh, you can let her hand go...she's in good hands bro..

Joshua didn't even notice he had been holding her hand.



Joshua:That's my sister Seeletso, that's my mother and Sara o kae?

Seeletso:(rolling her eyes)se timpetse, she robetse(she is full, she is asleep)

Joshua:Okay..

He let Marang go and urged her to move forward. Marang walked to where Seeletso was and Seeletso asked Marang to follow her.

Ma Josh:That time when the dog bit her she fainted, she seems shy.

Joshua:Yep! Let me go give dad his car, I'll come back with a taxi.

Ma Josh:Or better yet come with your dad..

Joshua:Will do. Will be back in a few.

He walked out and Ma Josh walked back to the kitchen. Marang was tiny and she smiled alone, why her son was holding her hand and that tight?

Obviously she wasn't going to point it out and embarrass him.

In the bedroom Marang looked around. It was so pink and she had a computer in her room.

Seeletso: This bed is big enough for both of us and unfortunately I do not have a shower in my room, we'll use the main shower...

Marang was looking around. It was nice and she had never seen anything like this.

Seeletso: Marang?

Marang snapped out of it.

Marang: Ma?

Seeletso: never mind. Haish o tiny yang mma, you wear which size?

Marang: any is fine..

Seeletsp walked to her wardrobe.

Seeletso:Uhm I have this night dress, I wore it once. I'm not sure if it will fit but for the night.

Marang:Thank you so much..

Seeletso:Between me and you Joshua like you.

Marang:ma?

Seeletso could tell she was slow and she shrugged.

Seeletso:Never mind..let me show you the bathroom my love..

She led her to the bathroom.

Seeletso:Yah this is it...urg do I have extra supplies? I think mama has a set of fresh towels and face cloths, you can use my body wash..

Marang looked at the sparkly bathroom, she didn't even want to think about that place. She pushed those thoughts back.

Seeletso:ema pele how old are you?

Marang:15..

Seeletso:okay..

She looked at her pimples. It was just a stage but the pimples were ruining her face, she was pretty and she had nice eyes and those tiny little lips. She was a baby, shorter than her.

Seeletso:O dira form mang?

Marang:3..

Seeletso:oh,anyway maybe I should ask about the towels so you can take a bath and we'll eat when everyone is here..

Marang walked out when Seeletso did and she was just about to follow Seeletso when Seeletso said it's fine, she can just sit in the bedroom.

Marang sat on the queen size bed and picked up Joshua's phone, he had forgot that she had it, she

presumed or he knew? She couldn't read people. She sighed and pressed on random apps.

At Block 3

Lebo panicked as she checked the time and Marang was not back. She heard a car engine and she had to restrict herself from going to the window and checking. She sat still on the chair and waited.

Minutes later there was a door knock and she went to open the door, her fake smile almost dropped but she maintained it as her heart started doing that pounding that was usually accompanied by a slight stomach ache.

Lebo:Hello(fake smile)

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## THE GAME

#26

At Block 3

The police woman looked at the woman who was said to have sold her niece. She was disgusted. So disgusted by her.

Police woman: You are under arrest.

Lebo: What? My niece is missing and you want to put me in prison?

Police woman: Did you report your missing niece...

Lebo paused as she thought of a lie.

Police woman: I thought so, you have the right to remain silent as everything you say or do will be used against you in the court of law.

Her workmate turned Lebo and handcuffed her.

Lebo:What did I do?

Police woman:For being an active accomplice in the molestation of your niece, child trafficking her too..let's go.

The man with the scar was not in the house as they led Lebo to the police van. So that little dirty scoundrel reported? They will get her even if they put her in jail, Russel will find a way to get to her and they won't find her any time soon. She smiled as they put her at the back of the police truck and she placed her head on her knees.

At Joshua's parents

Marang walked inside the bedroom after the bath, she smelled nice now and she hated the fact that she reddened her own skin as she tried to scrub away what happened in the morning away. She

found a panty on the bed and the night dress along with a gown. She has never worn a gown before in her life, it had seemed too expensive when she used to live with her grandmother. Tears made their way to her eyes as she thought of the woman. None of this would've happened if she was still alive.

She wiped her tears and sat down on the bed. She wore the panties along with the dress and gown. She saw the lotion too and she applied it, this all smelled so nice. It smelled of nice perfume as she brought it to her nose. She found shoes but they were a bigger size, it was still okay.

The bedroom door opened and she was expecting Seeletso but it was Joshua.

Joshua: How are you settling in?

Marang: Your sister is nice and she talks a lot like Phemelo.

Joshua: Phemelo is your...



Marang:Best friend. I don't have her number memorized mme..

Joshua:Okay. Dinner is ready..

Marang:Ga se dijonyana tsa sekgoanyane?(it's not fancy food?)(smiling softly)

Joshua:You'll see, mom is a great cook. Come...

He extended his hand and she took it.Joshua felt her soft hand in his and looked at her.

Joshua:Are you okay?

Marang:I guess...

Joshua:If you want to talk to me okay?

She nodded and they walked out of the room. Their house was fancy or was it that she was too used to being poor that anything better seemed fancy?

Anyhow he led her to the dining room where

everyone was seated and she saw a little girl.

Marang:that's your other sister?

Joshua:Yes, Sara...

Marang:She is cute and small...

She sat down next to him and Ma Josh smiled.

Ma Josh:May we all say grace?

They all bowed their heads and Marang just did what they did. Ma Josh said grace and everyone indulged in the food. Marang looked at the food on the table and looked at Joshua.

Marang:What's this?

She pointed to the fillet.

Joshua:Fillet, you don't eat fillet?

Marang:I haven't eaten it before..

Everyone minded their own business as Joshua took

Marang's plate and dished the fillet for her.

Joshua:Taste this..

He cut a piece and held the fork in his hand. Marang hoped she won't embarrass herself and vomit the food out because she wasn't used to it. She opened her mouth and he fed her. She moved her head back and chewed on it. It was good.

Joshua:And?

Marang:It's actually tasty...wa re ke eng gape?

Joshua:Fillet.

Marang:Fillet. Got it.

Joshua filled her plate with food before he filled his. In minutes there was chatter at the table as they asked Marang questions which she answered as honestly as she could. They were really nice people.

She smiled a bit when Sara talked to her and even

wanted her to go see her room. She was a nice child too.

An hour later Ma Josh came in with dessert.

Marang:I think I'm full.

Seeletso:a meal is never complete without...

All:Dessert!

Ma Josh:a few bites..

Marang:Okay, a few bites..

The cake was served with some whipped cream. She wasn't used to all of this and it was all nice. Nice for them to do this.

By the time dessert was over Ma Josh was clearing the table along with Rra Josh.

Ma Josh:Okay goodnight everyone...

They all said their good nights and Marang followed

Seeletso to her room.

Seeletso:I'll take the side next to the wall..

Marang:Okay...

She climbed the bed and got under cover as Seeletso did the same. Seeletso was on her phone as she laid on her back. That was when Marang remembered she had Joshua's phone.

Marang:Where is Joshua's room? I don't think I gave him his phone back.

Seeletso:Uhm, just move right along. The last room on the left.

Marang nodded and got off the bed. She picked the phone and walked to barefoot to his room. Seeletso said left or right? She will try both rooms.

She knocked on the door and Joshua opened the door half naked. She covered her eyes and held out

the phone.

Marang:Your phone and I'm sorry, I didn't know you weren't dressed..

Joshua:It's okay...

He looked around and got the phone before he held her hand and pulled her inside the bedroom. He closed the door.

Marang kept her eyes closed. He appreciated her naivety sometimes. He wore his t-shirt over the jeans that hung low, that revealed the waist band of his Calvin Klein briefs and the abs.

Joshua:All covered up, you can open your eyes.

Marang removed her hand and smiled.

Marang:Thank you. You have nice songs.

Joshua:and you have a sweet voice.(softly)

Marang:Huh?

Joshua:Nevermind sweetness..sit down.

Marang:I should go to sleep, your sister is waiting for me..

Joshua:Okay...tomorrow morning you'll meet the social worker and then come by the hospital for those tests I talked about..

Marang:Okay. Goodnight.

She held the door knob and looked at him for a few seconds before she opened the door and walked out.

Joshua sucked in a deep breath and walked to the bathroom.

At the police station

The police woman sighed. This woman was guilty in all senses but she wa protecting the perpetrators. Why??

She couldn't understand why she would sell her own niece and still protect those who hurt her. Some

people just had evil in their blood and this was one of the very reasons she had chosen to become a police officer.

Lebo was in a holding cell and she highly doubted she was going to get bail. They had a solid case but the woman protected the evil men.

She got inside her car as her phone rang. She answered it and placed it on loudspeaker.

Her:Hello?

Voice:He used me...

Her:Dani what is up?

Dani:You remember the guy I told you about, the one wa friends with benefits Amantle...

Amantle:oh, I forgot his name but you're hurting yourself. You sold yourself short by agreeing to the most ridiculous arrangement I've heard in history.

Dani:I liked him and now I love him but I knew he



was seeing me even though it was not in the most conventional way...

Amantle:Your point is?

Dani:My point is that he is seeing a little girl  
Ammie...nnananyana...

Amantle:Ijoo...

Dani:You're a police officer and you know that it's against the law to sleep with a minor...

Amantle:Dani how sure are you? Sleep mntase or cry it out, don't tarnish reputation tsa batho with such claims.

Dani:So the law lets adults sleep with minors? She is gullible and I'm protecting the little girl. Kana she looks twelve ka sefatlhego se se sa lebegeng...

Amantle:O bitter Dani...

Dani:I'm not. I'll show you in the morning.....

Amantle:Bye..

Dani:Bye my love...

She hung up and she reversed her car. She couldn't stop thinking about this case. It was big for her and she was going to make sure Marang gets justice one way or another.

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## THE GAME

#27

At Joshua's parents

Marang turned and Seeletso was still on her phone.

Seeletso:Do you have friends?

Marang:Just one, Phemelo..Aren't you sleeping?

Seeletso:I can't sleep, don't worry I'll wake up in the morning for school. Are you on Facebook?

Marang:No...I hear people talking about it at school.

Seeletso:Let me search for your friend on Facebook, what's her full name?

Marang:Phemelo Moseki..

Seeletso typed the name and she turned to face Marang.

Seeletso:This one?

She showed her the pictures.

Marang:Yes..

Seeletso:Nice...

Seeletso went through the pictures and well this Phemelo friend of her was good, okay she paused as she thought about the Moseki surname. It sounded so familiar to her but she brushed it off. She turned to find Marang fast asleep. She was such a small human being and Josh liked her. Like Joshua actually had a girl he liked. Wow!

She faced the other way and put the phone under her pillow and closed her eyes.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo talked to Raine as she thought about it.

Raine:Well we organized a movie date this weekend.

Phemelo:I cannot wait..

Raine:Your friend is not coming?

Phemelo:Raine Marang has been through a lot, she lost her granny and stuff like that.

Raine:It could cheer her up you know, when one is going through something they shouldn't bottle it all up and isolate themselves. Fresh air would do her good, a whole lot of good for that matter.

Phemelo:You are right, when she comes to school I will ask her because she is not answering her phone.

Raine:Kana motho should be surrounded by people. Imagine she is all alone and her life problems get to her and she thinks of suicide. That's not right besides I'm excited to meet her tota. All your close friends together?

Phemelo:That would be awesome. She doesn't talk that much though...

Raine:Who approached who first?

Phemelo:I did, she didn't care that I was from a private school besides no one hanged around her and people with a low profile are usually the best people.

Phemelo laughed, wondering what goes through Marang's head. She usually gave short answers then her mind would wander away to God knows where.

Phemelo:Mxm, night Raine.

Raine:Night. You studied akere mme?

Phemelo:Yes of course..night.

She hung up and placed the phone by the night lamp. She was juggling it all pretty well, the boyfriend, school work and when he wasn't busy a whole video call just to help her with a few questions. Dating was not that bad considering this was her very first boyfriend. The dinner with her parents was also not that bad, she should give them the benefit of the doubt and give their relationship a try.

At Joshua's parents

Joshua was awake as he laid on his stomach in the bedroom. She was in the other room and he didn't know how he could sleep today. He picked his phone and got off bed. He headed to the kitchen as his phone beeped and it was a message from Dani.

Dani:Can't you see you're hurting me Joshua?

He frowned. What the hell was she talking about now? And sending messages at this ungodly hour.

He texted back.

Joshua:And then?

Dani:You can't use me for sex and then date a child..

Joshua:Uhu! Okay. Sharp and delete my number.

Dani:What? I love you and you do this?

Joshua:love was not part of the arrangement Dee.

Please delete my number for the sake of your mental health.

After he sent that text he blocked her. She honestly thought that he was going to fall in love with her? Not that he saw her only sometimes. Women sell themselves short and expect you to not do that when they did it to themselves.

He placed his phone down and opened the fridge looking for something to eat.

The following morning

Everyone was up bright and early as the girls got ready for school and Joshua dragged his feet to the bathroom.

Ma Josh was in the kitchen preparing breakfast and



a lunchbox for her husband, Joshua and the kids including Marang. She was younger than he second born and you wouldn't guess she was a teenager if it wasn't for the acne on her face.

Ra Josh walked into the kitchen and he smiled. He held his wife's waist and kissed her cheek.

Ra Josh:Morning.

Ma Josh:Morning, I'm almost done okay, you can sit down and eat.

He still didn't let go of her waist and she laughed pushing him off.

Ma Josh:Behave Dr Colton.

Just as she said that Seeletso walked inside.

Seeletso:Breakfast this early morning? Marang should come here often waitse look at mom making breakfast around 5am..

Ma Josh:Madume ga a yo mo molomong?(Cankt you greet?)

Seeletso:Morning mom..morning dad..I'll be back.

She walked out and Ma Josh shook her head. She hated that Seeletso was more like her father than she wished.

Meanwhile in the bedroom Marang was fast asleep, she turned on her side as her small lips parted and a soft snore escaped her lips.

An hour later everyone was in the kitchen eating breakfast. When Seeletso's taxi was hooted, she just picked the lunchbox and her school bag.

Seeletso:Bye, thank you mom.

She walked out as everyone ate their food. Ra Josh left shortly after Seeletso and Ma Josh looked at her

son.

Ma Josh:Aren't you going to work?

Joshua:I am..Let me see if Marang is awake, she is supposed to meet the social worker.

Ma Josh:Okay. Her food is in the microwave, her lunchbox is in the fridge, my car keys are on the table. Let me clean up and sleep. You'll drop Sara off at pre-school?

Joshua:Okay.

Sara went to the lounge to watch tv and Joshua went to Seeletso's bedroom.

He knocked softly on the door and there was no response. He knocked over and over till he heard the rustling of the sheets. The door opened and Marang looked at him as she rubbed her eyes.

She yawned softly and blinked a couple of times.

Marang:Morning..

Joshua:Hey, take a bath sweetness then come eat.

Marang:Okay.

She stretched her arms and looked at him.

Joshua:Was your sleep good?

Marang:It was.

She said. She was just glad she didn't dream of the incident. She wanted to forget everything related to it so bad because she didn't want to cry.

Joshua:Get ready..

She nodded and walked back into the bedroom where she slid her feet into Seeletso's size 5 slides. She passed him by the door and headed to the bathroom. She looked at the rail and her panties where not there, yesterday's panties. Her cheeks reddened when she remembered how old and almost torn her panties were. She removed the gown and the night dress. The panties she wore were nice. She hummed as she started filling the bathtub with

warm water. They were so kind to her.

Joshua waited patiently for Marang to be done. Thirty minutes later she walked out wearing a dress that looked bigger than her, Seeletso's clothes didn't fit her and he wasn't about to take her around the mall for more clothes, she needed to rest and who knew how long her meeting with the social worker will be.

Marang:Seeletso said I can wear some of her clothes.

Joshua:You do know the clothes are not your size..

She nodded.

Marang:I'm used to it, I never had clothes that fit me.

Joshua:Breakfast is in the microwave and your lunchbox is there too.

Marang:Lunchbox?

Joshua:Mhmm, you do need to eat at lunchtime.

Marang:Thank you.

She walked to the kitchen and called Joshua.

Marang:Open the microwave for me.

Joshua:This is how you do it..

She saw him extend an arm as he opened it with ease, his cologne was nice.

Joshua:You got it?

She nodded and he handed her the covered plate that had breakfast and he took out the lunchbox.

Joshua:We'll wait. Eat and then we go okay?

Marang nodded.

At the police station

Amantle rolled her eyes as Dani cried her eyes out. She consoled her and hung up. She placed her phone down and talked to the team, they were going

to search the house and they had a search warrant for that and maybe get the child's documents because as far as she is concerned the state will be taking care of Marang from now on. The social worker had assured her that Marang will be in good hands.

Lebo was in a holding cell and they will interrogate her some more later. Right now they had to go to the place to collect the documents. She had suspicions on who was trafficking the child but they were baseless more especially that Lebo was protecting the guy. Evil woman.

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## THE GAME

#28

At the hospital

Joshua closed his files after he had cross examined Marang. The social worker wasn't here as of yet so he had time.

Marang looked at him in his white coat and all. She had no idea why this man was so kind to her along with his family.

Joshua:Uhh...

He removed the stethoscope and placed it on the desk and looked at Marang.

Joshua:sweetness we have a problem here.

Marang shifted in her seat as she looked at him



again.

Joshua: You have a predominantly inattentive type ADHD. I know that's a very big term for you my love...

He paused. What the fuck? Did he just say my love? He looked at the file and at her and she hadn't noticed what he had uttered.

Joshua: As I was saying you have an attention disorder hence the lack of focus and from what you have said it stems from childhood.

Marang: okay.

Joshua: I know your not following, I'm going to write down a prescription of stimulants and we'll see as the week goes if you can get a long time patch and see the effect the stimulants. I have a list of medications but I assessed the possible side effects too..Also I-

She wasn't even listening and he sighed.

Joshua: Marang?

He called her name three more times before she

answered.

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:I will give you medicine and you have to undergo behavior therapy, psychotherapy and social therapy and since you are going to therapy I'm sure your therapist will deal with that.

Marang:Okay..

There was a door knock on his office.

Joshua:Come in..

The social worker walked in and she smiled.

Joshua:Hi Mrs Thuso..

Mrs Thuso:Goodmorning, I was held back by the traffic but I'm here. Hey Marang baby..

Marang:Hii...(smiling)

Mrs Thuso:Well while I will be sorting the paperwork, thank you for the hospitality.

Joshua:Anytime..

Mrs Thuso:Should I drop her here again after the

therapy today?

Joshua:Of course, I'm sure my mother won't mind.

Mrs Thuso:Thank her for me once again.

Joshua:Speaking of therapy..

Mrs Thuso:yes?

Joshua:She has ADHD.

Mrs Thuso:oh..

She said it more to herself. Explains why she had zoned out yesterday and they had to call her name over and over again before she was back to reality.

Joshua:She needs therapy, I have a list of medication too..

Mrs Thuso:You are so kind.

He smiled.

Joshua:It's nothing. So you will sort it out?

Mrs Thuso:Of course. Thank you.

Joshua nodded and Mrs Thuso walked out with Marang. She told herself over and over again that they were good people who had her best interests at heart.

At Block 3

Amantle and her team walked inside the house. It seemed as if the people who were living in it left last night. How convenient. She walked inside the room and she paused seeing a black refuse bag. She went through it and those looked like a girl's clothes. This was the right address Marang was living here so this must've been her room.

She opened the wardrobe and she saw the sheets that were shoved in the corner.

Amantle:interesting.

She stretched out the sheet and it had stains,hmm..

She opened the clear bag she came with and threw the sheet inside. They had come here for documents and her colleagues were searching other rooms.

She went through the bags and she saw the school bag that had books and her school stuff. She was probably going to need all of them.

At Sunshine Orphanage

Mrs Thuso showed Marang around the orphanage, it was a was a walkable distance to school so she will save on transport.

Mrs Thuso:How does it look?

Marang:It's okay...

Mrs Thuso:Are you sure? By the end of this week you can move in.

Marang:I will be safe?

Mrs Thuso:I assure you child, you'll be safe..

Marang nodded and followed Mrs Thuso. Mrs Thuso had talked to the therapist after Marang's first session. Apparently she had been closed off but she understood, she had been through something traumatic so they won't give up. She will get through this.

Mrs Thuso:Let me drop you off okay?

Marang nodded as she slid her hands into the pockets.

At the hospital

Mrs Thuso knocked on the door.

Joshua:Come in.

She walked in with Marang and she smiled.

Mrs Thuso: We've found a place and she said it's okay. I'll come with more details with the sorted paperwork.

Joshua: Thank you.

She said goodbye to Marang and Marang looked at Joshua who was working.

Joshua: I didn't want to ask this earlier but what do your grades look like?

Marang: I get Ds and Es..

Joshua: You are writing ka November akere?

She nodded. She had accepted that she was going to fail and not go to senior school.

Joshua: I have a suggestion...

Marang: There is no use, I'm still going to fail.

Joshua: No you're not... how far is the orphanage to my house?

Marang:It's a walking distance, it's not even that far from school.

Joshua:Every weekend come over and let Seeletso help you, she is in form 4.

Marang sighed. She was too stupid to grasp concepts.

Joshua:and you're not stupid Marang.

Marang:It-

Joshua:Are you hungry?

Marang:I'm okay.

That evening.

At Joshua's parents

Ma Josh cleared the table as Joshua walked out followed by Seeletso and Marang.



The girls closed the bedroom door and Seeletso looked at Marang.

Seeletso:Josh said I should help you so shoot..

Marang:You don't have to..

Seeletso:Okho...we are making sure his wife will be smart...

Marang:Whose wife?

Seeletso:Never mind..We should start with science my dear ray..

Marang:Seeletso...

Seeletso:not up for discussion ray ray...

Two hours passed and Seeletso looked at Marang.

Seeletso:you have a short attention span mogirl yoh, but waitse ke eng, ga ke hele pelo mma wee..did you grasp the concept?

Marang:A little.

Seeletso:do this. Like for the short time you can

focus sing along the notes or hum them as if it's a song...so tomorrow evening you can use your art to your advantage.

Marang:You're smart and you weren't impatient...

Seeletso:And you are smart...as long as you can pass form 3, we'll deal with form 4 next year...

Marang:You don't-

Seeletso:whatever Marang...if you get a C at least for this level...

There was a door knock.

Seeletso:Joshua we are good. We studied hau...

Joshua laughed at the other side of the door.

Joshua:Mo reye a tle a nwe dipilisi(tell her to come take her pills)

Seeletso:You can hear him..

Marang stood up and walked to the door opening it.

Joshua handed her the pills and a bottle of water.

Joshua:and?

Marang just took the pills and downed them with water. She handed him the bottle before she stood on her toes and hugged him, her small arms wrapped around his waist.

Marang:Thank you.

Joshua froze for a few seconds before it clicked and he placed his hand on her small back.

Joshua:Anytime sweetness..

She broke the hug and smiled at him once again.

Marang:Thank you so much..

She walked inside and closed the door. Joshua rubbed the back of his neck meekly. He hadn't expected that hug from her. Not at all..

At some place

The man with the scar looked at Russel.

Man:Is she worth the trouble? The Police were snooping around earlier and if that Lebo talks its over for us.

Russel thought about it, he wanted the girl but what use would she be if they catch out his syndicate.

Russel:So Lebo is okay taking the fall alone?

Man:Yes. Yes...she was stupid and failed a simple task, she has no use now and the child escaped and the police are involved. If she is abducted and Lebo cracks we are screwed.

Russel:You are right..we should move fast.

Man:There is new business ko Kasane...most tourists would want girls and those girls would do things to better their lives.

Russel:Okay. We should leave first thing in the

morning.

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A YEAR LATER

## THE GAME

#29

At Mater Spei College

The bell rang and Marang was the first to walk out of class. It was a Saturday and she had the laundry to take care of before she went to check on Seeletso to help her with math.

Phemelo:Marang!!(shouting)

Marang stopped in her tracks and waited for Phemelo who breathlessly caught up with her. Phemelo pushed her glasses back and adjusted her bag. Marang was okay with doing double sciences and Seeletso did help her get a C so now here she was doing her absolute best. Those As and Bs didn't go unnoticed and there were subjects she excelled on better than pure science students. Subjects like

Art, English and Geography. She was really good at them. Phemelo had gotten a solid A for her finals and she was happy for her friend.

Phemelo:Let's start walking to the taxi rank..

Marang:Okay..

Phemelo:Do you want to go to the library?

Marang:Me?

Phemelo:Yes you...

Marang:ng ng, ga ke batle go go tshwarela kerese mma(I don't want to be the third wheel)

Phemelo:Raine will be there...

Marang sighed. She didn't like Raine but what can she say, it seemed as if she was her best friend's other best friend.

Marang:Ke busy...

Phemelo:And you need to relax...We are almost done with mid-year exams...

Marang:Still...I told Mrs Thuso that I will do the laundry ya all the kids at Sunshine..

Phemelo:Okay. When we close schools do ask for permission for a sleep over or something along those lines..

Marang:okay..

They walked along as they discussed the mathematics that they were going to write on Monday.

At Joshua's parents

A black Mercedes drove through the yard as the gate opened. The young gentleman stepped out of the car as soon as the engine stopped.

The dogs barked for a while till they realized who it was and ran to him. Joshua chuckled as he knocked



on the door and his mother opened.

Ma Josh:ngwanake bathong!look at you all grown..

He hugged his mother,

Joshua:Hey, I was just passing by...

Ma Josh:You are always busy bathong...

Joshua:I applied for a transfer here, hope it will be approved.

Ma Josh:You drove all the way from Maun to check on us?

Joshua:Mhmm..

And to check on someone. He thought to himself. His mother let him go and he walked inside the house. Life has been hectic on his part but he did come here when it was possible. He had last seen Marang around December and she had been making so much progress with the case and her ADHD. She didn't have a phone unfortunately † ♀but he just wanted her to heal with no distractions and all that.

It felt so good to be back home regardless.

Ma Josh: You should've told me, I would have made food for you.

Joshua: So extra plate ke ya mang?

Ma Josh: Dipotso tseo ke yes di botswang ke bana ba malapa a mangwe (those are questions asked by other people)

Joshua: (raising his hands) okay, let me go get my bag..

His mother smiled as he walked out. Joshua looked around and walked back into the house.

At the taxi rank

It was congested and obviously a lot of kids were just back from their Saturday study.

Phemelo slid her phone out of her dress pocket.

Marang:Phones are not allowed.

Phemelo shrugged.

Phemelo:We have our ways Rangz.

Phemelo typed on her phone as she looked around.  
A guy came behind her and wrapped his arms  
around Phemelo.

Phemelo:Baby(squealing)

Guy:Hey you..

Phemelo turned around and hugged him before she  
broke the hug she had with Theo.

Phemelo:You remember my best friend Marang..

Theo:Yes. I was here to say hi, the guys are waiting  
for me that side.

She pointed to the left and both girls glanced in that

direction.

Phemelo:Okay.(hugging him again)see you later okay?

Theo:Okay babe...

He kissed his cheek and walked away to where the boys were.

Phemelo:He has fine ass friends doesn't he?

Marang:Ijoo...Let's get a taxi and go..

Phemelo:The one in the cap is cute. His name starts with a B or something.

Marang:Phem Phem motho let's go...

Phemelo:I was jus saying. Are you sure you don't want to join us?

Marang:Nope...

They walked forward and Marang found a taxi. She said bye to Phemelo who got inside the next taxi.

## At Sunshine Orphanage

The taxi stopped and Marang paid the taxi fare as she stepped out. She opened the gate as the kids played around.

Kid:Maraaang!

She laughed as the kid as dusty as he was jumped on her, she picked him up.

Marang>Hello...

She put him down and walked to the house and greeted the caregivers. She walked to the room she shared with three more other girls and she put her bag down. She yawned and sat on the bed. Eat then wash then take pills and check Seeletso to help her. She got it. She yawned and placed her head on the pillow. Just thirty minutes would do.

## At Joshua's parents

Seeletso closed her books. Marang was supposed to be here around half two and now it was almost 3. How long was she doing her laundry??

She walked out of her room and passed her brother who was in the kitchen.

Seeletso:just say you missed mom's cooking.

Joshua:wa lapisa...how is form 5?

Seeletso:fine. They beat us for every silly mistake..Mxm!

Joshua:and then?

Seeletso:nothing. I'll be back...

She walked out of the house. She walked to the gate and pushed it open. She shooed the dogs away and she closed it. It was a walkable distance so she was going to see what was up. Tomorrow she would be too busy with other subjects than to focus on

mathematics. Joshua's wife ene bathong!

Minutes later Seeletso opened the gate and knocked. Okay they knew her here so it wasn't as if she was a stranger or anything.

Seeletso:Dumelang..

Caregiver:Hi, motho waago o robetse(your person is fast asleep)

Seeletso:I'm going to wake her up yoh!

Caregiver:You know the way.

She smiled and walked to the room. She knocked and one of the girls who share the room with Marang opened.

Her:Wa kgorotlha ebile(she is even snoring)

Seeletso:(laughing)hey..

Her:Hi, come in..

She walked inside and Marang was still in her

uniform.

Seeletso:Sleeping beauty wake up!

She shook her a couple of times as Marang turned to face the other way. She was shaken yet again and she reluctantly opened her eyes.

Marang:Ng ng(sleepy)

Seeletso:A dog is coming!

Marang's reflexes were quick to grasp that and she screamed. All the girls laughed once she stopped screaming and rubbed her eyes.

Marang:It's not funny(slowly)

Seeletso:You're late...

Marang:What's the time?

Seeletso:3pm..I'm scorched by the sun and wena you're getting your beauty sleep?

Marang:I lost track of time and(yawning) I was tired.



Seeletso:Change so that we can go.

Marang:I didn't do the laundry did I?

She asked herself over and over again. She doesn't remember doing it though.

Marang:Tomorrow then, it won't be dry on time..

Marang unzipped the long tunic and pulled it over her head.

Seeletso burst into laughter.

Marang:What?

Seeletso:Nothing, change mma..

She was still that tiny girl and the thought of Marang with her brother was hilarious right now. She looked like a literal kid next to him. She shook her head. At least the pimples were clearing up and you could see her perfect jawline and those tiny lips. She was so cute and everyone could see that. She didn't know

how Joshua was going to react seeing his supposed crush.

Marang wore the dress and her flip flops.

Seeletso:Keore some of us hate the long school dresses and you wear a long dress..

Marang:Should I get my books?

Seeletso:Please do..

Marang knelt to the ground and took out other notebooks till only she was left with the mathematics notebook and textbook.

Marang:we can go...

They walked out of the bedroom and Marang told her caregivers where she was going and where to find her if it gets late.

The two started walking to Seeletso's place.

Seeletso: You got your periods?

Marang: it was awkward, being the second month I started to get those.

Seeletso: Late bloomer but o sharp?

Marang: mhhm... Mrs Thuso explained everything to me..

Seeletso: do you have cravings?

Marang: Uh I don't remember but we'll see..

When they got there, Seeletso pushed the gate and Marang stood back.

Seeletso: They won't bite you, I always say this..

Marang: Okay (taking deep breaths)

She stepped inside and Seeletso closed the gate.

Seeletso: mama dished for you..

Marang:Her lamb roast.

Seeletso:She made stew today..

Marang:Still fine. I'll say thank you(pausing)this is a nice car.

Seeletso:When I start working, I'm going to get a car better than this mntase...

Marang:It's so nice and looks new..

Seeletso:Apparently it is..

She opened the door and they walked inside. Marang paused and her jaw dropped. Joshua put the plate down, staring at the human next to his sister.

Marang:Hiiii....

Joshua stood up and opened his arms for her. Don't let her think twice about this, he said over and over again in his head.

Marang placed the bag down and walked into his arms.

Marang:Hi and you didn't tell me(softly)

Joshua:Hello to you too sweetness...

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A bonus from me to you guys

## THE GAME

#30

At Joshua's parents

Marang's arms were around his waist and he still used the same cologne she remembered.

Marang:Hello..

Joshua chuckled as he looked down at her.

Joshua:You good?

Marang:yeah..

He let go of her and she moved a few steps away from him as she smiled shyly. She picked her bag and avoided Seeletso's gaze. Seeletso just made her way to her room and Joshua put his hands in his pocket.

Joshua:can I see you after you guys are done?

Marang:Sure..excuse me.

She walked to Seeletso's bedroom.

Seeletso:I'm not even going to ask..I have two hours to spare.

Marang:Okay.

She sat on Seeletso's carpet and removed her flip flops. She took her books out and Seeletso joined her on the carpet.

Seeletso:Which topic?

Marang Arang:Equations and using the quadratic formula..

Seeletso:O-k. Do you have practice questions?

Marang opened her bag and took out the sheet of paper. They had questions that the teacher had given out as practice.

Marang:here..

She handed them to Seeletso.

Seeletso:let's get solving. So it goes like this...

Meanwhile in the kitchen that was when it clicked who the extra plate was for. Shortly after he came, his parents left leaving him with his sisters and he didn't know Marang was coming.

Sara made her way to the kitchen.

Sara:I want ice cream.

Joshua:okay.

He took it out of the freezer and took out an ice cream bowl, dishing up for her.

At Prison



Lebo tied the orange jacket around her waist as she tended to the gardens there. Since she had protected their names she had been expecting them to send a good lawyer on her behalf but no, she was sentenced 15 years of jail time with no parole for the first ten years.

She could remember that day at court as if it was yesterday. Tears filled her eyes as she wiped the sheen of sweat on her forehead with her hands. She got the digging fork and started digging. Prison was horrible. The food and everything.

One of her cell mates joined her in the digging and they did that in silence.

Her: You have no parole serious?

Lebo: Mhmm..at least your crime was corruption..

She shrugged.

Her: One more year then parole akere I have been

behaving. There are other crimes I would rather not commit. I was sold out by my partners but it's okay.

Lebo:I think I'm going to die here all alone.

Her:it's a man's world mam. And why would you sell your only niece? When she is all successful she would've helped you but what do I know, I'm just a corrupt worker.

They kept on digging till her cell mate went to get the watering can.

Her:I think we cultivated enough.

Lebo placed the digging fork down and went to get a watering can too so they can start watering.

At Joshua's parents

Seeletso:we're done. You got it?

Marang closed her eyes and pictured everything they just did. She opened her eyes minutes later.

Marang:Yes. Thank you once again.

Seeletso:let's go eat..

Marang stood up and stretched before she followed Seeletso to the kitchen. Joshua's cologne was still hanging in the air when Marang opened the microwave. To think that she didn't even know how to use it let alone open it.

Seeletso:there is ice cream in the freezer if you want some..

Marang:I don't think I will have space for ice cream.

Seeletso:Kana wena, o ja o kare koko (you eat like a chicken)

Marang:Let's just eat..

Seeletso:I know you won't finish the food but anyway..(trailing off)

They sat on the couch and Seeletso scrolled through the channel list while Marang started eating. Mrs Colton was a good cook, her food always left her wanting more though she could finish the whole

plate. Seeletso settled on Mzansi Magic and started eating as she fed Marang the latest gossip.

Seeletso: Gatwe your friend Phemelo is dating this other guy, I forgot his name.

Marang: Theo..

Seeletso: that one.. that guy is a fuck boy, I'm scared for her..

Marang shrugged.

Marang: She listens to Raine more than she listens to me.

Seeletso: she is smart and I've seen her name on the list ya top ten but this guy is bad news.

Marang: The bad guys we see them on novels hela mme..

Seeletso: don't get me started on my book character crushes..

Marang: You got me hooked on novels and now I know a lot of things.

Seeletso: I'm a good sister aren't I (smiling)

Marang:And that book A court of Thorns and Roses..

Seeletso:Rhysand is thee best.

Marang:Tamlin is just urg but he was too controlling but he deserves happiness too.

Seeletso:we are not Tamlin stans. Girl don't.

Marang laughed as she had a few spoonfuls.

Seeletso:talk to her ray ray, please..

Marang:I will try. Monday morning.

Seeletso:thank you..next year do us proud.

Marang:Let us deal with form four first then we'll see.  
Where do you want to study?

Seeletso:if I can do exceptionally well I want to go to London.

Marang:wow!

Seeletso:I'll call you everyday..

Joshua made his way to the lounge in grey sweatpants and a grey tee.

Seeletso looked at Josh and Marang, it was time to excuse herself from this equation. She stood up and headed to the kitchen where she quickly placed the plate in the sink and headed to the bedroom.

Joshua sat next to her and she placed her plate on the glass table, Marang sat cross legged on the seat and looked at him. She didn't know if she was too naive last year or too trusting or maybe just out of place with everything, he was a fine looking guy. She could easily picture h8m as a novel character.

Joshua:What?

Marang:Nothing. How are you?

Joshua:Okay. I'm just happy that the treatment is going well along with the therapy.

Marang:Thank you once again. I don't know how to thank you. Honestly.

Joshua:Let me take you out for an ice cream date..

Marang:Ice cream?

Joshua:Yep. Right now, I'll be back let me go get my

car keys.

Before she could answer him he was already gone and she sat properly on the chair looking at her toenails. He came back with his car keys.

Joshua:Should we go?

Marang:Let me wear my shoes but you don't have to, Seeletso said there is ice cream in the fridge.

Joshua:I'm waiting sweetness..

Marang walked back to the room where she wore her shoes.

Seeletso:you're leaving?

Marang:O'm going out for ice cream..

Seeletso:turn around ke bone..

She turned around.

Seeletso:okay sharp. Take photos.

Marang:Bye I'll be back...

Marang found Joshua waiting for her and they walked to the car.

Marang:your car is nice..

Joshua:You'll test drive it when you get your driver's license..

Marang:After 2 years. That's a long time..

He opened the door for her and she got in.

Joshua handed her his phone and she looked at him.

Joshua:still the same password.

She placed her fingerprint on the screen and it unlocked. He jogged to his side and got inside. He fixed the rear view mirror and started the car.

Marang took off her shoes and went to his music app.

Marang:I get As and Bs by the way..



Joshua:You told me..(laughing)

Marang:when?

Joshua:two weeks ago when we talked on Seeletso's phone.

Marang:oh. It slipped my mind..

Joshua:I'm sure it did sweetness.

Marang:It did. Honestly and you could've told me you were coming still on that phone call.

Joshua:I also didn't know I was coming.

Marang:when are you leaving?

Joshua:Monday..

Marang:ooh. For the weekend?

Joshua:Yes. You still don't have a phone do you?

Marang:Nope. Life is peaceful that way.

Joshua:You don't want one?

Marang:Maybe next year..

The gate slid open and he reversed out of the yard. He joined the main road and drove off.

At town

Phemelo took selfies with Theo as they laughed while sucking on their milkshakes. Raine had said something funny as she scrunched her face at her boyfriend. It was honestly a chilled vibe there by Milky Lane. They were joined by some of Theoks friends.

Raine:Should I order something?

Phemelo:God no! I'm halfway through my milkshake tlheng...

Raine:Marang is missing out.

Guy:I saw her, she was with you earlier right Phem? The short stuff that was next to you?

Raine:she is short and cute..

Phemelo:That one..

Guy:Ah no the dress was too long..

Phemelo:do we look like we have a choice in the matter at school?

Theo:They don't..

Phemelo checked the time. Her curfew time was a bit far and she'll be home in time.

Meanwhile in the parking lot...

Joshua stepped out of the car and waited for Marang. He searched his pockets for his wallet while Marang held his phone and headsets. She got out and he locked the car.

Joshua:Have you ever been on an ice cream date?

Marang:Not that I remember. Unless of course it's Seeletso buying ice cream from KFC while I wait for her outside the shop.

Joshua:You should learn to order.

Marang:People still get to me..

Joshua:I'm here aren't I?

She shrugged with a smile as she walked besides him heading to Milky Lane.

They got there and Marang spotted Phemelo and her friends. Phemelo spotted her and she smiled and waved.

Joshua:Sit down while I order.

Marang:It's just ice cream..

Joshua:It varies..

Marang:let me see then..

He nodded and they went to the front. Marang looked around, it was all too much and some of it looked complicated.

Marang:Okay order. I'll sit down.

She walked away and sat down. She put his headsets on and listened to his music.

Meanwhile at the table murmurs passed around them.

Guy: Didn't you say she doesn't have a boyfriend?

Phemelo: I knew that she doesn't have a boyfriend. I have no idea who that is.

Raine looked at the guy, he was all muscle. She swore she could see his six pack underneath the tee he was wearing. Where did Marang find such a man? You could see he wasn't even a student. Levels!

Joshua sat opposite Marang and she removed the headsets.

Marang: The ice cream ya teng e nale dilo the dintsi hela, ga and tshwarise mala? (the ice cream has a lot of stuff, doesn't it give one a stomach ache?)

Joshua: Bathong no..

Marang:we are not used to such.

Joshua:And ai like the fact that you don't hide it.

Marang:I just hope I don't embarrass myself. Did I show you my best friend?

Joshua:I don't think so..

Marang:The one with the glasses.

Joshua glanced in the direction and he faced Marang.

Joshua:I see her..

Marang:Mhmm..

She picked his phone again and put the headsets on. She gave him the other one.

Marang:Listen to this song, besides it's your phone...

He put the earpiece in his ear as his eyes locked with hers and she looked at the phone screen. They were waiting for their order.

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## THE GAME

#31

At town

Joshua's phone beeped and reported a message as they listened to the song. At that exact moment their order arrived and Marang placed the phone down. It wasn't even her place to read his messages, he trusted her with his phone and she wasn't going to break that trust he had.

Marang:I should be home before seven..

Joshua:Ke to six..

Marang looked at the milkshake that had complicated designs of chocolate on top.

Marang:sure I won't get a stomach ache?

Joshua:if you do, your system is weak weak weak..

Marang:ae tlhe, ga ka tlwaela(no, I'm not used to this)

Joshua:try something new..

She picked the straw from the tray and dipped it inside. She crossed her fingers hoping she doesn't embarrass herself. Joshua brought his hands together watching her small lips suck on the straw, at that exact moment he wished he was the straw she was sucking on.

Marang's eyes moved up and she removed her lips.

Marang:it's not bad..I like it. What's it called?

Joshua:Some complicated name.

Marang:I like it. Thank you. Drink yours..

He did and just smiled at her making her face the other way.

Joshua:You're shy?



Marang:No..

She faced him again.

Joshua:How are you coping though?

Marang:Uh I miss mmaiye, a whole lot..I once passed by the house just that I don't know where the keys are.

Joshua:It gets better with time.

She bit the straw for a few seconds before she answered him.

Marang:I guess. Surprisingly I've started having nightmares..

Joshua listened to her attentively.

Marang:It started to click a few months ago, I was more of a fool, he raped me(holding back tears)

He was sure no one could hear their conversation because she naturally didn't have a loud voice.

He took her soft hands in his and rubbed them.

Joshua:Hey I'm here okay? It's okay to acknowledge what happened to you and to cry it out.

He let go of one hand and used his thumb to wipe her her tears away.

Joshua:Should we go?

Marang:I'm still enjoying this milkshake..

Joshua:if you say so..

Marang:How is Maun?

Joshua:far from home but so far so good, I'm sure I didn't tell you I was placed at Maun.

Marang:Seeletso and your mother did.

Joshua:the women in that house.

Marang:the wildlife e ntse jang?

Joshua:It's beautiful to be honest, the beautiful sunsets, sun rises...

Marang:I see the pictures from the library at school.

Joshua:You should visit really, it's beautiful.

Marang:one day..

Joshua:and the boat cruises..

Marang:Now I want to go to Maun, stop!

Joshua:okay mam..okay Marang!

Marang finished off her milkshake while Joshua's glass was half full.

Marang:You are not having that?

Joshua:I'm good.

She placed her empty glass in front of him and took his glass. She changed the straws and drank his.

Joshua:Now you love milkshakes.

Marang:You told me to try new things.

He laughed.

At the other table Raine stole glances at Marang and the guy she was.

Raine:I thought we were friends. She could've told us.

Phemelo:She is a very private person mme, I understand. When she was with us the last time at the library she barely said a full sentence, ga a modumo.

Raine:I understand though.

Theo:Should we go?

Phemelo:Sure..

Raine:Let's say bye to her.

Phemelo:Let her be Raine.

Phemelo looked over at Marang's table and she was all smiles. She smiled. She never saw this coming but if her friend was happy with this man, as much as it's wrong and it might be called defilement she was happy for her. I mean one has to have her first boyfriend, kiss and heartbreak. As long as they were playing it safe and she doesn't fall pregnant while at school she was okay. She had been performing so well at school and at some she had been astounded

that it was Marang whom she used to force to study.

Raine:Okay, let's go guys.

They stood up and one of Theo's friend looked at Marang. She was so cute and now that she wasn't in a school uniform you could see it. The fact that she was seeing a man way older than her didn't sit well with him. Anyone with eyes could see that the man was older than her but girls.

They walked to the taxi rank as they kept conversation.

Meanwhile at the ice cream shop the two stood up.

Joshua:I should drop you off home right.

Marang:My bag is at your house..

Joshua:Okay, let's go..

She walked in front of him while he walked closely behind her. Marang paused.

Marang:I think I forgot your phone..I'm sorry let me go get I-

Joshua threw the car keys her way.

Joshua:Let me go get it, unlock the car in the meantime.

He walked back to their table and it was still there. He picked it up and inspected it before he started to walk towards the car parking lot. She did unlock the car right? He unlocked the phone and saw the unread message. He opened it and deleted it. Fuck buddies who caught feelings. It was getting rather annoying. What he knew was that he wasn't going to ask Marang. She was still young and had to focus on her grades nothing more. He will just wait for two more years if she does agree. In his thoughts he was unaware of the person who was walking behind him.

Her:Hey you!

He turned and it had seemed as if the devil was working overtime today.

Joshua:Hello Dani.

Dani:So you blocked me?

Joshua:I'm not doing this with you Dani, have a good day.

Dani:I can report you for defilement.

Joshua:Go right ahead if it makes you sleep better at night.

He walked away and she quickly walked to him in her heels.

Dani:I'm sorry that's me being bitter, I'm sorry.

Joshua looked around the parking area till he spotted his car.

Joshua:Look, we slept together, it's been a year Dani. Move on, save whatever dignity you have left okay?

She paused and nodded.

Joshua:Don't make me hate you okay?

She hated it when he made her feel all mushy inside without even trying, he was more lighter and yes, definitely that August Alsina lookalike.

Dani:okay(softly)

Joshua:Good.

He walked to his car and opened the driver's door.

Joshua:You managed to open the car.

Marang:I pressed that button(showing him the button)

Joshua:When you close form 5 next year, I should teach you how to drive..

Marang bobbed her head to the sides.

Marang:I will think about it..



Joshua started the car and Marang fastened her seatbelt as he handed her back his phone.

At Joshua's parents

Ma Josh and Ra Josh were in the lounge watching a movie when the door opened. Marang walked in a bit embarrassed as Joshua's phone suddenly felt like hot coal in her hands.

Marang:Dumelang!

Ra Josh:Hello.. Joshua..

Joshua:Dad..

Ma Josh:How are you?

Marang:Okay. Good. Uhm...

Then she started walking more like running to Seeletso's room. Joshua looked at his parents and his mother just stood up leaving them there.

Ra Josh:Joshua?

Joshua:Rra?

Ra Josh:we can see you like her, honestly we can see that but please please ska mo imisa and don't find yourself o nale case ya defilement.

Joshua:I won't.

Ra Josh:And if you decide to date her, do right by her and don't mix her up with side chicks.

He said. Late last year his own wife nearly left him because contrary to what he thought, she already knew about the cheating and was prepared to walk away.

Joshua:Don't worry about it okay?

He said walking away to his room.

In Seeletso's room Marang put her books in the bag.

Seeletso:Did you take photos?

Marang:No..

Seeletso:do you have his phone password?

Marang:It's my fingerprint..

Seeletso:hee banna!(clapping her hands)

Marang:I think I have to return this phone and go..

Seeletso:why are you running?

Marang:I am not..Bye bye!

She walked out with her bag and walked to his room.  
She knocked on the door and he opened it.

Joshua:You're leaving?

Marang:Yes. Thank you for the ice cream and here is  
your phone..

She gave it to him and he held her hand and closed  
his bedroom door after stepping out.

Joshua:Let me walk you back, it's getting late and  
you aren't supposed to be walking alone.

Marang:it's a ten minute walk..

Joshua:Still..let's go.

They walked to the door as he got her bag.

Marang:Thanks.

Joshua:Mhmm..

As soon as they stepped out of the yard, they walked side by side and Marang stole glances at him. He was taking care of her as he would Seeletso and Sara and that was really nice. The fact that his family treated her like their own was beautiful.

Joshua:Marang?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:Do you have a boyfriend?

Marang:No. No. why are you asking?

Joshua:I will shoot straight to the point..

Marang's heart rate picked up as they maintained their pace while walking. It seemed like decades had passed when he finally spoke and his voice boomed in her ear.

Joshua: I-I think my soul has found it's equal in you.

Marang stopped moving and what he just said played over and over in her head. She looked at him and saw that it had taken a lot for him to say that. He wasn't smiling as usual and she deciphered what he said, "his soul found it's equal in her"

Joshua sucked in a deep breath and bit his lower lip waiting for her reply.

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## THE GAME

#32

On the way to Sunshine Orphanage

Marang innocently nodded as if he didn't say anything heart stopping. Her heart was beating furiously in her chest as she continued walking.

Joshua:Marang? Sa- fuck! Forget I said anything.

They walked in silence as Marang walked ahead of him while he was holding her bag. When they were a few house away from the orphanage she stopped and looked at him with a smile.

Marang:O ngadile?(are you sad?)

Joshua:No, keep walking.

Marang:Ng ng..

She waited for him and when he was next to her she flashed a cute smile at him.

Marang:are you sad Josh?

Joshua:Marang!

Marang:okay. You're sulking then..

She continued walking and stole glimpses at him as he walked behind her. She swore she could feel the butterflies the novels kept on talking about. He was brooding now. She stood by the gate and got her bag from him.

Marang:Let me give one of the kids the bag.

She called one of the kids and gave him her bag.

Marang:Thank you.

She faced Joshua and took his hand placing it one hers.

Marang:You did say we should keep walking..

Joshua:Mar-

Marang:a reye(let's go)

He relented as their hands intertwined and they kept on walking. It was the opposite of love at first sight like the books say, just seeing him for the first time today she realized that she had seen him in a different light and had pushed herself to believe he cared for her like a brother should though she had never had a brother.

Marang:So, you found your equal in me?(Smiling)

Joshua:I-

Marang:And you're tongue tied too, a whole doctor?

Joshua:Marang d-

Marang:And I think I'm the missing piece to your puzzle, so if that was your way of asking me to be your girlfriend then yes..

Joshua paused and stared at her. The sun's last rays



of the day shining on her face as she gave him the widest smile.

Joshua:Don't play like that...(in disbelief)

Marang:I'm not..

He let go of her hand and covered his mouth. This little human being actually said yes? She genuinely said yes..

He threw his head laughing in disbelief and shock before he wrapped his hands around her waist.

Joshua:Fuuck! You said yes..

She nodded with a small smile.

She was short though and it meant that he had to bend his knees to place his forehead onto hers. He picked her up and she wrapped her legs around his torso.

Joshua:Okay, baby girl?

Marang:Hmm...

Joshua:it feels so good saying this.

He licked his lips and pecked her small lips. Marang blinked and resisted the urge to touch her lips, she could see the happiness radiating from him, it was in the way he smiled and the way his eyes lit up when he looked at her. She had almost forgotten there were in the middle of the road when they saw an oncoming coming. He moved to the dusty side of the road and placed her down on her feet, keeping his hand around her waist. The feel of his large arm on her waist was comfortable, after what she went through one would think that she would be so scared of men but he was different, he knew her in and out and she didn't have to explain how she felt or why she felt that way.

Joshua:Thank you..

Marang:So..

Joshua:So I'm taking you out on a date tomorrow sweetness..

Marang turned to look at him.

Marang:Tomorrow?Ke nale washing tlherra..(I have

laundry)

Joshua:When will you be done?

Marang:around midday..

Joshua:A lunch date then sweetness, we'll talk then.

Marang:Okay..

He kissed her forehead before rubbing it with a smile and she blushed. He walked her back to the orphanage as they walked in silence holding hands. He stopped by the gate and kissed her hands.

Joshua:Goodnight sweetness.

Marang:Night(softly)

He let go of her and waited for her to open the gate, get inside and watched as she walked to the door. She waved at him with a tiny smile and she opened the door walking inside. He closed his eyes hoping he wasn't dreaming and started to walk home.

In the room Marang jumped on the bed and screamed into the pillow. One of her roommates looked at her.

Her:and then?

Marang screamed again and lifted her head.

Marang:ekete nka screamer gore yoh!

Her:Bathong what happened?

Marang breathed in and out.

Marang:Nothing, I had a milkshake.

Her:Bathong wena kana, did you finish it?

Marang:Mhmm...

Girl 2:she rarely finishes her food.

Marang:I need to take a bath...

She smelled her self and his cologne was on her.

Marang:On second thoughts I need to sleep.

Girl 3:It's not even 7am yet..

Marang:Ke nale washin..Boroko..

She removed her shoes and got undercover in her dress. She pulled it up and breathed in it, she forced her eyes closed. No nightmares today, only good dreams. Only good dreams.

At Joshua's parents

Joshua opened the door and walked straight to his room. He wished baby girl had a phone but she said she doesn't want one. He bit his lower lip. Not having a phone could be an advantage but it was such a disadvantage. She said yes now all he had to do was control himself. Like really control himself, she was underage and she needed to focus on school.

Nothing more, nothing less. He moved from the door and walked to the wardrobe, he took out his old phone, the one he used to use like two years ago, it wasn't old just that he upgraded.He could buy her a new one but she doesn't want a phone she said. He

heard her loud and clear.

He still couldn't believe it. Just like that? He never imagined she would see him in that light, he thought she saw a big brother and now...now..wow!

He placed the phone on the bed, he will buy her a SIM card tomorrow. He had to plan for their date too.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo sat in the couch in the middle as she watched a movie with her parents.

Phemelo:After this one we are watching another one...

Her father got the remote and switched off the tv.

Ra Phem:We have to talk Phemelo...

## THE GAME

#33

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo looked at her parents as they shared a look.

Ra Phem:I know we've had this talk before but I want us to talk about boys.

Phemelo shifted in her seat.

Ma Phem:You're 17 and you are still a teenager, you are bound to explore more and try stuff but..(pausing)you have a life ahead of you.

Phemelo:Ee mma.

Ma Phem:You shouldn't disturb your studies with boys or their nonsense. I met your dad at college..

Her father smiled.

Ma Phem:all I'm saying is that you shouldn't find yourself in a situation you are not supposed to be in. Your top priority should be school and your extra-curricular activities because you also excel at those. This stage is fun, you are smart and getting the grades but just a single boy can make you pregnant. You do biology wa tlhaloganya ngwanaka. We just want the best for you really, we don't want a case where things happen and it seems as if we never told you anything,

Ra Phem:exactly. Don't ruin your future for a boy who won't be there two years later, someone who will just do a hit and run, we understand these things and we lived through such in our times.

Phemelo:I understand.

Ra Phem:At this age you are also still underage for a lot of stuff, you have your form five and you want to be an engineer right? Focus on that my child. Wa jola Phemelo?(are you dating Phemelo?)

Her heart skipped several beats as she looked at



both of her parents.

Phemelo:No.

Ma Phem:Good. It should stay that way, we don't want you to ruin your future.

Phemelo:Ee mma.

She excused herself and made her way to the room where she removed her phone from the charger. It was on silent and she had found missed calls from Theo and Raine. She will call back again later.

The following morning

At Joshua's parents

Joshua made his way to the kitchen as he opened the cupboards.

Ma Josh:You are up early..

Joshua:Morning.

Ma Josh:What are you looking for?

Joshua:Food anything..

Ma Josh:For what?

Joshua:Uhm mother take out the chicken for me, fish, brea crumbs, bread, dressings and the whole charade. I'll be back..

He walked out and searched his pockets, he found the keys and wallet. He had to buy a few stuff for the picnic he was planning for her.

He made his way to the car while his mother shook her head and looked around. She had no idea what that boy was planning.

At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang started hanging the first batch of laundry along the line as the sun hit her face. She used her hand to cover her face before she bent down again to hang the wet clothes. She will be done by midday before he came along. So they were really dating like girlfriend boyfriend type of thing. Seeletso was going to laugh and she wasn't sure how Phemelo would react. She better keep it to herself for now. The disadvantage of it was that Joshua was leaving tomorrow and she had no idea when she was going to see him again. At least she could focus now and Mrs Thuso did have that boys' talk with her before she started form 4 so she knew all there is to know. She hoped.

The kids ran around as she peacefully did the rest of the laundry.

The day passed so fast and true to her word she was done by midday. Exhausted she walked back inside the house with the buckets. She needed a

bath and to decide what to wear. He once mentioned her wearing clothes that fit her and she wasn't sure she had clothes that fit her but she will see.

She grabbed her stuff once she had put the buckets away and walked into the bathroom where she filled the bathtub. A few minutes then she will be clean, it's not like she is dirty right?

After some time she walked back into the room and opened the wardrobe where she looked for clothes. This was a date? Her tummy did flips as she picked out a white summer dress, the one she had been reluctant to wear along with her nice black sandals. This would do.

Meanwhile Joshua at home put food in the basket and baby girl will just get angry but he bought a new phone for her along with a SIM card. He had to call her, honestly.

His mother walked inside the kitchen.

Ma Josh: You cooked and now a basket? Who is she?

Joshua: Someone.

Ma Josh: do we know her?

Joshua: Maybe..

Seeletso walked into the kitchen.

Seeletso: picnic? Ehe ke mogatse Marang..(it's Marang's husband)

Joshua: Seeletso wa swaba!

Ma Josh: It's Marang?

Seeletso: Toodles, I have a chemistry exam to study for.

She walked away and Ma Josh looked at her son.

Joshua: Mother don't start. I know, I know and I'll be responsible. She's still a baby and I'm putting her

first, above everything.

His mother smiled,

Ma Josh:I know we raised you right..

She walked away and he sighed.

Joshua walked to the car and placed the basket there. It had everything they needed including the glasses and plates. The blanket was in the car along with the pillows and he walked to the bedroom where he picked the little gift bag that had the new phone and it's accessories. He had to make the most of this day because he was leaving the next day.

He got inside the car and started the car. The gate slid open and he reversed before he joined the main road.

At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang waited anxiously for Joshua. Of course she said she was going out but not with who. She would get in a lot of trouble for that and she thought that she would get Joshua in a lot of trouble too. She stood up and walked to the door where she looked around. She saw his car a few houses away and she said her goodbye and walked out.

She walked to where the car was and he opened the door for her. She got inside and closed the door.

Marang:Hii..

Joshua:Hey sweetness..

She closed her eyes and opened them again with a small smile adorning her beautiful features.

Marang:Where are we going?

Joshua:When should I bring you back?

Marang:before six..

Joshua:Okay mam.

He lightly kissed her cheek before his car sped off and Marang wore her seatbelt. She watched him drive and he was just in shorts and a white tee, now it was like they discussed what to wear.

Joshua:You look beautiful.

Marang:thanks.

She leaned back and on her seat and looked at him. He looked at her while she looked at him. Like always he was supposed to hand her his phone along with the headsets so she can listen to music.

Joshua:At the back there is a gift bag.

Marang:Before I open it, you don't have to.

Joshua:I know..

She turned and extended her hand. It was short.

Marang:too far Josh..



He joined another lane and he extended his hand to grab the gift bag. He placed it on her lap and she gazed up at him first.

Marang:what's inside?

Joshua:Open it..

She slowly opened it and she gasped.

Marang:A brand new phone? B-bu-but you didn't have to. I'm okay without a phone.

Joshua:and how will I talk to you love?

Marang:You're right though but it didn't have to be expensive..

Marang took out the phone and looked at it, it had a shiny pink case and all.

Joshua:I charged it and registered the SIM card.

Marang:Josh..

Joshua:I didn't say you should be on Facebook and

WhatsApp..

Marang:I won't..

Joshua:I still like you as innocent as you are..

Marang nodded. He honestly didn't have to get her a new phone.

Joshua:Do you know how to use an atm?

Marang:Ng ng..

He turned as he kept on driving.

Marang:how do you switch it on?

He showed her and she pressed the button till it switched on. She stared at it once again, he didn't have to get her a new smartphone.

Joshua found a parking spot while Marang held the phone. It didn't have passwords so she won't forget any.

Joshua:I charged it earlier.

He got his phone and started pressing it then a message reported on Marang's new phone.

Marang:You(pausing)You sent money?

Joshua stepped out of the car and she got out following him, he locked the car and she increased her pace to catch up with him. When she did she took his hand as they walked to the atm.

There was no queue and they both got inside the atm cubicle.

Joshua:Stand in front of me o bone..

She did and looked at the screen.

Joshua:I sent you an ewallet and this is how you do it, follow the instructions on the screen okay babe?

Marang:Okay.

Joshua:Start by pressing this button ya the card less withdrawals..

Marang:Okay..

She read the instructions on the screen as she pressed the buttons.

Marang:Gatwe phone number..

He spelt out her new phone number. She pressed again and then pressed the numbers for the pin.

Joshua:Withdraw all the money.

Marang:okay..

She did and then turned to face him, she grinned.

Marang:I did it. So what do I do with the money.

Joshua:It's yours.

Marang:This is a lot Josh..

Joshua:It's not..let's go...

They stepped out and walked to where the car was. Marang held the phone and money in her hands. What was she going to use all this money for?

Joshua:Marang P200 is not a lot and I just wanted to show you how to use an atm.

He opened the car door for her and she got inside while he walked to his side. As soon as he got inside the car he handed her his phone and she placed hers on his lap. She put her fingerprint and once it unlocked she put on the headsets and leaned back on the seat.

Somewhere in Francistown

Joshua parked his car under the tree as he looked around, the spot was private and secluded, it had a beautiful green scenery.

Joshua:We've arrived my love..

Marang:It's beautiful, I've never been here before..

Joshua:I know..

She got out of the car and he picked the basket and the blanket. She followed him to where he was walking to and he placed the basket down.

He laid the blanket down and walked back to the car to get the pillows.

Marang: This is the lunch date you talked about yesterday.

After he placed the pillows down he held her from behind.

Joshua: A picnic my love.

Marang: Wow! Thi-this is nice. Thank you.

Joshua: Don't thank me yet.

He let go of her waist and helped her sit down before he followed suit.

Marang: Bathong this is nice tlherra aaaah!

He laughed opening the basket and took out the glasses and plates along with the food.

Marang:Your mother cooked? I love the food she cooks.

Joshua gave her a blank look.

Joshua:You doubt my cooking skills.

Marang:I haven't tasted your food yet..

He laughed as he started dishing for her.

An hour later Marang's head was on his stomach as she told him about school and everything. She surprised herself at how open she was to him and she didn't leave out a single detail except of course if she forgot.

Joshua:You want my opinion?

Marang:Mmmh..

Joshua:Don't let your friends influence you in doing anything you're not comfortable in doing, don't change sweetness okay?

She nodded.

Joshua:I'm serious here Marang, ga ke batle go utlwa dikgangnyana(I don't want to hear small petty issues)

Marang:Ee rra..

Joshua:Good..

He kissed her forehead and held her hand, playing with her fingers.

Marang:Did you have a girlfriend before?

Joshua:Not a girlfriend per say but something along those lines.

Marang nodded.

Joshua:Just focus on school, nothing else okay? Don't let me make you fail at school, you've come so far with your progress and everything.



Marang:I still don't know what I want to do when I finish school.

Joshua:You will know with time. Did you get any nightmares yesterday?

She shook her head.

Joshua:Whatever that's bothering you tell me okay babe?

Marang:Okay..

Moments later, Marang just blurted it out.

Marang:You are a good cook..

Joshua:Really?

She nodded..

Joshua:Next time when I come over I'll teach you.

Marang:Okay, deal.

It was peaceful at this exact moment. She smiled and turned on her side as she looked up at him and

laughed softly.

Joshua:what?

Marang:nothing..

Joshua held her chin and bit his lower lip. Just 2 years he told himself over and over again.

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## THE GAME

#34

At the picnic

Marang sat on his stomach as he told her about his line of work. She didn't know that being a doctor was that hectic.

Joshua:What you saw me doing at the hospital that time was nothing, I rarely sleep babe..

Marang:aren't you afraid to give a wrong prescription?

Joshua:Look at you and I can't believe you told me you were dumb.

Marang:That was a year ago. Thank you again, I think I'm dealing with the ADHD. I read more about it at the school library. Thank you..

Joshua placed his hands behind her neck and pulled her face towards his. His warm breath hit her lips

and she parted her lips looking into his eyes. His lips gently touched her tiny lips and she closed her eyes.

He parted her lips gently with his tongue and bit her lower lip as she placed her hands over the hard planes of his chest. He was kissing her, her heart alerted her and her brain went all mushy as her heart went into a crazy frenzy beating out of her chest.

Joshua's warm breath hit her cheek as he whispered against her ear.

Joshua:Let me..

His lips found hers now as his grip on her neck tightened but it wasn't too tight to hurt her. She did as he did and in seconds they were lost in a kiss, her first kiss. It was slow and unhurried, like they had all the time in the world. Joshua broke it and licked his lips, he could feel other parts of his anatomy reacting to the kiss and the fact that she was sitting right on top of him. Her eyelids fluttered open and she held back from touching her lips. Joshua pecked

her lips and what was meant to be a mere peck on her lips turned into another kiss, she caught up fast. His other hand rested on the small of her back and she was the one to break the kiss first. This time she touched her lips and locked eyes with him. He gave her a heart stopping smile and she found herself smiling with her head on his chest. This gentleman here didn't even ask her for permission to kiss her, he just did...

Joshua:We should probably drive back baby girl.

Marang:How long have we been here?

Joshua:I'm not sure..do you want ice cream on the way back?

Marang:It's okay. You're leaving what time?

Joshua:Early morning around six..I have an idea.

Marang:What?

Joshua:I'll drop you off in the morning at school.

Marang:You've done so much and I still have transport money to school, your mother takes me to

school if she is in the mood to take Seeletso to school.

Joshua:I'll drop both of you guys then..

Marang:Joshua...

Joshua:Please, I don't know when I'll be back because of my busy schedule and the long drive from Maun to Francistown.

Marang:Okay..

Joshua:Thank you..

She got off him and stretched her body. The dress moved up a bit as she did so. A yawn escaped her lips and she bent down to put the things back in the basket. Joshua stood up and she just picked the pillows, Marang made her way to the car while Josh picked the blanket and pillows. Their phones were in the car so he didn't leave anything behind. He found baby girl comfortable in the car with his phone in her hands and headsets on. He kissed her cheek and she smiled wearing the seatbelt.

Joshua:A se gore ke go neele phone yame?(Isn't it better that I give you my phone?)

Marang removed one headset and smiled. She couldn't stop smiling.

Marang:It's okay. I just love your songs.

Joshua:I'll give you my Apple Music account so you can listen to the songs.

She had no idea why he was talking about but she just nodded and he started the car.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo closed her books. She was done studying for the day. Finally! She was going to ace that mathematics exam. As she walked to her bed, she wondered why Marang still didn't have a phone, she would've been talking to her right now. When she was with Raine and the guys she was pretending not to care but deep down she wanted to know who

Marang was with yesterday.

She walked out of the house and made her way to the kitchen.

Phemelo:Mom?

Ma Phem:Yes?

Phemelo:I want to check on Marang...

Ma Phem:What's wrong with her?

Phemelo:ao batho mama...

Ma Phem:Nna your friend o ntlhomola pelo..(I pity her)she always has that sad look in her eyes and she is always quiet. We heard about the case but she never talked about it. Did she tell you?

Phemelo:I didn't want to raise it in case she cries and gets sad all over again.

Ma Phem:I honestly wished she would've opened up more, me and your dad would've represented her well and that woman would've gotten life imprisonment instead of a measly 15 years. Okay.



When will you be back?

Phemelo:Before 7..

Ma Phem:Take your phone with you.

Phemelo:Alright mom...

Phemelo walked to the bedroom and got her phone and taxi money. She said bye to her mother and walked out.

At Sunshine Orphanage

Joshua parked his car a few houses away.

Joshua:We'll talk okay?

Marang:Thank you so much. Bye.

She kissed his cheek and he just held her neck to kiss her lips.

Joshua:Bye sweetness.

She got out of the car holding the P200 note and the gift bag that had her phone and it's accessories.

She walked to the orphanage and his car was still there. She waved at him with a smile and she opened the gate. She looked around and it was quiet. She opened the door and quickly made her way to the bedroom where she got her money box from under the bed and she shook it. It was all coins. She put the note inside and she removed the phone from the gift bag. She clicked on the contacts and she found his number, Seeletso's number and his mother's number. Those were the only contacts she needed anyways.

How was she going to explain where she got the phone from? She had no idea.

She changed clothes and wore the dress from yesterday and her flip flops. She held the smart phone. It was nice and she always saw how Seeletso

and Phemelo used their phones to take pictures. She will learn but it was nice. She threw it on the bed and walked out of the house. Her caregivers opened the gate.

Caregiver:you're back.

Marang:Ee mma...I'm going to water the small garden at the back.

She walked to the backyard and filled the watering can with water before she started to water. When she was done with that task she got the clothes from the washing line, then came the sorting and everyone had to iron their uniforms before bed today. They were just one happy family here and it was peaceful too.

Meanwhile Phemelo opened the gate and she spotted Marang who was walking to the door holding the clothes.

Phemelo:Marang!

Marang turned and was surprised to find Phemelo here.

Phemelo:Let me go put the clothes away then..

She walked inside the house and came back minutes later.

Phemelo waited by the shade. Marang smiled at her.

Marang:Hey, let me bring chairs.

Marang walked back inside and came out with two plastic chairs.

They sat down under the shade and Phemelo gave Marang a look.

Marang:What?

Phemelo:And you didn't tell me..

Marang:tell you what? I'm not sure that I'm following..

Phemelo:That you have a boyfriend..

Marang:I do?

Phemelo:Don't act dumb, look at that smile.

Marang laughed.

Marang:Tswa mo nna mma...

Phemelo:As long as you are happy and okay.

Marang:I am...

Phemelo:What's his name?

Marang:why?

Phemelo:So that if he tries anything I can put him in his place..

Marang:wena:(laughing)His mother will do that.

Phemelo's jaw dropped.

Phemelo:You know his mother?

Marang shrugged.

Marang:Yeah...

Phemelo:Ijoo!bajada!

Marang:Ehe before I forget..that guy you are seeing

Theo..

Phemelo:What about him?

Marang:be careful of him, gatwe ke fuckboy kana gatweng...yeah that.

Phemelo:Those are just rumors. That guy o sharpo.

Marang:But please be safe tlhemma...

Phemelo:sure sure Rangz...tell me about your boy..

Marang:It's still new but yeah we're are okay..

Phemelo dropped the subject it seemed as if Marang didn't want to talk about it. Who would've thought the quiet and reserved Marang would bag herself a hottie as a boyfriend.

That evening

At the Colton's

Joshua went through his contacts as he blocked and deleted some. Mostly fuck buddies. He spent some time in his room thinking about it and of course a man needed sex but what if he says Marang's name in the throes of ecstasy? Women were vicious creatures and he wouldn't want any of them attacking Marang. It was all up to him to protect her innocence and keep her away from trouble. If she does find out he will be ruining her for life. Her innocence gets to him and imagine her failing because she found out he said he loved her and he is sleeping with another woman older than her and she cries herself to sleep.

The child needed to focus and he wasn't going to distract her. The door opened to his bedroom door and his father walked in. His relationship with his father has improved drastically and he wasn't complaining, not at all.

Ra Josh:Your mother told me..

Joshua nodded. He knew obviously everyone in the house was going to know.

Ra Josh: Joshua you are dealing with a minor, she is sweet and innocent. Don't be the reason why she hates love when it is something to be cherished. If you are going to do something on the side make sure she doesn't find out, that is going to break her and guess who will pick up the pieces? Your sister and mother because they are so close with her and we regard her as family. She will hate them too. Wait for her, don't find yourself in prison because you couldn't wait a mere 2 years.

Joshua: Ka utlwa...

Ra Joshua: Don't get her pregnant, you already have a life and you are working but she hasn't even started university yet, a baby will delay her studies at this point. Ke tseela gore o motona wa nkutlwa. Cheating is the very thing that destroys relationships and marriages. The strongest of marriages have been destroyed by just one night of cheating and nothing was ever the same after that. It's hard to rebuild broken trust, some couples spend times



building together making a home and cheating is a drawback. The biggest drawback. You'll spend nights arguing and investigating your partner instead of focusing on important things and you'll be asking yourself why you can't be like this couple or that couple e le wena o itirileng dilo.

Joshua nodded. He heard his father loud and clear.

Ra Josh: Take care of our daughter in law or else your mother will be on your case and trust me that woman can be vicious if she wished to. She loves Marang like her own and would take her side over yours any other day.

His father walked out and Joshua breathed into his hands. This was going to be the longest 2 years of his entire existence. This celibacy but he loved her, he chuckled. Who knew he would fall for a sixteen year old.

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3 MONTHS LATER

## THE GAME

#35

### At The Coltons

Seeletso ate her pop corn as she talked to her mother.

Seeletso:Did your daughter-in-law tell you?

Ma Josh threw a pillow at Seeletso who laughed covering her face.

Seeletso:Anyways she has the best sister-in-law so it's a must.

Ma Josh:kante wena o itlhela o bua eng?

Seeletso shrugged.

Seeletso:as I was saying, you know that tomorrow is the school's annual prize giving ceremony right?

Ma Josh: You always tell me and besides I have to be there..

Seeletso: Marang will be scooping three or is it five?

Ma Josh: You lie!

Seeletso: Ka Modimo (on God!)

Ma Josh: Does she have anyone to take the prizes for her?

Seeletso: She said she asked Mrs Thuso...

Ma Josh: That's still okay..

Seeletso: You'll see tomorrow at school akere you have a smart daughter and daughter-in-law.

This time her mother hit her face with the pillow. Ma Josh knew that Joshua was coming for the Independence holidays, apparently there was a shortage of staff back in Maun so his transfer was not approved at all. They had accepted that and he hasn't been home in three months. He had a busy schedule, she saw it with her husband who worked tirelessly. She guessed it was their passion to be

doctors and they did it with their all.

Seeletso left her mother in the lounge as she walked to the bedroom. After the Independence holidays she was finally writing her finals and then she will be done with school. In the meantime she had to study and study hard.

She placed the bowl of popcorn on the mat and she dialed Marang. She was sure she was already home. She answered immediately and she took out her notebook.

Seeletso: You said you wanted help with stoichemistry.

Marang: Mhmm, let me put you on loudspeaker and get my notebook.

Seeletso: you see that a phone makes things easier plus ke dira revision ka wena.

Marang: Thank you so much, you have no idea how much you help me.

Seeletso:soon that BB will be an AA or A\*A\* for your double sciences.

Marang:the little I'm getting is a lot though.

Seeletso laughed. Joshua's wife was too modest.

Marang:Did I say anything funny?

Seeletso:Not at all, you are always reading mma..

Marang:I don't grasp concepts that easily so I have to always read..

Seeletso:You are smart, I mean you are getting prizes tomorrow.

Marang:Ijoo!

Seeletso:I'm going to give mom my phone so she can take photos of us and we need selfies, I mean when I'm abroad you'll tell people that you know thee Seeletso Colton.

Marang:Did they tell you that you are annoying?

Seeletso:I'm older than you Ray ray yoh! Le roga bagolo(you are insulting elders)

Marang:Let's start, I have my notebook and textbook..

Seeletso:Mole concept first then the Avogadro's constant le the formulas.

Marang:Yeah, I see the notes..

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo was all giddy and excited. She was the best student in the school and her parents couldn't be more proud. This was exciting and she couldn't hold it all in. She sat cross legged on the bed as she texted back and forth with Theo. He had biter her to a house party on Saturday and Raine was coming, she wanted to ask Marang if she would land the party but she knew she would say no.

Phemelo:I'll see what to do. I will give you the final verdict Saturday morning.

Theo:Okay, can't wait to see you baby girl and congratulations on the prizes you are getting

tomorrow.

Phemelo laughed. Theo was better than her ex, that one cheated on her because she had said she wasn't ready for sex but so far Theo hasn't broached that subject, she would land and she deserved to live a little after a stressful term besides the following week was the mid-term break plus Independence holidays so it was only this time.

Phemelo: Thank you baby I love you..

Theo: I love you more Phem bear

She blushed and placed her phone down. She tried calling Marang, she did find out she had a phone and whoa! Whoa! Her boyfriend went all out. She couldn't believe that she got a whole iPhone and she didn't know she had a phone that had the best picture quality and all. At times Marang was too slow. She pestered her on and on about being on WhatsApp but she refused saying that if she dared her



boyfriend might take her phone.

Marang's line was busy. She sent a message instead and hoped that she would get it and respond. It took a lot for Marang to even tell her her boyfriend's name. She said Joshua but she never said the last name. Marang thought.

At Sunshine Orphanage

Two hours later Marang looked at her colorful notes.

Marang:I will read this again and call if I get stuck.

Seeletso:Do you want to be a doctor like...

She paused. She almost said like your husband. She wanted to laugh so bad, they looked cute together but no, her brother was...and imagine them doi-yoh yoh she should stop, she shouldn't even think about it.

Marang:like how?

Seeletso:forget it. Mama is picking you tomorrow, give her your phone too she will come with it so we can take pictures with that. I can't believe you have an expensive phone just like that.

Marang:I honestly didn't ask him to buy it..

Seeletso:I'm just kidding ray ray yoh, it's yours.

Marang:We'll talk tomorrow. Bye,

Seeletso hung up and Marang saw the message from Phemelo. She replied and tried calling Joshua. His phone wasn't going through. She sighed as she went to the calendar and saw the date she marked. He was all about her and to think he gave her P1000 every month. She didn't know what to do with the money honestly. She looked around and her roommates were asleep. She pulled the money box from under her bed and opened it. She started counting the notes and some of the coins. She had like P2600 and his birthday was on the third of October. He was going to be 24. He was old, old, old, old.

She put the back in the box and pushed it underneath the bed. She walked to the sitting room where she got the papers for specials and walked with them to her room. She sat cross legged on the bed and paged through. She didn't like going to town alone so she will ask Seeletso to accompany her to buy something. Anything.

She sent him a message and placed the papers on the floor, her phone under the pillow and walked barefoot to the switch where she switched off the lights. She got undercover and she thought back to the conversation she once had with Phemelo and Raine. She didn't know how she agreed to join them at the library..

She shook her head and closed her eyes.

At the Colton's

The pit bulls barked as a car flashed its headlights on the gate around midnight. He hit the hooter and the dogs barked some more. He was sure they had activated the alarm and he was tired. That drive drained him out. He was on leave and he wanted to sleep, just rest this whole week.

Ra Joshua got out of the house holding a baseball bat and he walked to the gate. He recognized the car and he opened the gate. The car drove inside and Ra Joshua closed the gate. A tired Joshua got out of the car as he yawned. His phone battery was dead and he just needed to sleep. He closed the door and locked the car.

Ra Josh:You didn't say you were visiting.

Joshua:It wa(yawning) spur of the moment thing, I wasn't sure if I should come tomorrow evening or today..

Ra Josh:You look tired.

Joshua:non-stop shifts and calls.(yawning and stretching)

He held his phone in his hands as he made his way to the house in sweats and a loose tee along with flip flops.

He didn't even close the door to his room fully when he lay on it exhausted and burnt out. And he was gone just like that.

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Thank you for the shares and comments family

## THE GAME

#36

The following morning

At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang hummed to the song that was playing in her headsets when she felt someone touch her shoulder. She removed her headsets and beamed.

Marang:Dumelang.

Mrs Thuso:Morning...what time does the ceremony start?

Marang:Around ten, thank you so much for doing this. Thank you...

Mrs Thuso:I'm proud of you, you've come so far ever since the incident.

Marang:I guess therapy did help.

Mrs Thuso:I did tell you that if you really want something to work, it will work in your favor. Give me a hug.

Marang hugged her as her social worker grinned.

Mrs Thuso:You are making me proud. You remind me of my children and how proud they used to make me, they are old now and feel I nag too much.

Marang:I'm sure they love you so much.

Mrs Thuso:Let me go home and get ready, what time?

Marang:Around ten..

Mrs Thuso started ululating and Marang blushed with a little smile on her face. Black women and always singing praises when they were happy.

Mrs Thuso:I will see you.

Marang nodded and she checked her phone in her pocket. The elaborate lies she spouted in regards to

where it came from where top tier. Joshua just had to buy an expensive phone.

Speaking of him, she checked her phone for any messages from him and there was nothing. She drank her glass of water and placed the dishes where they were supposed to be, she rubbed her hands against the long tunic and she picked her phone again. He hadn't responded. He was most probably doing the night shift. He got so busy that he would fall asleep talking to her sometimes. This was really something he was passionate about. If only she can find out what she was passionate about that she did it diligently.

At the Coltons

Seeletso ran to the car where she put her bag.

Seeletso:mama?

Ma Josh:yes?



Seeletso:is dad coming?

Ma Josh:he will be there he promised you akere?

Seeletso:I want photos mama.

Ma Josh:wa lapisa waitse..

Seeletso shrugged walking to the kitchen and she stood on her tip toes picking a lunch box. She opened the freezer and just got two russians to put them in the microwave. She was sure her brother's wife didn't eat. She didn't eat breakfast everyday that one.

She got started on the sandwiches while the russians were microwaving.

Minutes later she was done and she got the juice from the pantry.

Seeletso:mama don't forget to pick ngwetsi ya gago.(to pick your daughter-in-law)

Ma Josh:Wa swaba wena Seeletso.

Seeletso:It's the truth mama, you'll come with my school bag and phone akere? Pictures mama and wear that dress that shows your figure.

Her father walked inside the kitchen and pointedly glared at Seeletso.

Seeletso:Dad you have a beautiful wife.

Ma Josh:One day you'll find her crying.

Seeletso:that's my cue to leave, le a nthreatenisa lona akere(you are threatening me now)

She picked the food and walked to the car with it leaving her parents in there. Joshua was here, she clapped her hands. She is single and she has to watch her brother simp over Marang. The worst torture he has ever made her endure. She shook her head as she walked back to the house and made her way to his room. He was fast asleep with clothes on. She let him be, besides he sends her money if she asks him nicely.

Seeletso:mama shouldn't we get going?

Ma Josh:Okay,okay...

She grabbed her car keys and made her way to the car. Seeletso sat in the front and buckled up. The gate opened and her mother adjusted the rear view mirror reversing the car.

Minutes later the car was hooting in front of the orphanage and Marang said bye to her caregivers as she walked to the car. She had combed her short afro hair nicely and it was shiny too.

She got in the back.

Marang:Dumelang..

Ma Josh:hello child, you got everything?

Marang:I think so. Thank you.

Ma Josh:Bathong! You always say thank you, it's nothing. We are family now Marang(smiling)

Marang:Okay..

Seeletso:I brought food, the lunchbox there at the

back motho wa motho..

She said cockily. Her mother shook her head. She gave up when it came to this child.

After what seemed like 20 minutes, her mother's car parked by the gate. Marang got the juice and left her phone.

Seeletso:leave the bag too, we are not doing anything today. Tlogela tlhemma.

Ma Josh:Don't let her bully you.

Seeletso:mama I'm not a bully yoh, bully ke dilo tsa makgoa(bullying are things done by English people)

Ma Josh laughed as Marang relented and left her bag.

Seeletso:see? It wasn't hard. Mama will be back, relax. I know this school. I got this.

Ma Josh:Bye girls.

Both:Byyeee!

She drove away just as Phemelo stepped out of the taxi. Her mother was coming for the ceremony later. She spotted Marang with the form 5 who was the smartest. She half ran to them as she called Marang's name.

They stopped and she caught up to them

Marang:Hey Phem. Phem this is Seeletso, Seeletso here is Phemelo.

Phemelo:Nice to meet you.

Seeletso:likewise, I heard a lot about you.

Phemelo:Good things I hope.

Seeletso shrugged.

Seeletso:I'll find you when mom comes Ray ray and I think you should really come.

Marang frowned in confusion.

Marang:I don't follow.

Seeletso:Ijoo. Bye girls...

She walked away leaving them.

Phemelo:You know her and you didn't say? I never see you with her in school..

Marang:She helps me when she has time and congratulations.

Phemelo curtsied with a huge smile.

Marang:You are smart and I'm sure your parents are proud.

Phemelo:Very..

Marang:I am still not changing my mind about the house party Phem, shouldn't you like ask for permission?

Phemelo:They will never allow me to.

They walked inside the school.

Marang:I don't think you should go.

Phemelo:Pretty please.

Marang shook her head. There will be men and the only males she felt safe around were Joshua's dad and Josh and the kids at the orphanage. Well most of her classmates didn't speak to her, they just did group assignments together.

Marang:Ng ng, Raine should not be going.

Phemelo:I have a feeling you hate Raine.

Marang:I don't, she is just too much.

Phemelo:There is nothing I can do to change your mind?

Marang:I don't think so...

Phemelo:I tried. So about what he talked about that time in the library?

Marang:I don't want to think about it Phemelo yoh, today is a nice day friend..

Phemelo:You do know you are dating an older guy unlike some of us and he probably gets it from someone else because you can't.

Marang sighed, as they walked to her class.

Marang: We'll see. Talk later Phem Phem.

## At the Coltons

Joshua finally woke up and he looked around the room, he needed a shower and to eat. How the hell did he drive from Maun to Francistown? He remembered, it was all energy drinks and look at him now.

He sat upright and picked his phone. It was off, he didn't even charge it. He stood up to go charge his phone before he headed to the bathroom for a shower. He tried to remember the reason why he had risked an accident when he was fatigued. The warm water hit his head as he closed his eyes. His mind was definitely not here. It was not.



When he was done, he stood in front of the mirror and started to shave his chin. He stared at his reflection, he looked better. He didn't know why the reason didn't click but he knew it involved baby girl and she told him because she was excited. He placed his hands against the sink, he should stop doing night shifts but then he had a reason for taking them. He looked at the mirror when it suddenly clicked.

Joshua: Fuck!

He finished shaving and he washed his face before he applied some aftershave, his clothes were in the car and fuck! fuck!

He wore his sweatpants and looked for his car keys. He walked to the car where he unlocked and got his suitcase.

He passed his mother and he said a quick hi as he proceeded to his room.

He changed into what he would term as decent clothing and he brushed his hair, sprayed his cologne and wore his watch, he was okay.

He walked out and he saw his parents. Both of them.

Ra Josh:hee banna!

Ma Josh:I dropped off Sara at pre-school and you want to join us?

Joshua:I'll be right behind you.

Ma Josh:You look good by the way..

Ra Josh:o re kgamisa cologne(the cologne is suffocating)

Joshua laughed.

Ma Josh:We are leaving, bye.

Joshua:I'll lock up.

His parents walked out in their best clothes. Seeletso was making them proud and he was proud of her, she has always been smart but then his baby girl. He smiled as he walked back to the bedroom where he checked his phone. He switched it on and it was charging, he should probably charge it in the car...

He unlocked it and waited a few minutes as messages started to report. Her message popped up along with those calls he missed.

Baby Colton:Hey, I just wanted to say night since your phone wasn't going through. I love you

She wasn't holding her phone. He specifically told her not to take it to school but since today was prize giving, it would've been an exception. She was too cute, she didn't even ask silly questions like if he

was cheating or anything of that sort. He was not cheating on her, of course he was tempted sometimes but the night shifts were the welcoming distraction he needed. He was too busy to do anything and he thanked God he survived till now. He would be patient with her, breaking her would be him breaking himself. He got the phone charging cable, his wallet was in the car and he closed his suitcase. He bought her stuff whenever he got time to go out.

He walked out of the bedroom and got the keys by the tv stand before he walked out and locked the door. He didn't know how she was going to react.

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## THE GAME

#37

At Mater Spei College

The tents had been set up and it was clean as the parents started to arrive. Seeletso on the other hand made her way to Marang's class.

Seeletso:Ray ray wee?

Marang looked up at her, she had been lost in thought once again.

Seeletso:Mama is here..

Marang:Oh...

She stood up and walked to the door.

Seeletso:I'm not sure, the parents have started

arriving so I think mama is here.

They walked to the parking lot and Seeletso looked around. It took her a few minutes to spot her father's car and she grabbed Marang's hand.

Seeletso:I found them. I hope they brought food, I'm so hungry yoh.

Marang:You ate in the morning.

Seeletso:Was that food? Ah ah Marang..

Marang followed her lead and they stopped in front of the car.

Seeletso:You guys came, I'm so happy.

Ma Josh:Wouldn't miss it for the world, your bags and phones are at the back.

Marang:Dumelang..

They both acknowledged her greeting with a smile as Seeletso handed Marang her phone and bag.

Seeletso:Bye guys..

They walked away and Marang checked her phone for messages but there was nothing. Meanwhile Seeletso texted on her phone as they walked back.

Seeletso:I know you are in town..

Marang's husband:Where is Marang? I'm somewhere in the parking lot.

Seeletso:Typical of you to forget my existence and ask about her. She has her phone okay bye

She placed her phone in her pocket and stopped walking,

Marang:what's wrong?

Seeletso:Borrow me your phone.

Marang handed it to her and Seeletso clicked on the camera app.

Seeletso:Re ikutluse vivid ya apple(we should try out the vivid filter on apple)

Marang:How will you get the pictures?

Seeletso:Send them to Josh and he will send them to me..akere bo Seeletso re Android gang..

Marang laughed softly as Seeletso pouted facing the selfie camera.

Seeletso:Stand here and let's smile.

Marang:I'm cool..

Seeletso just stood behind Marang and adjusted her hand according to height.

Seeletso:too short but we will make do, smile tlhemma..

Marang smiled looking at the camera as the sun rays hit their faces, making the picture quality so much better.

Seeletso:You're pretty, portable and cute..

Seeletso moved away from Marang and started taking pictures of Marang as she laughed.

Seeletso:Turn around..

Marang did and Seeletso snapped some more



pictures. When she was done she handed Marang her phone.

Seeletso:We should get going.

Marang slipped her headsets on and walked along side Seeletso who started texting on her phone.

Marang's phone beeped with a message.

My Dr:hey sweetness..

She didn't know whether to respond or not because he said she shouldn't dare bring the phone to school.

Marang:Hey.

She bit her lower lip as she sat at a nearby bench and Seeletso waved as she continued walking. She was waiting for him to flip about the phone and it was school hours. She braced herself for the long call she was going to get that evening.

At the parking lot

Seeletso had used another way to look for Joshua's car and she spotted it, the windows were open and he was on his phone.

Seeletso:I'm here, I can bring her to you. Buy me lunch.

Joshua:Hello to you too.

Seeletso:lunch money brother..

Joshua:One wouldn't guess that you're the smartest.

Seeletso:Your sister needs money, I didn't bring my lunchbox. I won't eat at the DH today mr, entlek you should take us to Nando's.

Joshua:Bathong Seeletso!

Seeletso:Nando's it is..I'll be back with her. I love you too.

Seeletso walked away and Joshua shook his head laughing.

Seeletso found Marang at the same bench and she sat next to her.

Seeletso:I thought you would be sitted.

Marang:The parents are still arriving...

Seeletso:In that case, I think they are in the car.

Marang:Yes, I'm nervous and I want to see Mrs Thuso..

Seeletso:Before that, I left something at the car, how much do you have on you?

Marang:P20 why?

Seeletso:Your money is short.

Marang:It's enough for a taxi..

Seeletso:taxi? Suuureee

Just as they stood up, Phemelo was making her way to them.

Phemelo:I was looking for you Marang..

Marang:Seeletso will you go to the car alone?

Phemelo:You guys are heading to the parking lot?  
I'm looking for my mother too.

Marang:oh we can all go then.

She put her headsets on and played music as Seeletso texted on her phone. Marang's phone beeped and she smiled texting back. Phemelo was still wondering about her friendship with Seeletso Colton. How did she know her?

Phemelo spotted her mother's car.

Phemelo:I'll catch up with you guys.

Marang:Sure thing.

Marang was sure she knew where Seeletso's parents had parked their car but Seeletso pulled her to the other direction.

Marang:I thought it was this way..

Seeletso:Uhm they moved spaces..

They walked and Marang was oblivious as she started at her phone screen blindly following Seeletso's footsteps.

They stopped at Joshua's car and the door was open. Marang wasn't paying attention at all as she got inside when Seeletso said so, she was busy texting Joshua.

Seeletso's walked away, at times it showed how she can be easily be distracted and not pay attention to her surroundings. This time it worked to her advantage.

Meanwhile in the car after Marang frowned as the familiar scent invaded her senses, she slowly placed her phone down on her lap and turned to find Joshua staring at her.

Marang:oh God!

She covered her mouth with her hands as Joshua closed the windows.

Joshua:Sweetness(deep voice)

Marang couldn't shake the shock off as she looked around, she was in his car with him. He was here and...oh God!

Her hands moved to cover her face and he laughed taking her hands.

Joshua:We're shy now?

Marang looked at him and she shook her head in disbelief.

Marang:Yo-you're here and-ohmygod!

Joshua tipped her head over and leaned in for a soft slow kiss which she allowed as she wrapped her hands around his neck. The kiss went on for more than a minute as he savored her lips, 3 months too long without this sweet little thing.

His lips detached from hers but they shared the same breath as he pecked her lips and started to

French kiss her. Marang broke it and stared into his hazel browns, her hand moved to his chin and he gave her a smile that she swore would always be directed to her.

Joshua:I can finally say hello to my baby.

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## THE GAME

#38

At the parking lot

Joshua held the hand that was on his chin with a little smile as her eyes shone with unshed tears.

Joshua:I missed you..

Marang smiled and kissed his lips again. He chuckled.

Joshua:You missed me too?

She nodded letting his chin go and he held both her hands in his.

Joshua:Don't mind my presence today, I just came to watch you get those prizes.

Marang let go of his hands and covered her face, now she will know he is in the crowd watching her.



Marang:Hello(softly)

He couldn't stop smiling, that long drive was worth it.

Joshua:We'll talk later at home..

Marang:Ho-oh okay. Thank you for coming.

Joshua:Well I'm glad I could come and support my baby.

Marang:Your baby..

Joshua:My only baby(pinching her cheeks as she lightly slapped his hands away)

Marang:I love you what did you say I was?

Joshua:My soul's equal and you said you are the missing piece to my puzzle.

Marang:Now you're my left ventricle.(laughing)

Joshua laughed as he kissed her small lips one more time.

Joshua:Hey there left ventricle..

Marang:stop!(blushing)

He kissed her whole face as she giggled in the car, luckily his windows were dimmed so no one could see what was going on in the inside.

Joshua:We should probably go before the ceremony starts.

Marang:Thank you, thank you..

Joshua kissed her lips once more biting her lower lip in the process..

Joshua:Now we should go. Do you want to eat something?

Marang:I'm fine.

Joshua:Sure? I can get you something to eat..

Marang:I'm sure. I'm fine just nervous, how am I supposed to act and all that..

Joshua:I'm sure you will be fine, trust me..babe we should get going.

Marang:Okay...

She got out first and started walking ahead as Joshua got out, he locked the car and looked around. He walked behind her but maintaining some distance between them.

Marang turned to look at him as he slid his hands in his pockets and kept walking. She blushed as she walked to where the ceremony was held and Joshua spotted his parents.

He took out his phone and texted her.

Joshua: I'll be with the parents that side. All the best sweetie..

Marang took out her phone and read the message as she found her seat. She spotted Mrs Thuso and she waved at her. Mrs Thuso gave the biggest grin and Marang laughed into her hands. This was too good to be true.

Minutes later the ceremony started and she put her phone in her pocket as they started with an opening

prayer.

30 minutes later that was when it was time to start announcing the prize winners of the day.

MC:now we get to the business of the day, the awardees..

The people smiled.

MC:We are going to start with subjects, the best in that subject form 4 and form 5.

The crowd waited in anticipation as the MC stood by the podium.

MC:Firstbprize of the day goes to Phemelo Moseki best in Chemistry.

People clapped their hands as Phemelo walked up front with her mother behind her, she had one wide smile as Phemelo's father took photos and Phemelo got her prize.

Meanwhile Seeletso was looking for Marang when she heard her name being called.

Seeletso:Shoot!

She breathed in and out as she walked to the podium where she grinned seeing her mother start with the ululating.

Seeletso:Bathong mama!(laughing)

Joshua had one hand in his pocket as he took photos along with his father.

Ra Josh:They made you the photographer?

Joshua:The ladies of the house..

Ra Josh laughed.

MC:bana ba di science..Chemistry e bokete la itse tota(chemistry is hard do you know that?)

Just as Seeletso was about to walk away the MC

stopped her and told her to be near and wait by the sidelines because her name was going to be called a couple more times.

Seeletso nodded as she followed her mother. They weren't very far from the podium and she took out her phone. She sent a text to Marang.

Seeletso:O kae?(where are you?)

She waited for the reply as she and Phemelo were called for Biology and Physics.

MC:Guys you know not everyone does well in mathematics, for the form fours this was hard because the girls were neck and neck on the subject. Boys where are you?

The crowd laughed as he read his paper.

MC:For the best in mathematics form four is Marang Rutang..

Marang exclaimed. She wasn't expecting the maths prize as she stood up and Mrs Thuso ululated walking to the podium and Seeletso and Joshua snapped photos. Look at her all smart and shit. Mrs Thuso even picked her small body and Marang laughed.

Seeletso:you should pay me for tutoring your wife(whispering to Joshua)

Joshua:Wa swaba Seeletso.

She laughed as she was called to get the mathematics prize.

Phemelo looked at Seeletso and at the guy she was sure was Phemelo's boyfriend. She took out her phone as she typed "Joshua Colton" in the search bar and his picture popped up. Her eyes nearly popped as she took in his photos, he was a doctor. A whole doctor? And he was Seeletso's relative or was

he his brother. She clapped her hands as Seeletso got her prize for add maths too. She was smart yoh!

She will search more later, the day was still long.

Marang was called again for English, Geography, Art and Home Economics. By the time she sat down she was exhausted from standing up and getting those awards. Joshua beamed with pride as he watched from the sidelines.

Seeletso got more prizes along with Phemelo and other students, well she had to thank Seeletso for helping her, the mathematics prize took her by surprise. She was shook really and wanted to cry.

Meanwhile Phemelo stood next to her parents,

Ma Phem:She is so smart and shy, Bathong..as your friend, I approve..



Phemelo:I know right? I'm proud of the progress she made.

Ma Phem:le sure o dira di double science?

Phemelo:yes..

Ma Phem:Okay..

Her mother nodded her head in approval.

By the sidelines as students in sport and other activities were called, Ra Joshua talked to Mrs Thuso who was beaming with pride, this was the tiny Marang who did all this?

Joshua texted her.

Joshua:Babe? Sweetness meet me by the parking lot okay?

She replied immediately

Baby Colton:okay..

He excused himself as Seeletso raised an eyebrow and with the corner of her eye she saw Marang stand up. Dikgang tsa malapa a batho! She clapped her hands and scrolled through the pictures that were taken of her and those of Marang. The last awards she was going to take pictures with her, she should stop hiding after getting those prizes.

In the parking lot Joshua waited for her and he saw her at a distance. When she was close he opened his arms for her and she fit right in.

Joshua:I'm proud of you baby girl..

Marang held his torso tightly holding back tears. She didn't expect any of this, this is how it felt to be a smart person?

Joshua:are we crying baby? It's not over yet..

He broke the hug and forced her to look at him as he wiped her tears.

Joshua:I love you and I'm so proud of you, very proud. Don't cry baby..

She smiled with tears in her eyes and he let her go.

Joshua:I think there are more prizes to be won..

Marang nodded as she wiped her tears. She walked away and he watched her walk and he shoved his hands in his pockets with a little smile. He walked back.

Minutes later Marang felt herself being pulled.

Seeletso:Don't sit down..

Marang:Seeletso..

Seeletso:You were crying? Sorry but let's go.

Seeletso walked with her to where the parents were and Joshua had to hold back and not hold her in his arms. She was so overwhelmed by everything, his poor little thing and Seeletso was not making things better.

MC:We are starting with the top ten list and we'll this year we have a lot of surprises..

The crowd waited in anticipation as he started with number ten and when he got to number five Marang was called and she walked forward. So she beat some of the pure science students? Unbelievable..

Mrs Thuso walked to the podium holding Marang who's tears were streaming down her face. Phemelo was the best overall student Form four and her parents were beaming with pride.

The form five list was called and like the Coltons expected Seeletso topped the whole grade along with the school.

In her teary mess Seeletso pulled Marang as they walked to the podium for Marang to get an award for the best double award student.

MC:and they are friends? Great minds think alike..

Seeletso:Josh's baby tlhemma wipe your tears for the pictures and to get the award motho wa motho(whispering)

Marang smiled through the tears as she wiped her tears and looked up as cameras flashed.

Marang:guys!

Seeletso:We are proud of you, smile again baby for the cameras.

She looked ahead as her eyes locked with Joshua's eyes and she blushed and he chuckled taking photos. She wiped her tears as people clapped their hands and Phemelo did too. She had already connected the dots but they will talk about it.

Marang walked away and Mrs Thuso hugged her.

Mrs Thuso:we are proud of you.

Ma Josh walked towards Marang and hugged her too.

Ma Josh:congratulations baby..

Marang laughed softly with tears. Ma Josh rubbed her back and she couldn't stop the tears.

Ma Josh let her go and Marang looked at Joshua who was holding himself back. They were in public and he once mentioned the issue of her age raising ques and eyebrows especially here in a school environment. Seeletso hugged her.

Seeletso:When you start working, pay me for my efforts.

Marang laughed.

Phemelo walked to where they were and she hugged Marang.

Phemelo:congratulations Rangz..

Marang:congrats to you best student mma.

Seeletso flashed a smile.

Seeletso: Congratulations Phemelo!

Phemelo: Now everyone is congratulating each other.

They all laughed as Phemelo let Marang go and Marang took the risk and walked towards Joshua. She hugged him for a few brief seconds and smiled.

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## THE GAME

#39

At school

The ceremony was over and Marang was with Seeletso.

Seeletso:Uh you've got to join us tonight for the celebratory dinner, I already asked mama to talk to Mrs Thuso and she said yes, you deserve to celebrate.

Marang:Okay.

Seeletso:Youkre spending the night too.

Marang:Okay..

With the corner of her eye she watched Joshua talk to some of the teachers she assumed taught him.



He just came here to see her?

Seeletso: You'll get the photos from Joshua. He has most of them.

With that Seeletso walked away and Phemelo made her way to Marang.

Phemelo: Congratulations once again Rangz.

Marang: thank you so much..

Phemelo sat down and looked at Marang. From an average student to a star student? She really surprised most with her current achievements.

Phemelo: Seeletso's brother is your boyfriend?

Marang shrugged.

Marang: Yes (confused)

Phemelo: Kana I was wondering how you knew Seeletso. (pausing) tha-that means his parents know you too are a thing, you once mentioned that his mother would talk to him if he did something wrong.

Marang: I don't get where this conversation is

heading Phem.

Phemelo:I'm just curious, you're always so secretive and all.

Marang:It's really not anyone's business, I never interfere in your relationship affairs.

Phemelo:True, I'm sorry..

Marang:It's okay.

Phemelo:But you do remember what we once talked about?

Marang:Phem tlhemma I don't want to think about that.

Phemelo:Sorry but that's just life sweet Rangz, can I borrow your phone. I want to take selfies.

Marang handed her the phone, it didn't even have a passcode.

Phemelo quickly went to contacts and sent herself Joshua's number before she deleted the message

on Marang's phone and went to the camera app.

Phemelo:the picture quality is incredible..

Marang:Seeletso says the same.

Phemelo:let's take photos together...do you have share it perhaps?

Marang:I think it's there..

Phemelo:let's take photos.

Phemelo turned and angled the phone at them as Marang smiled. She was pretty and cute, her small size made her adorable and all.

After more than 3 minutes of selfies, Phemelo sent some of them to her phone as she handed Marang her phone.

Phemelo:So you are not going to the house party?

Marang:Nope.

Phemelo:Cool..

She hugged Marang one last time.

Phemelo:You'll call me, I have to go with my parents and congratulations girlfriend.

Marang:Thank you,bye!

Phemelo let go of Marang and she waved as she half ran to her parents.

Marang looked around and she wasn't sure if she should start walking to the taxi rank, she was so tired today. A lot had happened. Her phone beeped with a text message.

My Dr:the car sweetness.

Marang:On my way..

She started walking and she bumped into a beaming Mrs Thuso.

Mrs Thuso:I can't stop smiling..

Marang blushed.

Mrs Thuso:Mrs Colton wanted to have a celebratory dinner for you guys, I agreed. Is it okay?

Marang:Yes..

She hugged Marang.

Mrs Thuso:Do you want me to drop you off?

Marang:It's okay, thank you so much for coming. I appreciate it.

Mrs Thuso:I would have never missed it for the world. O sure you don't want a ride?

Marang:No mam...bye.

Mrs Thuso:Bye bye!

She hurried off to the car holding some of Marang's prizes. It means she took some to the car earlier on.

Marang walked to the parking lot and looked for Joshua's car. She found it and she opened the door.

Joshua:Hey sweetness..

Marang:hey..

She buckled up as he started the car and switched on the air conditioning system. Joshua smiled on his own as he reversed out of his parking spot, his shirt sleeves were rolled up exposing his veined arms and he had one hand behind Marang's seat as he turned the wheel, glancing at the back every two seconds.

Marang's lips softly parted as she kept her gaze on him.

Joshua:Just say you want my attention instead of staring.

She leaned back as she removed her school shoes.

Marang:You are driving..

Joshua:Connect my phone to the aux cord.

She got his phone which was on his lap and she unlocked it. She connected it to the cord she saw and went to his music app.

She picked one of her favorite songs with a smile. About You Now by Sugababes started playing and Joshua smiled. Marang sang along with her usual saccharine voice as she snapped her fingers. Okay she was being much more open around him, he knew she loved music with every fiber of her being and she listened to it when she wasn't studying or she wanted to relax.

When they were by the robots and he stopped in front of the red lights. She looked at him with a heart stopping smile that had his eyes glued on her.

Marang: Not a day pass me by

Not a day pass me by, when I don't think about you

And there is no moving on cause I know you're the

one

And I can't be without you(you)

Can we bring yesterday back around

Cause I know how I feel about you now

He looked down with a smile as the traffic lights went green and he stole a kiss which she laughed into before he continued driving.

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## THE GAME

#40

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo looked at the number she sent herself. She really wasn't sure if it was Joshua's number but she guessed that since he was a doctor and the fact that Marang had other four numbers saved by their actual names this one was a possible guess, it was a pet name. Lame if you asked her. Who saves a number as "My Doctor" and she had like five numbers on her phone. Just five

She saved the contact on her phone and she will see what to do with it, not that she is jealous or anything.

She went to WhatsApp after saving the number and

it showed, she saw the profile picture and he was in a white coat. He resembled a celebrity she knew but she couldn't put her finger on who exactly.

Her phone rang and she answered.

Raine:Hey..

Phemelo:I'll be landing tomorrow for the house party, a bit early if you ask me.

Raine:is Marang coming? Kana mma Bame likes her a whole lot.

Phemelo:She is not, she plainly refused besides her boyfriend is in town so..

Raine:Her boyfriend? The older guy you mean?

Phemelo:Yeah, his name is Joshua Colton.

Raine:Ijoo! Okay. We'll meet tomorrow at town.

Phemelo:Sure thing.

Immediately as Phemelo hung up Raine went to

Facebook to search Joshua and my, he was one fine specimen. She sent a friend request and a message request at the same time.

She placed her phone down and continued watching tv at home.

### At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang combed her hair again as she looked at the mirror. She was not sure how she should look, they said everyone was eating out today and Josh dropped her home.

She sat on the bed in her towel as she thought about an outfit. She has never eaten out except for the time Joshua took her to Milky Lane and that private picnic she had. Who could help her with nice clothes? Seeletso will probably say she should wear whatever she feels comfortable in and well Phemelo used to

wear nice clothes to school during Civvies day.

She grabbed her phone and called Phemelo who answered immediately.

Phemelo:Hey Rangz.

Marang:Can you help me choose an outfit? I don't know what to wear..

Phemelo:The occasion and let me think of something.

Marang:apparently it's a dinner, a celebratory one and I never go to anywhere fancy or dress up fancy.

Phemelo:You are two size smaller than me, my clothes won't fit and you are short..what's in your wardrobe.

Marang:Ah, they wouldn't fit in a fancy place.

Phemelo:You can make anything fancy, it's a little after 3pm so let me ask my mom to come over and help you with what to wear.

Marang:Thank you..

Phemelo:Sure thing sisters.

She hung up and she walked to the wardrobe. She never bought clothes with the money he gave her and she regretted it at this exact moment.

She called Joshua.

Joshua:Sweetness.

Marang:The dinner is it anywhere fancy and all?

Joshua:I think so, my father said he booked a table at a hotel.

Marang:okay. I got to go.

Joshua:I'll pick you up at seven yes?

Marang:Yes. I love you bye.

Joshua:I love you more sweetness.

She hung up and threw the phone on the bed. Her hair will be fine at a fancy restaurant or will it?

## At the Coltons

Joshua threw his phone on the bed, she does have something to wear right? She gets a thousand every month for whatever she feels she needs or wants. He closed his eyes, he will wake up later, he never thoroughly rested.

Meanwhile in the bedroom Seeletso updated her status with a picture of her and Marang, she was a little cutie and Joshua had a good eye. She hoped their relationship will stay solid but even if it doesn't last, Marang was her friend now and Joshua will still remain her brother till whenever. She was hoping Joshua doesn't hurt Marang and all in all she couldn't wait for the sleepover tonight with Marang. After the dinner, they were going to watch a movie at home. She was happy and excited.

Sara walked in her room holding two dresses.

Seeletso:That pink one.

She looked at it and walked out, that moment Seeletso stood up and followed her sister. She better help her get ready before she messes up.

At Sunshine Orphanage

After what seemed like 20 minutes there was a knock at the door and Marang opened. Phemelo walked in holding her backpack and she threw it on the bed.

Phemelo:Okay let's rummage through your closet.

Marang:Wardrobe.

Phemelo:same difference.

Phemelo threw Marang's clothes on the bed and

looked at Marang.

Phemelo:Black is stylish, do you have a pair of pumps?

Marang:I think so..

Phemelo:What colour?

Marang:Black, not sure I never go anywhere.

Phemelo:That's why you need to go out more, live more, meet new people. Get acquainted with the city, you only live once. Playing it safe won't be so fun in a year or two.

Marang shrugged as Phemelo picked up a skirt.

Phemelo:this looked nice, do you have a plain white shirt?

Marang remembered the shirt she once got from Seeletso, she had said it was too small on her and it looked brand new.

Marang:I do.

Phemelo:find it form this heap of clothes.



Marang:What's in the bag?

Phemelo:Hair products, you have a nice afro Rangz and you have edges that need to be laid, o Tswa even makgarebe.

Marang:I have no idea what you are talking about,

Phemelo:Don't worry.

Marang found the shirt and laid it next to the skirt.

Phemelo:You don't have a jacket or something of that sort but we will make do. Wear the clothes and let's see.

Marang dropped the towel and in her panties she picked the clothes, they weren't ironed yet but they will see.

She was done 3 minutes later.

Phemelo:Ng ng, ga go dire...

Marang:I should just cancel.

Phemelo:We'll find something, don't worry.

Marang:Okay.

3 hours later Phemelo made Marang turn around, it was okay.

Phemelo:That looks good, we tied the shirt and since that long ass dress is sleeveless it looks better with those pumps, edges laid you are good to go.

Marang:You are a lifesaver, thank you.

Phemelo:Welcome. Pictures?

Phemelo took out her phone as she forced Marang to take pictures.

Marang:I never turn out good in pictures,

Phemelo:You are pretty no wonder he likes you.

Marang:who?

Phemelo:never mind, smile baby girl. Smile.

Marang smiled as Phemelo snapped more pictures.

Phemelo:Perfect. I have to go love. Bye.

Marang:Thank you once again..

Phemelo:It's nothing..

She walked out the door and Marang waited for Joshua to come pick her up. While waiting her mind kept going back to what Phemelo and Raine once said and a part of her couldn't help but agree but...

She shook her head. She will see tonight.

That evening

Joshua held Marang's hand as he led her to the house, dinner was fun and everyone had fun to the point of Sara falling asleep. Joshua's parents decided to call it a night and headed to their room as Joshua kissed Marang's cheek.

Joshua: Goodnight sweetness..

Marang: Night..

He left her and Seeletso in the lounge.

Seeletso: Let's go change and watch a movie.

They headed to the bedroom and she wore the night dress she had worn her first evening here along with some slides, the fact that she can wear Seeletso's clothes like that without her complaining about it too..

Seeletso had changed into her pajamas and handed Marang the remote.

Seeletso: Find a movie, I'm going to get snack okay?

Marang: Okay.

She sat on the couch as their words rang loudly in

her head at this exact moment. She changed channels and stopped on one movie that was to start in a few minutes.

Seeletso came back with snacks and placed them on the table while Marang leaned back waiting for the movie to start.

Halfway through the movie Marang yawned and Seeletso looked at her.

Seeletso:If you are tired you can go sleep, you had a long day.

Marang:Thank you.

She got up and stretched her body before walking away. She was about to enter Seeletso's bedroom when she decided to walk to Joshua's room. She thought of knocking but took her chances and opened the door, it was now or never.

He was in his boxers on the bed while on his phone.  
He frowned confused and placed his phone down.

Joshua: Sweetness you're not supposed to be in here.

Marang: I want to be in here..

Joshua: You shouldn't, walk out baby...

Instead of walking out she made her way to the bed  
and sat next to him.

Joshua: Sweetness you shouldn't be in my room at  
this time, if you are ti-

She placed her small hands on his cheeks and  
kissed him, climbing on top of him. Marang's heart  
pounded as she did this but he didn't stop her.

Joshua was caught off guard with that move and his  
erection was already up. He held her hands and  
broke the kiss.

Joshua: Marang o dira eng? (Marang what are you  
doing?)

Marang:What a girlfriend should do, if yo-you don't ask me for sex then you(pausing as a shadow crept on his face and his grip tightened on her hands)

Joshua:What?

His voice cool, calm and everything dangerous as alarm bells rang in her head.

Joshua:Who the fuck told you that shit?

Marang:I-Uh...

Joshua:Nkarabe Marang..

Marang:The-Uh..

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## THE GAME

#41

At the Coltons

In Joshua's bedroom

Marang was tongue tied and she didn't like the look in his eyes.

Joshua:Marang?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:I asked a question..answer me dammit! I won't ask you twice.

His grip on her hands was too tight and tears burned at the back of her eyes.

Joshua:Marang you weren't crying a minute ago, ska



ira botete..

He has never used that tone on her.

Joshua:Marang?

Marang:Rra?(shaky voice)

He let go of her hands and she rubbed them and rubbed her eyes.

Marang:Uhm..They said(holding back tears)Uhm, since y-yo-you're older than me you get Uhm sex somewhere else..

He pointedly looked at her as she got off him wiping her tears and she sat on the bed. He was expecting her to say more.

Marang:I th-thought about it an-and you never asked for it, I assumed they were right..

Through teary eyes she kept her gaze on him, looking down when he looked directly into her eyes.

Joshua:Who?

Marang:Uh Ra-

Joshua's phone beeped with a message and he lifted his finger to silence her. She sniffed as used her hands to wipe her tears while he checked his phone.

Joshua frowned reading the message that had Marang's picture attached. He pinched his nose bridge as he placed his phone down.

Joshua:Know what go to sleep, I don't trust myself not to raise my voice at you.

She stood up and walked out, wiping more tears that rolled down her cheeks.

She got to the bedroom and Seeletso frowned.

Seeletso:Why are you crying?

Marang shook her head as she got undercover and faced the other way.

Seeletso:Ijoo!

She closed her eyes, forcing sleep to come take her.

The following morning

When he was much calmer he walked to Seeletso's bedroom where he knocked. Seeletso opened the door and she folded her arms.

Seeletso:She was crying half of the ni-

Joshua:It's none of your business Seeletso..

Seeletso shut up. She moved from the door as Joshua walked inside the room. She quickly excused herself and closed the door in her way out.

Marang lifted the blankets from over her head, she heard his voice and now it was silent. When she got her head out, he was leaning against the door frame with his hands deep in his sweat pants pockets.

She tightly held the blankets and looked at him. He was silent but he looked like a person who had a lot to say.

Marang:I'm sorry.(low voice)

Joshua:Marang o batla go ntlwaetsa bananyana?(Marang do you want kids to get used to me?)

Marang:Rra?

Joshua sucked in a deep breath before he continued talking.

Joshua:And you want to see me in prison for defilement?

Marang shook her head. That was honestly not her intention, she thought that it wouldn't be known and-

Joshua:why give your friends my number Marang?  
Bananyana Marang!

Marang:I swear, I didn't give out your number!

She said before she bit her lip and rubbed her swollen eyes.

Joshua:We'll come back to the number part, explain what you did last night.

He was forcing her to talk.

Marang rubbed her hands together with tears in her eyes, she didn't think it was going to be much of a big deal.

Marang:I-(quivering lips)

She looked at him and he hadn't changed his stance.

Marang:They k-k-

Joshua:Who is they?

Marang:uhm Raine a-and P-ph-Phemelo..

She was hesitant to say their names but she didn't want to make Joshua angry.

Joshua:Do you think I'm stupid for not demanding sex from you?

She shook her head.

Joshua:You had to deal with the trauma of being raped and for God's sake Marang you're a minor. I love you but I'm certainly not going to defile you or risk my whole career and land in jail because of that. Are clear?

She nodded sniffing and she just looked at him.

Joshua:Did you give anyone your phone yesterday?

Marang nodded and she told him with a voice that cracked, more from fear than anything.

Joshua:Fuck!

He said as he thought about for a minute.

Throughout this whole tap he hadn't called her sweetness or any of those pet names he liked calling her.

Joshua:Don't ever do that and honestly if that's what you and your friends spend time on, discussing, it would be better to cut ties with them. What happened last night is not you Marang. I want what's the best for you and you just showed me that your friends are not what's best for you.

She nodded her head wiping her tears.

Joshua:do we understand each other Marang?

Marang:ye-yes.

Joshua:Good. Come here, o ntlhomosa pelo..

She slowly pulled the blankets off and got off the bed. He hugged her and he rubbed her back.

Joshua:Do you have a headache? Gatwe you were

crying all night...wa bona gore wa itidisa hela(you see you're making yourself cry)

She shook her head and he kissed the top of her head.

Joshua:You understand what we talked about?

Marang:Ee rra.

Joshua:Then do the right thing okay?

She nodded.

Joshua:You are not ready for the commitment and everything that comes with sex, just focus on school and nothing else okay?

She nodded once again.

Joshua:Do you need panado? Paracetamol?

She just shook her head and he sighed holding her in his arms. If she did something wrong he sure was going to call her to order, just because she was his girlfriend didn't mean she could get off lightly.

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## THE GAME

#42

At the Coltons

Joshua made Marang look at him as she wiped her tears. He really hoped she heard him, of course he wanted sex but she was not ready and he hated the fact that her so called friends were starting to corrupt his young one.

Joshua:Baby?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:I love you..

She blushed and placed her head back on his torso. He chuckled holding her small frame, he hated what that aunt of hers did to her, he was glad that the therapy was working for her. He wanted her to fully heal from being sodomized by that man, whoever he

is.

Joshua: You should get ready for breakfast, you're done with the tears?

She smiled and nodded.

Joshua: Good. Take a bath, you'll find us in the dining room.

Marang: Okay...

He finally let go of her small frame and kissed her forehead. He walked out and Seeletso walked back in the room.

Seeletso: are you okay?

Marang: Yes..

Seeletso: If you say so, you know you can talk to me about anything.

Marang: Yes I know. Let me go bath..

Seeletso: okay.

Marang walked out and made her way to the bathroom meanwhile Joshua blocked Phemelo's number on his phone. Kids!

He threw the phone on the bed and headed to his bathroom for a shower.

At town

Phemelo sat down as she talked to Raine.

Phemelo:I will call you guys as soon as I'm out of the house.

Raine:Marang's boyfriend is fiine.

Phemelo:Tell me about it, I guess that's why she isn't coming. She might go out with him.

Raine:Most probably. But mma he is all in one, a doctor and all that.

Phemelo:Giiirll! I have no idea how she caught his attention, he probably sees a lot of hot women

everyday at work.

Raine:He does. Anyway the theme is black, wear something black.

Phemelo:Yes sir!

They continued talking as they drunk their milkshakes. A text beeped and Phemelo looked at the message. She read it over and over again.

Raine:What?

Phemelo:Uhm Marang wants to talk or something.

Raine:Call her and ask her about what..

Phemelo:Let me do that.

She called and the call went through.

Marang>Hello..

Phemelo:Hey Rangz you wanted to talk..

Marang:Ye(laughing)Let go of me tlherra..Phem sorry for that.

She said as she removed Joshua's hands from her waist. She had no idea where his parents had disappeared to but they were alone in the house and she was eating ice cream with him in the lounge.

Phemelo rolled her eyes as she waited for Marang to continue.

Marang:Due to some unfortunate circumstances, I can no longer be your best friend.

Phemelo:What?

Marang:I'm sorry Phem Phem okay? I hope you understand..

Raine grabbed the phone from Phemelo and answered.

Raine:So you think you are now better and friends with the smart girl you dispose of Phemelo like that.

Joshua listened while eating ice cream.

Marang:I'm sorry guys..Have a nice life and bye.

She hung up and she threw the phone on the other side of the couch.

Joshua:That wasn't hard was it?

Marang:It felt cruel but she listens to Raine so...

Joshua:What do you want to watch?

Marang:Anything is fine.

Joshua:alright sweetness..

At the mall

Raine looked at Phemelo who was shocked. She had thought they were friends and she just said it's over like that.

Raine:Girls are toxic yoh(clapping her hands)

Phemelo:What did I do? I don't understand. I've been treating Marang like a sister.

Raine:Forget about her, you don't need that poor

orphan anyway..

Phemelo:Keore I'm shocked Raine.

Raine:Let me order some more ice Cream for you so that you can calm down.

Phemelo:I guess...ljoo..

Raine:Girls neh! She is sleeping with an older man and she thinks she is better.

Phemelo:Ijakg!!

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## THE GAME

#43

At town

Phemelo was quiet as she thought about it, Marang all of a Saturday decided to end their friendship. Was she choosing a man who might not even be there in future over a friendship of more than 3 years?

She clapped her hands again.

Phemelo:Hayi, I still don't understand.

Raine:Girls are snakes.

Phemelo:Clearly, I never expected this from her.

Raine nodded and took out her phone to check if Joshua had accepted her friend request on



Facebook. He still hadn't.

Raine:We should probably go.

Phemelo:of course..

They picked their bags and left the place.

At the Coltons

Marang switched off the tv and yawned. Mrs Thuso knew where she was but was probably waiting for her to make her way to the orphanage. And she couldn't stop thinking about Phemelo. She gave wrong advise but what did she do other than that?

Joshua handed her popcorn and she placed her head on his shoulders.

Marang:What did you mean that I gave your number

to my friends?

Joshua handed her his phone.

Joshua:Go to WhatsApp.

Marang unlocked his phone and went to where he said she should go. She opened the green app and he clicked on a message, she read the message and she saw that he had blocked the contact.

Joshua:She looks familiar sweetness? All I'm saying is choose people who are good for you. People who won't give you wrong advises.

Marang:I didn't know she got your number. I'm sorry okay?

Joshua:I'm not angry at you, we talked about this in the morning akere?

She nodded.

He held her chin and baby kissed her lips.

Joshua:Then we are good besides I can never be

angry at you forever, you're just too sweet for me to be that angry over some things people made you do.

Marang grinned.

Marang:What did you say I was again?

He laughed.

Joshua:My soul's equal baby girl.

Marang:Your missing puzzle piece.

He smiled and French kissed her as she wrapped her arms around his neck, as he placed her in his lap.

Joshua:I love you baby.

Marang:I love you too..

He kept on kissing her with his hands rubbing her back. In the middle of the kiss the front door opened and Marang broke the kiss.

Joshua looked at the door and it was his parents. Shit! Baby girl just bowed her head low without making eye contact with anyone as he licked his lips.

They passed by the lounge and Joshua thought they were going to their room when they stopped.

Ma Josh:Hello kids.

The way she emphasized the word kids.

Marang couldn't even bear to look at her, she was still on his lap and she wanted to move but it seemed as if her body was frozen in place.

Joshua:Hello..

Ma Josh:Hello Marang.

Marang:Dumelang(low voice)

Her face was already reddening from the embarrassment, she knew they knew she was seeing Joshua but being caught like this in their house.

Ra Josh:Hello guys!

That's when they started making their way to their room and Joshua chuckled.

Joshua:Sorry for putting you in that compromising position. Baby?

She looked at him and he pecked her lips.

Joshua:You should go back but you don't want to go back do you?

Marang:Maybe I should talk to them..

Joshua:Don't stress about it, they will forget about it in a few days or so..

Marang:Still..

Joshua:I want to kiss you right now so you can shut up.

Marang:Your paren-

His lips met hers and he bit her lower lip with a smile before he whispered an inch away from her lips. She felt his warm breath and she was even breathing the same air as him.

Joshua:Shut up sweetness!

He held the back of her neck and kissed her slowly, taking his time with devouring her lips.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo had just taken a shower as she rummaged through the clothes in her closet. She clapped her hands. Marang really ended their friendship just like that? Like that? She tried to know what she did but she will ask her on Monday. It can't be over like that just over a single call that didn't even take more than two minutes.

She wore a black shirt dress and some kicks, grabbed a jacket in case it becomes chilly. Her parents had out of the blue decided to go out and she was home alone for the weekend. She didn't even think the help would be a problem so she

wasn't going to sneak in and out. This was going to be fun.

A text came in from Theo.

Theo:Hey babe, where are you?

Phemelo:At home, come pick me up.

Theo:Sure thing baby girl.

She placed her phone down and picked her bag, checked if she had money for a cab in case she was bored. She put her phone inside and walked to the lounge. It was a little after 3pm so it wasn't late.

Helper:Hello Phemelo.

Phemelo:Hi, I'm going to movies with friends. I'll be back before my 7pm curfew.

Helper:okay miss. Excuse me.

She walked out and Theo called her.

Phemelo:Hello.

Theo:Direct us there.

She gave him the directions and waited for him to arrive. Marang was missing out really.

After ten minutes she heard the hooter and she grabbed her stuff walking out. She shooed the dogs away as she pushed open the gate and closed it after stepping out.

The car was nice.

She got in the front seat and kissed him as she sat down.

Theo:Hey.

Phemelo:Hey and thank you for picking me up, nice car by the way.

Theo:Thanks.



At the back were just two of his friends whom she greeted and she and Theo started talking. She was a hundred percent sure Raine was landing, she will deal with the Marang issue on Monday, check her at the orphanage.

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## THE GAME

#44

At Phemelo's parents

The house helper moved the curtains expecting to see Phemelo walking through the gate. She waited and sat down. She stood up and checked again. There was no sign of Phemelo.

She dialed Phemelo's parents.

Ma Phem:Hello.

Helper:Dumelang, Phemelo long left saying she went to the movies and her curfew has long passed.

Ma Phem:Have you tried her phone?

Helper:Not yet.

Ma Phem:Let me try it..thank you for calling. Bye.

Phemelo's mother hung up and she looked at her husband at the hotel. They were here to well, celebrate privately and she told him when they arrived that she was pregnant.

Ma Phem: Gatwe Phemelo is not at home.

Ra Phem: Try calling her phone.

Ma Phem fixed her gown as she sat down and tried dialing Phemelo's number. It wasn't going through at all.

Ma Phem: Ga e tsene (it isn't going through)

Ra Phem: We should probably look for her, what if something happened to her?

Ma Phem: Bathong, my poor baby.. we should get dressed.

Ra Phem: Mhmm..

At the Coltons

Marang smiled as he taught her how to play cards in his room. They were sitting on the carpet as she kept her cards close to her flat chest.

Joshua:Baby it's easy right?

Marang:I will get there, it's my first time playing cards. Seeletso likes to make me play Monopoly with her because she always wins.

Joshua:We can play it right now?

Marang:Ng ng..

She placed two diamonds.

Marang:Take two(laughing)Two cards left.

Joshua:Babe? Me?

Marang:take two Josh..

Joshua:Sweetness..

Marang:I wasn't crying when you made me take four.

Joshua:Babe..

He placed the cards down and tickled her as she fell

on her back laughing.

Marang:Stoop!(laughing)

Joshua:Game over..

Marang:That's cheating, I won..

He stopped tickling her and she caught her breath while laughing.

Marang:Ga go fair(that's not fair)

Joshua:I let you win,

Marang:it isn't even over(laughing)

Joshua:You are beautiful you know that?

Marang:Thank you.

His lips found hers and his fingers found their way inside her afro hair. He was an addict and he knew she won't be here after a week and he will deal with getting himself off for the next year and few months.

He broke the kiss and licked her lips. He shouldn't be doing this to the child.

Marang smiled, he was here just for a week.

Joshua:Do you ever go shopping?

Marang:I buy things sometimes.

That reminded her that she needed to talk to Seeletso about accompanying her to the shops to buy him something for his birthday.

Joshua:But before your 18th birthday I want to teach you how to drive.

Marang:Won't I ruin your car, ke thula pole?(hit a pole?)

Joshua:It's not as if you will be alone in the car.

Marang:Still..

She checked the time on his phone and she got up, sitting on her butt as she picked her phone.

Marang:It's getting late.

Joshua:It's 8pm mam.

Marang:I love you.

She kissed his cheek and stood up holding her phone.

Marang:I'll text once I'm safe in the room.

He laughed and stood up to hold her waist.

Joshua:o hemile Marang..

Marang:Night..

He let her go and she walked out. He was glad she was still an innocent and didn't even see the boner. He needed a shower, he was going to needs lots of cold showers this week.

Marang walked inside the room and found Seeletso on her laptop.

Seeletso:She remembered me..

Marang:I never forgot you.

Seeletso:during the course of the day did you wonder where I was?

Marang:Uh-

Seeletso:I knew it. Sit down and tell me.

Marang:what?

Seeletso picked her phone and showed Marang other peoples statuses on WhatsApp.

Seeletso:the house party at Donga, go busy busy..

Marang:they are smoking? And is that Phem?

Seeletso:Di hookah ngwanaka, I'm waiting for more updates. What did Phemelo tell you?

Marang:she invited me but I don't go to parties, people terrify me after th-that time.

Seeletso:During the course of the night I will update you.

Marang:Your brother's birthday is coming up in a few days and I wanted you to accompany me to the shops.



Seeletso:Okay! We'll talk budgets and all. La becha bo Marang..

Marang:Ijoo..

Seeletso smiled as Marang started texting on her phone and she snapped pictures of Marang. She looked so focused on her task.

She sent them to her brother.

Seeletso:Look at your wife        lona itlhela le  
mpolaya waitse

She went back to Facebook when a message from her brother reported.

Marang's husband:nako nngwe ke tla go shapa

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Seeletso: Sure abuti..

Marang:Seeletso?

Seeletso:hmm..

Marang:Is it okay that I don't know what to do when I finish school?

Seeletso:totally fine, you have more than a year and a half to think about it tota.

Marang:okay..

In the parents bedroom Ra Josh laid his head in his wife's lap as she brushed his hair.

Ma Josh:So after the prize giving your partners were interested?

Ra Josh:In awarding her a scholarship in any field of Medicine if she does want to pursue that field. So even next year her performance will be monitored.

Ma Josh:le ene she is smart..Your son o ikgodisetsa mosadi.

Ra Josh laughed.

Ra Josh:Remember I met you years back.

Ma Josh:Don't remind me..mxm and made me carry

three of your children.

Ra Josh:and the fact that she does double sciences and is able to get such grades is surprising, it's like they put her in the wrong class..

Ma Josh:Seeletso always helps her..

Ra Josh:and your son ene o phuraphura ngwana...instead of helping her..

Ma Joshua laughed as she lightly slapped his chest.

Ma Josh:He wouldn't cross that line, he knows why.

Ra Josh:He knows what's at stake at this point in his life, he is old enough..

She nodded.

Ma Josh:she was so embarrassed earlier today,

Ra Josh:and you made it worse by specifically greeting her.

She laughed.

Ma Josh:I had to...

They both laughed in their room.

At the house party

Raine excused herself as she went to the bathroom half drunk. Phemelo had decided to stick to juice and well smoking using the hookah was nice.

Theo kissed her lips with alcohol tinted breath.

Theo:How is it?

Phemelo:It's okay, not too much and there aren't a lot of people.

Theo:If you want to go home, tell me so I can take you.

Phemelo:You're drunk baby.

Theo:I'm still fine and thank you for coming okay love?

He kissed her again and deepened the kiss before he broke it and walked away to go talk to the boys.

She switched turned off flight mode and waited a few minutes before messages started reporting. Calls from her parents specifically. She will lie her way out if again. The night was still young.

Raine came to sit next to her and she was slurring.

Phemelo:Robala wena.

Raine:he-yeah neh..

Phemelo:Babeeee?

Theo made his way to her.

Phemelo:I think I need to go. It's almost nine and bona mogoma(pointing at Raine)she is drunk and out.

Theo searched himself checking the car keys.

Theo: Sure baby? I don't trust want to make you get a cab this late, what if they rape you or something?

Phemelo: You're right but you are not in the right state to drive.

Theo called over one of his friends.

Theo: He isn't drunk, he will be driving..

Phemelo hugged Theo.

Phemelo: Thank you.

The three of them walked to the car and she got in the backseat with Theo while his friend caught the car keys.

He got inside and started the car.

Meanwhile at the back Phemelo and Theo started talking as he caressed her thigh.

On the road, Phemelo and Theo were engrossed in their conversation that they didn't notice that the driver couldn't see clearly. He had forgotten his glasses but they were too far to go back and besides there were not many cars on this road.

Theo: when are we arriving, my girl needs to get back home safe..

Him: In a few minutes..

He missed a few cars by an inch as he continued driving, what he failed to see was that he was in the wrong lane and was driving head first towards a truck, he heard the hooters and the couple at the back looked at him with beating hearts.

Phemelo: what's happening?

Him: The-

At that exact moment the truck collided with the Honda Fit car as the passengers screamed and what made it worse was the way their bodies flung

forward as they weren't wearing seatbelts.

Minutes later, the siren noises started.

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## THE GAME

#45

At the accident scene

The police car joined the ambulance that was there trying to assess the scene. The truck driver was already out of his truck as he looked at the smashed vehicle. He swore they were in the wrong lane and he hit the hooter a couple of times as an indication for the car to get out of the way but it didn't.

The paramedics looked at the smashed car and there was blood flowing out of the car as they tried to open the doors of the car. This was bad.

The police took a statement from the truck driver as they noted down the number plates of both cars

while the paramedics struggled to open the doors. When they finally did they hauled the driver out of the driver's seat gently so as to not worsen the injuries he had. The others hauled the two passengers at the back out and they placed them by the road side as the stretchers were brought. They checked their pulses, they were eat and looked like people who lost a lot of blood. They need to get them to the hospital fast fast.

The silent observers quietly took pictures and videos and posted them on their WhatsApp statuses.

The people in the car were so young that they wondered what they were even doing.

At Phemelo's parents

Ma Phem paced back and forth, they had no idea where she was and she wasn't answering her phone on top of that. He husband held her shoulders willing

her to calm down.

Ma Phem:I'm okay.

Ra Phem:You're stressing the baby, we'll find Phemelo okay?

Ma Phem:Why do I feel like something bad happened to her? (Tears in her eyes)

Ra Phem:No negative thoughts..look at me.

She did and he hugged her.

Ra Phem:We'll find her and it will be alright okay?

Ma Phem:Okay.

She sat down and bit her nails trying not to let the fear overcome her. Phemelo was fine and they were going to find her, they had called the police in search for her and they were going to find her. They had to be positive. Ra Phem's phone rang and she looked at him as he answered.

Ra Phem:Moseki here...

He listened over the phone and willed his features to give away nothing as he took the police's statement.

Ra Phem:We'll be there in half an hour. Thank you.

Ma Phem stood up and walked over to him.

Ma Phem:What's happening?

Ra Phem:we need to go the hospital.

Ma Phem:oh God!

Ra Phem held his wife maybe he should leave there and go to the hospital. The police were not even sure if it was Phemelo but they said she fit the description they gave so he had to check and enquire more about what happened.

Ra Phem:Maybe you can stay and-

Ma Phem:No, I want to go..

He sighed.

Ra Phem:okay. Let's go.

At the Coltons

Seeletso's mouth went agape as she saw the multiple screenshotted statuses on WhatsApp. Marang was still awake listening to music.

Seeletso removed one headset and made Marang look at her.

Seeletso:Bona..

Marang:An accident, why did they take pictures?

Seeletso:Batswana Like broadcasting news that does not even affect them, social media but that aside look.

Marang closely looked at the picture and she squinted her eyes confused as to who she was seeing.

Marang:that's n-it can't be right? Modimo!

Seeletso:Nothing is confirmed.

Marang dialed Phemelo but her phone was

unavailable at the moment. Her heart raced but she willed herself to calm down. Phemelo is okay right? Yeah she told herself that over and over again.

She got off the bed.

Marang:I'll be back okay?

Seeletso:okay and don't worry about it, we'll hear tomorrow morning.

Marang:yeah.

She walked out of the bedroom in her nightdress and made her way to Joshua's bedroom. She knocked on the door but there was no reply. She knocked before she opened the door and he wasn't in the bedroom.

Marang:Joshua?

Joshua heard her soft voice from the bathroom as he held his pulsing d\*ck in his hands. She called out his name again and that was what he needed to

finally come, he grunted closing his eyes as he reached release. This was better than nothing.

He breathed out as he looked at his d\*ck waiting for it to go soft but it was still hard. Was it because he knew she was in his room?

He cleared his throat.

Joshua:Coming baby!

Marang:okay...

She sat on the bed swinging her legs back and forth. She heard the shower go on and she placed her phone down. Her mind drifted to her aunt Lebo. Even to this day she didn't know why she did what she did to her. She stopped herself from thinking too much about it when Joshua walked out dressed up in his clothes.

Joshua:Hey what are you doing here? You are the one who said it was late.

Marang:I just wanted to talk.

He sat next to her on the bed as his d\*ck twitched.  
Fuck!

At the hospital

Phemelo's parents arrived and they were led to Phemelo's room to identify her. Ma Phem broke down seeing her only daughter lying cold on the hospital bed.

Ma Phem:Is she going to be okay?

Doctor:Is she your child?

Ra Phem:Yes, we reported her missing but it wasn't yet a case but they told us she was here.

Doctor:Okay. We are awaiting blood from the blood bank at the moment, she lost a lot of blood and most tests will be carried out tomorrow.

Ra Phem:Can we take her to a private hospital?

Doctor:In a week or so she can be moved.

Ra Phem:okay.



They walked out of the room as he hugged his wife. Tears rolled down her eyes, she didn't want to lose her daughter.

Ra Phem:It will be okay, trust me.

She nodded while sobbing against his chest.

At the Coltons

Joshua listened as Marang talked, it was comforting knowing that she fully trusted him to just want to talk.

Marang:and I'm worried about Phemelo.

Joshua:Marang!

Marang:Seeletso showed me pictures of an accident scene and it looked like her, if it is her can you take me to the hospital to see her?

Joshua:Marang!

Marang:pretty please, this one favor.

Joshua:okay.

Marang hugged him.

Marang:Thank you so much.

Joshua:This once.

Marang:This once..

She let go of him and kissed his cheek. He smiled at her innocent face as she walked out, she came just to talk. Marang was something else.

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## THE GAME

#46

The following morning

At the Coltons

Seeletso was up first as she checked social media. She was sure now that it was Phemelo, Marang will be so upset over the fact that her best friend had been in an accident. She was snoring softly. Was it fate that Josh loved her, even before her skin cleared from the pimples, one could see he was smitten over the little girl. Her innocence was attractive on its own though.

She got out of bed and walked out of the room making her way to the bathroom.

Marang woke up alone and she moved her hand to the other side of the bed, Seeletso wasn't there.

She stretched her small body and yawned covering her mouth. She should get up and take a bath then ask Seeletso what was up. She got out of bed and stretched her body once again, Seeletso's bed was so comfortable.

The door opened and she walked in.

Seeletso:Morning.

Marang:Morning...

Seeletso:mom didn't make breakfast so it means everyone is on their own.

Marang:It's okay, it's a Sunday.

Seeletso:Mhmm and it was Phemelo who was involved in the accident.

Marang:Thank you, let me go take a bath.

She walked out and headed to the bathroom.

At the hospital

Phemelo's parents sat by the benches, Ra Phem had to convince his wife that she needed to go home to rest.

He held her hand as she laid her head on his shoulder. He also wanted their daughter to be fine and the police were just waiting for one of the, to regain consciousness so that they can have their side of the story. They were also curious to know what exactly happened.

At Raine's house

Raine finally woke up as the sunlight hit her closed

eyes, forcing her back into reality. She came around four am in the morning and she was sure her parents hadn't seen her. She yawned then rubbed her head after. She had one massive headache and she was sure she was going to sleep in the whole of today.

She didn't remember seeing Phemelo when she left in the morning but she was too drunk and out of it to notice anything though.

She picked her phone from the stand and dialed Phemelo's number. It was unavailable. She yawned. She was still sleepy as fuck!

She went to her WhatsApp and went through the statuses, she frowned deeply as people shared pictures of an accident scene and the individuals involved looked oddly familiar. Her heart started racing as she sat upright and zoomed into the pictures. A gasp escaped her lips. It was Phemelo,

Theo and this other guy from the party.

Raine:Oh God! Yoh! Yoh!

She didn't know if she was okay and all...she was legit freaking out right now knowing that there was nothing she could do. Why couldn't she stay all night at least, none of this couldn't have happened at all. This was bad, real bad and if the police are involved they will know about the party and they will be questioned. This was so bad.

At the Coltons

Joshua walked out of his bedroom making his way to the kitchen. He found the girls making breakfast and Sara not being useful as always, he scooped the toddler in his arms and she touched his face then looked at Marang and Seeletso.

Seeletso:You can leave with her.

Joshua walked towards Marang and pecked her lips.

Joshua: morning sweetness.

Seeletso: I'm in the room and you are holding the baby, what is wrong with you?

Joshua: Calm down..babe how was your sleep?

Seeletso placed the knife down and walked out.

Seeletso: Yoh yoh!

Joshua laughed and leaned over for a slower kiss this time.

Joshua: Hmm..

Marang: It was good, thank you for asking.

Joshua put Sara down and he placed both his hands against the kitchen counter, keeping Marang there.

Marang: I was making breakfast with your sister...

Joshua laughed.

Joshua: I know babe..So I should wait for you to serve me?



Marang:We are making it for everyone. Bye!

He stole another kiss and picked the baby walking out. Minutes later Seeletso walked back inside.

Seeletso:Let's continue, I don't even want to know a thing..

Marang laughed.

Marang:Bathong Seeletso!

Seeletso:you two are annoying!

Marang:Let's cook.

An hour later the girls served breakfast as Joshua's parents walked in.

Ma Josh:Thank you girls.

Seeletso:mama this was hard work, you need to pay me.

Ma Josh:ba go loile(they bewitched you)

Seeletso:I was just joking!

Everyone sat down as they had breakfast.

Later that day

After Marang had convinced Joshua to take her to Phemelo, they walked out of the house.

Marang:I just want to know if she is okay.

Joshua:you are lucky that I'm a doctor and asked around.

Marang:Thank you so much, will they allow us?

Joshua:at this point, they won't. You aren't family babe.

Marang:It's still okay though. I just want to know if she will be fine.

At the hospital

Marang walked inside with Joshua by her side and she saw Phemelo's parents. She made her way to them.

Marang:Dumelang.

Ra Phem:Marang hello..

Marang:I heard what happened.

Ma Phem wiped her tears.

Ma Phem:She hasn't woken up and the doctors are still running tests.

Marang:Okay.

Ma Phem:You're the only friend who came to check on her.

Marang:I had to.

Ma Phemelo looked at Marang, she had a sweet childish voice and in her home clothes she looked more like a child. She was sweet. Too sweet.

Ma Phem:We'll tell you if there is a change.

Marang:thank you mam and it will be okay. Have a nice day.

Marang walked away and Joshua joined her.

Marang:Gatwe she is out, she will be fine. I hope so.

Joshua:You are too sweet, you know that?

Marang:I didn't know.

Joshua:Sweet girls deserve ice cream.

Marang:I love you okay?

Joshua:okay puzzle piece.

She laughed walking by his side as short as she was.

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A YEAR AND 3 MONTHS LATER

# THE GAME

#47

At Maun

At the hospital

Joshua placed his coat on the chair as he went through some of his in-patient files. The door opened and one of the nurses he worked with, peeked in, her straight weave gleaming.

Her: Hey Dr, we are going out for lunch. Want to join us?

Joshua looked at his files and at her, she walked in and sat on one of the chairs.

Her: You never join us for anything.

Joshua: I am a busy man.

Her:Whonputs himself on unnecessary night shifts.

Joshua shrugged. Well he has been doing pretty well. Well not well in terms of the excess testosterone levels he had. He swore that if he saw baby girl right now, he would take her on this desk without a care in the world.

The nurse saw that his mind had wandered off and she snapped her manicured fingers.

Her:Dr...hello...

Joshua snapped out of it and rubbed his head.

Joshua:Well I can't join you guys Same.

Same:Well okay. The offer still stands.

Joshua:I'll think about it.

She stood up and walked out, he always smelt so good and she couldn't quite get the name of his cologne, it was unique. Plus he looked lonely ever since he started working here. No mention of a girlfriend whatsoever but he was hot. She never let it show.

She sighed and went to join the others, he always he will think about it but he never did and what made it worse was that they were neighbors and not once and she ever seen a girl walk in his house. Not that he was always in his house, he was working tirelessly every single day she wondered when he was going to catch a break.

In his office Joshua went to his gallery and he smiled looking opening the album that had Marang's photos. He was missing her so damn much. He didn't have a lot of off days because he spent most of them during the Independence holidays, buying himself more time with his baby. He was only going to go to Francistown two days before Christmas though and there wasn't enough time to spend with her. He was hoping to spend the first week of January back in Francistown too because that very week was her 18th birthday and he wanted to make it special for her in every way.

He put his phone down and sighed. Obsessed? He didn't know how possessive he was going to be over her once he had a taste of the cake. Knowing he was going to be first and that she trusted him wholeheartedly. He liked the cologne, she never spent on herself but she went to buy him a cologne and watch for his birthday. He shook his head as he smelled his shirt collars, she didn't know he sprayed it everyday when he came to work.

At Francistown

Sunshine Orphanage

Marang closed her eyes in pain. This is what girls go through when they do braids. This was so painful and she couldn't even move her head. One of her roommates laughed shaking her head.

Her: You will get used to it.



Marang:I don't think so, it hurts yoh yoh...

Her:Marang o nale drama.

Marang:Ekete nka screamer mma! Do you have panado? I think I'm going to have a headache but I promised to check on someone.

Her:They suit you tlhemma. Do your hair more.

Marang:Thank you and we will see, will my hat fit? It's too sunny outside..

Her:Look at the forehead.

Marang:The sun mma wena...Imagine sitting for more than three hours on the chair, ke kokonetswe..

Her:Bathong Marang.

Marang:Too much mma.

She got her sun hat and walked out of the room, she told the caregivers where she was going as she said her goodbyes.

She caught a taxi.

At Phemelo's parents

The intercom rang and the helper went to open the gate.

Marang walked in and greeted the helper, being weary of the dogs. They still scared her till this day.

She got in the house and Phemelo was on the carpet with her baby brother. The child was cute and looked like Phemelo but in a boyish way.

Marang:Hello.

Phemelo:Hi, I was starting to think you were not going to make it.

Marang:I promised just that I took longer than I anticipated.

Phemelo:Wait did you do your hair?

Marang removed the sun hat and Phemelo smiled. Marang was blossoming beautifully, she was just a ray of sunshine like her name.

Marang:are you comfortable?

Phemelo:Mhmm I'm fine...

Marang removed her sandals and sat on the carpet and cooed to the baby.

Phemelo:I'm sorry..I-

Marang:just as long as you know that Joshua is off limits we are cool.

Phemelo:I no longer use that phone, it got destroyed in the accident so..I'm really sorry.

Marang:We are cool. We've been okay for over a year, it was just a lapse in judgement right?

Phemelo:Yes and thank you for being so kind tlhemma.

Marang:kante gatwe ke ene mang, Thunder ene yo

neng a go ntsha mo tseleng.

Phemelo laughed as she pushed her braids back.

Phemelo:Raine Bathong Marang!

Marang shrugged.

Marang:whatever her name was I never liked her  
moss..it's too sunny for a walk maybe later..

Phemelo:I'm babysitting this guy.

Marang:He is such a cutie..heeyy(baby voice)

Phemelo:the hairstyle suits you.

Marang:Thank you.

He giggled and Marang laughed as the girls talked.

Two hours later Marang helped Phemelo stand as  
she handed her the crutches.

Phemelo:Thanks. A walk?

Marang:Yes yes. Let me wear my hat.

Phemelo:Let me go wear the prosthetic leg, I'll be back.

Marang nodded as Phemelo made her way to the room.

In the bedroom Phemelo wiped away her tears, this was always a reminder of what happened. She was coming okay but then there were complications and they had to cut her left leg off. People never noticed because she always wore long dresses and trousers. She touched the smooth skin of her cut leg and that brought more tears to her eyes. Raine had distanced herself from her because she wasn't so cool anymore and Raine started talking about her.

That's when she knew that the words of a sister came back in whispers to prove that she was not, she seemed like a twin from her dreams instead she

was a crook who was caught. She didn't care, she couldn't believe that Marang was the one who was there for her and always treated her normally like she was still a whole human being.

She had disappointed her parents but they forgave her and were there for her every step of the way. She wore the leg and she wobbled till she caught her balance then walked to the wardrobe for her cap then walked out with a slight limp.

Marang was watching over the now sleeping baby.

Phemelo:I'm done..

Marang:Alright..

Marang slipped her phone out of the pockets of the dress she was wearing, she was so pretty and she just hated herself for treating her like a fool when Marang was just a genuine person.

They walked out and walked on the other side of the road.

At London, Britain

Seeletso looked at her calendar, she could go home and what if they didn't spend Christmas at home?

She dialed her brother's number.

Joshua:Hey you.

Seeletso:I don't feel like going home these holidays.

Joshua:o simolotse akere?(you have started)

Seeletso:No, listen to me. I want to convince mom to let the whole family go to Maun for the holidays ebile that way we don't inconvenience you.

Joshua thought about it but then if the family is here, he was still going to go to Francistown to see his girl.

Seeletso:pretty please plus the fresh air will do the family some good, those boat drives and tours all around.

Joshua:Okay,that might actually work.

Seeletso:Thank you..I'll be there in a week.

Joshua:Can't wait to see you sis..

Seeletso:same bro and greet your wife for me.

Joshua:Seeletso!!

Seeletso:(laughing)bye!tell your wife I love her.

Joshua:shut up!

He hung up and she laughed closing her books and then laying on the bed.

At Phemelo's parents

Twenty minutes later they walked inside the yard.

Phemelo:I didn't know I needed that walk.



Marang:same.

She checked her watch and hugged Phemelo.

Marang:I have to go. I have chores to do.

Phemelo:Okay. Thank you for visiting.

Marang:Anytime okay? Anytime.

She walked to the gate and waved at Phemelo who waved back with a smile.

Marang got out and the gate closed.

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## THE GAME

#48

### At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang removed her sandals and held the hat in her hands as she went to place them in the bedroom. She wore her flip flops and headed to the kitchen. She started with the dishes and then the pots before she cleaned the stove. She cleaned the fridge and went to the deep freezer to clean it. Okay she gave herself these chores and she was hoping they would grant her this one favor. It was just one favor.

Her phone rang in her pocket so she used the kitchen cloth to wipe her hands. She looked at the caller ID and immediately answered.

Marang:Dumelang

Ma Josh:Hello, apparently you passed by.

Marang:Ee mma, ne gotwe you weren't feeling well..

Ma Josh:Thank you for passing by, how are you?

Marang:I am good. I'll walk over there tomorrow. Is that okay?

Ma Josh laughed softly.

Ma Josh:Let me guess, you are always doing house chores.

Marang:Ee mma. I have nothing to do till February when the results are out.

Ma Josh:nervous?

Marang:very, I'm just hoping that I did well ma.

Ma Josh:You are smart, there is nothing to worry about.

Marang:I guess so. I am doing the dishes, can I call again later?

Ma Josh:No, it's okay. Bye!

Marang:Bye..

She hung up and placed the phone back in her pocket as she continued doing her self assigned tasks. She hoped Mrs Thuso agrees. She was crossing fingers and she knew Seeletso won't mind would she? If she told a little lie about her. Just a little lie.

Marang took out the pots to get started with supper for all the kids here. She was really trying and it had been a long hour of intense cleaning.

Once the pots were on the stove, she tiredly went to sit down on the couch in the sitting room. She heaved a sigh of tiredness and took out her phone.

She used FaceTime as she waited for Josh to answer his phone. He answered after some minutes.

Joshua:Hey swee-fuck!

She giggled.

Marang:Hey..

Joshua:I don't think I'll concentrate at work now when my baby is looking all kinds of fine.

Marang:Save lives mr.

Joshua looked down and he saw the tent in his pants. He looked back at the camera and Marang had a small frown.

Marang:Are you okay?

Joshua:Yes sweetness, I'm okay.

Marang:Tell me about your day..

Joshua loved that she was always willing to listen about what encompassed his day and she even threw comments in, if she wasn't the best then he didn't know what was.

Marang:Will he be okay? The patient?

Joshua:We are hoping so.

Marang:Shems!

Joshua:Can I call you later my love when I'm at home?

Marang:Okay. I love you.

Joshua:Photos, send me photos.

Marang laughed.

Marang:Okay Dr Colton. I love you okay?

Joshua:I love you more baby...

She hung up and went to check the pots. Did she take pictures? She didn't think she did but he wanted pictures of her. She smiled as she opened the pantry and got out the rice.

Two hours later of slaving away on the stove, she dished up for each and everyone. The caregivers thanked her and she nodded as they complimented her for the clean kitchen and all. She did all of this for everyone.

Marang:Let me go take a shower, I'll be back.

She walked back to the room and snapped a few

pictures before she got rid of her clothes and wrapped her body in a towel. She tried tying her hair but it was too painful, he didn't know how long it was going to be like this. She had no clue. Honestly.

At Maun

Joshua knocked off work and he walked to the parking lot to his car. He needed to rest and just call Marang. Was it showing that he genuinely loved her, he hoped so and his prayer was that she doesn't change. He didn't want her to change at all because she was perfect the way she was but then again she was growing up and she had varsity. She never told him which course she wanted to pursue but then he was going to find out.

He got inside the car and he dialed her number, he was obsessed with her and he didn't know if it was a good thing or a bad thing.

The call was ended. It looked like she hung up.

At Sunshine Orphanage

Mrs Thuso was here for her routine checks and she was surprised at the level of cleanliness in the kitchen and the food was nice,

Mrs Thuso:who made the food?

Caregiver:Marang gave herself all this work, she even cleaned the kitchen.

Mrs Thuso:Oh wow!

Marang smiled as she walked away. She placed her phone away, she will call him later.

Minutes later she walked to the sitting room and she found Mrs Thuso alone.

Marang:Dumelang!



Mrs Thuso:Marang hello.

Marang:I wanted to talk about something.

She sat next to her and she twiddled her thumbs,  
Seeletso will forgive her for this smallnyana lie.

Marang:Seeletso is back and unfortunately she said  
she is at Maun for the holidays and I wanted to see  
her, I haven't seen her ever since she went to London.

Mrs Thuso raised her eyebrow suspiciously.

Mrs Thuso:You will be going to varsity next year and  
you are almost an adult, there are a few things you  
need to know.

Marang:Ma?

Mrs Thuso:In whatever you do, use protection and  
contraceptives and know that you have an education  
to consider. A child would be such an inconvenience  
at this age. You have a lot to live for.

Marang:I just wanted to check on Seeletso ma..

Mrs Thuso:I know how teenage minds work Marang I'm not stupid.

Marang pretended to be shocked.

Mrs Thuso:Marang you don't think I know you are seeing Joshua?

Marang's mouth slackened.

Marang:Ma?

Mrs Thuso laughed.

Mrs Thuso:You can't outsmart me Marang, we know these things.

Marang:You can call Seeletso and ask.

Mrs Thuso:You can go, when did "Seeletso" say you should come check her? I want to make sure you are safe and I have the location details.

Marang:Monday...

Mrs Thuso:That's two days.

Marang:Ee mma...I haven't seen her for more than five months and she is always busy.

Mrs Thuso:Send me the details, ke tla go pega bus(I'll make sure, you get inside the bus)

Marang:Thank you so much. I will give them tomorrow. Thank you.

She hugged Mrs Thuso and walked to the bedroom. When she got there she literally screamed.

Her roommate hit her with the pillow and she laughed.

Marang:Where is my phone?

She found her phone and dialed Seeletso.

Seeletso:Hi there.

Marang>Hello how is London?

Seeletso:this place is fun, really mma. I've seen the tourist site Keore harsh, I want you to come see this for yourself and now mma it's snowing...

Marang:Aaw man..Look I lied about something. If Mrs Thuso asks you if you are landing Maun tell her

yes and that you are already there.

Seeletso laughed. She stopped laughing and laughed again.

Seeletso: You are going to see who? My brother?  
Banyana!

Marang: Don't laugh tlhemma.

Seeletso: Ehe mma. I will do what you say, you owe me.

Marang: Okay. Uhm where does he live again?

Seeletso: I will send the details. Le tricky banyana la itse.

Marang: Thank you...see you when you come here..bye.

Seeletso: bye (laughing)

She hung and Marang dialed Joshua's number.

He answered and she laid on her back.

Marang: Sorry I dropped your call I was with Mrs

Thuso.

Joshua:It's okay babe...

They talked for over thirty minutes when Joshua paused.

Joshua:there is a knock on my door.

Marang:Go get it, maybe it's important.

Joshua placed the phone against his shoulder and ear as he walked to the door.

Joshua:You were saying babe?

Marang:I'm still not sure about what to study tota...

Joshua opened the door.

Joshua:Babe I'll help you with research and we'll look at all course available akere go sharpo?

Same gave him a smile as she held the Tupperware dish in her hands.

Marang:Okay it's fine, we'll go through all of them..

Joshua:I'll you back in a few minutes okay  
sweetness?

Marang:okay. O dire video call..

Joshua laughed.

Joshua:Mxm! You give me sleepless nights I won't  
be able to sleep after seeing your pretty face.

Marang:I'll video call then.

Joshua:o tla swaba!

Marang:bye.

She hung up and he held the phone in his hand.

Joshua:Hey Same.

Same:Hi, I made a lot of food today and decided to  
bring you some.

Joshua:That's kind of you, you didn't have to.

Same:I wanted to. Tsaya..

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## THE GAME

#49

At Maun

Joshua's house

Joshua took the plate and thanked her before he closed the door. What was it with women and giving him food?

He made his way to the kitchen where he opened the bin and spilled the food inside.

Same stood by the door. He just closed the door on her face and didn't even blink. He had a girlfriend too? She shrugged. Besides he didn't know how she feels

about him, feelings do die right?

Joshua washed the lunchbox and placed it on the countertop.

He walked to the bedroom in his sweatpants and vest. He dialed his baby girl who answered immediately.

Marang:I'm hanging up, FaceTime Joshua.

Joshua:Bathong Marang.

Marang:I love you more baby.

Joshua:You're annoying..

Marang:I'll FaceTime in a few minutes okay?

She hung up and he laughed. Marang was something else and she opened up to him at all times. She called back again and he answered, seeing her pretty smile.



At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo slowly climbed the bed and stared up at the ceiling. There was a soft door knock and she softly told the person to come in.

Her mother sat by her side of the bed and Phemelo smiled sadly.

Phemelo:Hey mom.

Ma Phem:Are you okay?

Phemelo:I'm fine, I was with Marang earlier.

Ma Phem:So I heard(smiling)but are you okay?

Phemelo held back tears.

Phemelo:Even after a year I haven't gotten used to not having my other leg, I don't feel confident enough to wear anything short or even go swimming. It is a constant reminder of my recklessness.

Ma Phem held her hand and rubbed it.

Ma Phem:Phemelo with time you need to forgive yourself, it happened and as painful as it was you should be grateful that you are still alive.

Phemelo sighed sadly using her other hand to wipe her tears.

Ma Phem:we don't make you feel indifferent, you are still the Phemelo we know and love, you are still that smart child of ours. Baby forgive yourself..

Phemelo:It's hard, knowing that you were okay the day before and the next day you have a new reality, one that makes you feel excluded.

Ma Phem:you are the one excluding yourself baby, there is nothing wrong with you..

She knew her mother was just trying to make her feel better about herself but there was everything wrong with her.

Ma Phem:Rest okay and we love you..

Her mother kissed her cheek and walked out. Phemelo pressed her smart phone and looked at the only contacts she had. Just less than ten and it was peaceful, they wouldn't judge her for her bad decisions though she judged herself so harshly it was sad.

She went to Facebook and smiled sadly. The last time she uploaded a picture was more than a year ago, she rarely posts and she never responded to dms. She just hoped that Theo had a nice life, she was the only one with a serious injury while the others walked out with broken bones that heal overtime. And all that Raine had exposed when she started to talk about her made it impossible for her to talk to Theo again. She had this life reminder of that one particular where everything went wrong. The tears wetted her pillow and she sniffed. All she had was regrets and regrets which would not change her current situation.

## At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang:Monday are you busy?

Joshua:I want to rest..di shift di tla mpolaya(these shifts will kill me)

Marang:Please don't die on us and take it easy.

He chuckled.

Joshua yawned.

Joshua:I'm exhausted, goodnight.

Marang:Goodnight.

She hung up and he yawned again putting his phone aside, closing his eyes.

Meanwhile Marang put the phone under her bed and turned to face the wall, so basically she was going to see him. She couldn't wait. She closed her eyes with a small smile gracing her lips.

The following morning

She was up early and ready to pack. Just so she didn't forget anything and she should go see his mother since she didn't see her yesterday.

She walked to wardrobe to tie her pick of the clothes she is going to need.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo laid in bed, that feeling of worthlessness stronger than ever and she didn't even have the energy to get out. Her bedroom door opened and her father walked inside the bedroom. She just turned on her side and sighed.

Ra Phem:morning..

Phemelo:Morning..

Ra Phem: Get up, we have somewhere to be.

Phemelo: Do I really have to go?

He nodded and she reluctantly got out of bed with his help as he handed her the crutches.

Ra Phem: I'll be waiting for you in the lounge.

She nodded and her father walked out.

Meanwhile in the lounge Ma Phem looked at him as he made his way to her.

Ma Phem: I have feeling she is starting to get depressed. This outing will be good for her right?

Ra Phem: I hope so, life happens and what we should do is move from whatever that happened.

Ma Phem: she is no longer the same..

She rubbed her arms, they don't remember the last time she genuinely smiled and now that schools were closed she had nothing to do than to wallow in her misfortunes and the past.

At town later that morning

Phemelo's father held Phemelo's hand as they did their shopping. Well she was doing shopping though she was forced to go outside and interact with the outside world.

Ra Phem: You know the pin to the card right?

Phemelo's heart skipped several beats.

Phemelo: You're leaving me alone?

Ra Phem: I'm going to get food princess..

Phemelo: I can go with you and we'll go to the shop after the food.

Ra Phem: At some point you are going to have to let go of the fear.

She didn't want to be judged or get looks from

strangers passing by, it was less scarier to face them when she was with he dad than when she was alone. That was why she avoided going out in public, she trended so much on social media and people rarely forget shit.

Ra Phem:I'll be waiting by the door then, enter the store.

Phemelo:We can go in together or go home..

Her father sighed and walked inside the store holding her hand.

Phemelo:thank you.

She was literally clinging onto him as they walked by the rails and all she picked were the long dresses and loose pants.

Still in that shop she saw Theo and pretended not to see him as her father shooed her to fit the clothes before he paid for them. She reluctantly let go of his hand and she made her way to the fitting room.



Theo saw her father on his phone as soon as Phemelo had left and he walked into the fitting room.

Theo:Phemelo!!

She froze while she was zipping up the pants. She held her breath hoping he would go away.

Theo:Phemelo, can we talk? Please!

She covered her mouth and waited.

Theo:Please! Just this once and I won't bother you again.

She cautiously opened the door and he walked to the open door, stepping in.

Theo:Hi..

Phemelo:What do you want?

Theo:Phemelo I'm sorry..

Phemelo:you already apologized at the hospital.

He rubbed his hands together taking her in, that radiant glow she used to have was no longer there and the spark that was always in her eyes had dulled down. The accident did that, that one night they changed the course of her life and he carried that guilt wherever he went. He swallowed.

Theo:I know my apologies won't change anything but I'm sorry. I swear that wasn't supposed to happen.

Phemelo held back tears, she was trying to heal and seeing him was a reminder of how stupid she had been.

Phemelo:okay(biting her lip)I forgive you, it's okay. Don't talk to me again okay? Seeing you is a reminder of how misguided I was..

Theo looked down as her voice cracked.

Phemelo:of how I was also a pawn in all your games. There was a bet placed on me Theo!

He had nothing to say.

Phemelo:Raine spurted it out once the friendship ended. To see if he will sleep with the girl tonight

Theo:Phem I didn't because it was wrong.

Phemelo:I was such a moron and I hate that I had to lose a leg to see that while everyone is okay.

Theo:Phem-

Phemelo:Don't tell me you would take my place because you would not right? As young as I am I was crazy about you...

Theo:I still love you.

Phemelo:Classic. No one would want a disabled person because everything is about clout and who looks good and who doesn't.

Theo:Phemelo!

She shook her head as she used her hands to wipe her tears.

Phemelo:I am not a fool, this is no longer a game. I

should've have known this so called love was a game. Get out!

He looked at her as she struggled to hold back her tears. He wanted to wipe her tears away but he was the cause too.

Phemelo: Get out before I scream and security throws you out!

He stepped out and she closed the door.

Phemelo sat down wiping her tears. Even Raine was playing games with her right? She was too blind to see it but she didn't need them now and it was game over. No longer a pawn in their chess game.

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## THE GAME

#50

At town

Theo sat down on a nearby bench. He messed up yes and the accident was just that, an accident. He didn't know for how long he was supposed to say sorry, she said she forgave him but she was too angry and upset. The accident changed everything and what she did get know was that he didn't walk out Scott free from the accident, she lost a leg and he had less chances of bearing a child ever due to those spinal cord injuries which had rendered him wheelchair bound for months but no one knew that right? Even Phem. Just because he did his physiotherapy and sessions to get stronger, he seemed normal.

He checked his Facebook knowing very well he was blocked, he really wanted to talk to her. She was still angry and he understood where she was coming from, he really did. He will find a way he guessed. He was just here for the holidays before going back to school in January.

Meanwhile Phemelo held the shopping bag with one hand while the other held onto her father's hand.

Ra Phem:Are you okay? You seem down after fitting the clothes..

Phemelo:I'm okay dad, we can go buy food.

They walked to the parking lot while her father thought she was upset that the clothes won't look good on her because of her leg.

Ra Phem:I think you should do therapy.

Phemelo:I'm okay, I did it after the accident.

Ra Phem:again.

Phemelo:I'm okay, the therapist doesn't understand they say what they are taught to say.

Ra Phem:Phemelo..

Phemelo:It's okay dad, really.

She let go of her father's hand as he unlocked the car and opened the boot, she put her shopping bags inside and it was closed.

She walked to the passenger seat and opened the door. She got in and buckled up, rigid on the car seat. It was weird how being in a car, even when it was her parents car always brought back memories and that sudden fear that could suddenly make her point blank and cause literal tears to fall down her cheeks.

Ra Phem:it's okay, you are safe. This is still the same car we came with.

She nodded and placed her hands on her lap looking at her nails.

Ra Phem:do you want to do your nails?

Phemelo:I'm good. We can get food and go home.

He nodded and started the car as Phemelo closed her eyes and did the silent chant she always did when she was in a motor vehicle.

At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang went through the suitcase she had. She packed everything she needed and in that same suitcase she stashed the money she had been saving up in the suitcase and she pushed her braids back with a small smile.

She took her phone and dialed Phemelo.

Phemelo:Hello..

Marang:Hey Phem. How are you?



Phemelo:I'm good and you?

Marang:well...

Marang sat down as they talked for over an hour then she smiled.

Marang:Sure you're okay though? You sound down.

Phemelo:It's nothing.

Marang:I'll be gone for some time so I won't be able to visit.

Phemelo:Travel mercies love and be safe wherever you are going. Be safe please please.

Marang:I will. Bye love.

Phemelo:Byee!

She hung up and Marang smiled as she texted Joshua, she still had to visit Ma Joshua and it was still too early to talk to Seeletso. She was busy with school and she didn't want to disturb her. She will call Joshua later on.

At Maun

Joshua's house

Joshua placed his bag down as he stretched his body. Today was a shorter day because it was a Sunday and he was grateful for the break and rest. He was going to thoroughly rest tomorrow, play some relaxing music and just rest. Baby girl being around would definitely be a bonus, he could imagine her small hands massaging his back and he soft laugh echoing in the room, laughing at what he is saying and going quiet, concentrating on her given task with her brows furrowed and those tiny lips bit down.

But then he has never let it go further more than a kiss, she was still young for this and he knew if she could touch an inch of his skin he would be over her

in a matter of minutes.

He had the urge to even call her. He face palmed as he locked the door and headed to the bedroom.

Patience was just a virtue, one he really felt these past year and months.

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# THE GAME

#51

The following day

At Maun

The bus finally arrived a few minutes after 2pm and Marang called Mrs Thuso.

Mrs Thuso:Hello

Marang:hello, I just arrived.

Mrs Thuso:get Seeletso to come pick you up.

Marang:Ee mma.

Mrs Thuso:Then tell me when you've arrived safely at the house.

Marang:Ee mma..

She stepped out of the bus and waited for her luggage. She got the suitcase while she held another small bag in her hands. Mrs Thuso hung up and she sighed. Joshua had no idea she would be coming here and Seeletso last night said that she should look for a cab and give them the address. Seeletso went on to say Marang should take a picture of the plate number for security reasons.

She dragged her suitcase and looked for a cab but didn't find one. She contemplated calling Joshua but this was a surprise but she didn't really trust anyone here. She sucked in a deep breath and found a taxi. It already had people inside so she told herself over and over that she was safe.

Marang:Dumelang..

The taxi woman looked at her small innocent face.

Taxi woman:Hi..

Marang took out the paper she had scribbled down

his address and gave it to her.

Marang:I'm going there.

Taxi woman:Oh. I have a client going there too. Let me help you with your bag o tsene.

Marang:Thank you.

She sat at the back and placed her hands and phone on her lap. She forgot to tell Phemelo she arrived safely just to put her mind at ease. She texted both Phemelo and Seeletso telling them she arrived safely.

The woman occupying the front seat turned to look at Marang.

Her:Are you new in Maun?

Marang:Ee mma..

Her:okay..

Marang placed her phone down as the taxi woman got inside the car and started the car.

Taxi woman: You know the house number?

Marang checked her phone.

Marang: Ee mma. You can drop me at the location.

The woman started driving, carefully exiting the bus rank and joining the road.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo responded to Marang's text and placed her phone down as her little brother attempted to take it from her.

Phemelo: We don't do that (little smile)

The baby spoke his gibberish as Phemelo played with him. She was going to wait for him to sleep.

Phemelo:Hungry?

She should make him something to eat. Yep!

At Maun

The taxi stopped right where the doctor and nurse houses started.

Marang paid the woman as she and the woman who was sitting in front stepped out.

Marang:Thank you.

She got her luggage and started dragging it across the sand. It was so hot and she regretted not wearing her sun hat.

Her:Where are you going specifically?

Marang:I'm looking for a house around here, I'm sure I'll find it.



Marang took out her phone and the woman just looked at her. This girl was tiny and she came to Maun alone.

Her:aren't you too young to be traveling alone? Or you are here to visit a relative?

Marang:Not really.

She committed the house number to memory. He said he will be off right?

She started to drag her bag along the straight dusty path looking at the houses on her left and right. Plus she will be able to spot his car too. The lady who in actual fact was Same walked behind her holding her plastic bags. She should get her Tupperware and if Joshua wants she can invite him over for dinner. The little girl turned and Same frowned as she walked towards Joshua's house.

Same:You're sure you are looking for this house?

She said as she opened her gate.

Marang looked at the car. That was his alright.

Marang:Yep. Pleasure meeting you.

Marang opened the gate and dragged her bag inside before closing it. Same was confused at this point.

Marang innocently walked to the front door as Same slowly made the way to hers.

Marang placed her phone in the back pocket of her jean then rubbed her hands. She told deep breaths. She could hear music playing in the background. He was home. He was definitely home.

She knocked on the door while Same watched. She wasn't sure she was following.

Meanwhile in the house Joshua came over his hand as he grunted. He just needed to picture her and her

soft voice and hands then he was undone. He heard a door knock that was persistent as hell. He pulled up his pants and washed his hands before wiping them then walked to the door, half naked with his upper body exposed and those sweatpants hanging low on his waist exposing the brand label of the Calvin Klein briefs he had on. The knocking stopped before it continued seconds later.

Marang waited anxiously at the door, hoping Seeletso got the right address too and that she wasn't lost. Imagine being lost in a place you don't know. That would be hell. She heard the door knob turn and the door opened.

Joshua's jaw slackened as he rubbed his eyes. He was dreaming and he needed to wake up. That's not Marang is it? His baby girl was in Francistown and this wasn't her.

Marang smiled sweetly at him. It was hard to believe that she traveled all the way from Francistown to

Maun to see him.

Marang:Hi..(softly)

Joshua was rendered speechless and he just opened his arms for her. She jumped on to him, her jean clad legs wrapping around his bare torso and her hands on his back.

Joshua:Fuck! Sweetness hey..

Marang:hi. Again.(giggling)

Same just walked into her house and closed her door.

Joshua held her small body in his arms and looked at her. Their eyes locking and she looked down with blush creeping on her cheeks. He couldn't quite believe it that he was holding her.

Joshua:You d-damn!

Marang:Surprise!

He chuckled and breathed softly against her neck

before kissing her neck.

Joshua: Surprise indeed..when? How?

Marang: Today...

He kissed her neck again and she giggled. He put her down and tipped her head upwards. Baby girl was here? In the flesh.

Marang: Let me get my bag an-

Joshua: I got it.

He stepped out and pulled the suitcase inside the house before closing the door. With his other hand he pulled her to him and held her waist.

Marang: I didn't know you had a back tattoo.

Joshua: You never asked...

He let go of the bag and picked her up as she half screamed and half laughed.

Marang: Josh!

Joshua:I still can't believe you're here...

Marang:I am..put me down(laughing)

Joshua:Why would I?

Marang:I don't know...

Her soft laugh echoed in the room and his heart settled down as he put her down once again. As soon as her feet hit the floor, she was attacked with a kiss and he just picked her leg, hooking it against his before he made her wrap her leg around him. He walked to the couch and sat down, enjoying the sweet kiss. Her soft hands rubbed his back and he wasn't sure that with her with him in the house all alone, how long was he going to control himself.

Marang's hands moved his his chest as they moved up and down his six-pack. He broke the kiss and she breathed softly against his lips, her lips wet and pink from his kiss. Her eyes fluttered open and he kissed her again. She welcomed the kiss openly as his

hands slid under her t-shirt and he held her waist, feeling her skin against his hands.

Her small hands wrapped around his neck and he used one hand to pull her closer to him and held her small butt with the other, his warmth leaving her waist. He broke the kiss as they both breathed against each other.

Joshua:Welcome to Maun.

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## THE GAME

#52

At Maun

Joshua's house

He showed her around the two bedroom house as she silently walked behind him. His tattoo was fascinating. Joshua turned to look at her.

Joshua:Are you listening babe?

Marang:uhm yes.

Joshua:What was I saying?

She kept quiet and he sighed.

Joshua:Forget about that, do you want to rest or? If I knew you were coming, I would've prepared the other bedroom for you.



Marang:the other bedroom?(slowly)

Joshua:Yes..

Marang:okay.

They walked back to the lounge where she got her bag.

Marang:where should I put it?

Joshua:For now put it in my room..

He will wait, as long as he is not tempted. Just two more weeks til she is 18.

Marang:I'm spending Christmas here mme.

Joshua:Wait what?(surprised)

Marang frowned.

Marang:You don't want me here, I can still go back.

Joshua:no! No! I didn't mean it like that. I never expected it.

Marang:It's not a problem and if it's too much I can

go back.

Joshua:You can never be too much, does that mean you are also spending New Year's day with me?

Marang:Yes.

Joshua:Then I can take you out on a tour?

Marang smiled.

Marang:I would love that, is it the same like the tourist magazines I read at the library at school?

Joshua:Even better. You can place your bag in my bedroom and get comfortable.

Marang:Thank you.

Joshua:then we will talk.

Marang:am I in trouble?

Joshua:Not at all.

Marang pulled her suitcase to his bedroom.

Marang:Should I pack my clothes or leave them in the suitcase?

Joshua:Pack them.

She laid the suitcase flat on the carpet and unzipped it, placing her clothes on top of the bed. Everything was white here. She hoped and prayed she won't make anything dirty, her bedding at the orphanage wasn't white but it was a dark colour hence dirt was hard to detect.

She started packing while humming and Joshua sat on the couch not exactly believing his luck. She came all the way to Maun to see him? He honestly never thought she would come here.

He grabbed the remote and switched on the tv.

30 minutes later Joshua saw Marang walking with a towel to the bathroom. He closed his eyes. This was temptation personified. He heard the shower running and knowing he could do nothing, he had no choice but to imagine her under the shower, with the lather

all over her back and the water hitting her skin, making it gleam and him just there in the middle of the water with her. This was going to be some long ass holiday for sure.

He massaged his boner then switched the channels. By the time she was out, there was no tv playing and he started to press his phone.

Marang walked sat next to him minutes later in her usual long dresses.

Joshua:Babe?

Marang:hmm..(placing her head on his shoulder)

Joshua:Why are you always in long dresses?

She sighed.

Marang:I don't want to feel exposed. Other than you, the family and the children at the home at times I feel like men might be out to get me..like wh-what happened years ago. Wearing long dresses means I don't expose myself, jeans are just difficult to get

out of hence I have a pair or two.

Joshua:Why didn't you talk to me.

Marang:I didn't think what I wear matters.

Joshua:as long as you are comfortable.

Marang:more than..

She held his hand and sighed.

Joshua:do you still get flashbacks?

Marang:It's something I'll never completely forget, I just don't want to think about it. I want to be happy. You make me happy and I've been happy. Getting good grades, I'm safe and surrounded by people who care for me.

Joshua:And sex?

Marang:I've never really put much thought into ever since that time you scolded me.

Joshua:but is it something you would be scared of?  
Intimacy?

Marang:I don't think so given that I'm completely comfortable with you. You wouldn't hurt me. You are

asking on your own behalf aren't you?

Joshua:Uh...

Marang:It's okay. I guess, you do have the right to ask...

Joshua:Why are you so sweet?

Marang:I don't know(laughing)

Joshua:But I won't rush you..

She kissed his lips slowly with her soft hands on his cheeks.

Marang:Thank you.

she let go of his face and smiled.

Marang:I didn't eat on my way here, what's for lunch?

Joshua:I haven't cooked. You can cook?

Marang:Show me where the food is then..

Joshua:You weren't listening earlier were you?

Marang:I don't remember seeing where your food is. Show me.

Joshua:Fine..

She stood up and walked to the kitchen with him following closely behind. He showed her where everything was and the food.

Marang:cupboard ekete di empty mme(the cupboards seem empty)

Joshua:I live alone and normally eat out..

Marang:oh okay. Tomorrow you're going to work?

Joshua:yes sweetness but next week I'll be all yours and I'll be your guide around here.

Marang:That would be nice..food?

Joshua:We can do grocery shopping later on or maybe after I shower.

Marang:I've never done grocery shopping before.

Joshua laughed.

Joshua:I'm going to take a shower,just note down everything you think is needed in the kitchen.

Marang:Okay..

He kissed her cheek and walked out leaving Marang there. Her stomach growled and she sighed walking out. She sat on the couch but she wasn't holding her phone. She picked his up and unlocked it. She headed straight to the music app and leaned back.

At Same's place

Same contemplated going to get her Tupperware back or just sitting down. Her mind couldn't process the fact that the girl who was in the taxi with her was Joshua's girlfriend. She saw them hug and that didn't look like an innocent hug. She finally made up her mind and stood up. She might as well go ask for it back.

She closed her door and walked.



Marang was humming to one of her favorite songs on his phone when she heard a door knock. She paused the music and listened. It was definitely a door knock.

She went to the door and opened it since Joshua was still in the shower. Marang smiled seeing the lady from earlier.

Marang:Hello.

Same:Hi, is Joshua here?

Marang:Yes h-

Same:Can I talk to him?

Marang ignored the fact that she interrupted her sentence.

Marang:He is in th-

Same:Can I talk to him?

Marang sighed pushing her braids back.

She moved from the door.

Marang:tsena...

Same walked inside and sat on the couch. Marang walked barefoot to the bathroom and knocked before she opened the door a little bit and her head was the only thing visible as she stared at his backside. She closed her eyes now.

Joshua:and then?

Marang:a woman wants to see, she is in the sitting room.

Joshua:Why are you eyes closed?

Marang:Invasion of privacy..

He chuckled as she stepped out of the shower and wrapped a towel around his torso, his dick showing against the cotton of the towel.

He pulled her inside the bathroom and closed the door as Marang giggled.

Marang:You have a guest..

Joshua:Well just a kiss..

He said as he lowered his head down and caught her lips. She closed her eyes, hands on his wet neck and Joshua's hands moved to her small butt, rubbing it up and down as he kissed her. She was the one to break the kiss.

Marang:I'll be in the lounge.

She pecked his lips and opened the door walking out and Joshua followed. He stopped in his tracks, what was Same doing here?

Marang sat down on the couch while Joshua headed to the bedroom.

Same quietly observed and she wanted to interrogate the kid. Wasn't she too young to be at men's houses at this age.

Same:How old are you?

Marang:19.

She said without batting an eyelash.

Same:oh.

Marang pressed Joshua's phone while waiting for him. He only came minutes later in fresh clothes.

Joshua:Hi, how can I help?

Same:I came for the Tupperware. Was the food delicious?

Joshua looked at Marang who was busy on his phone.

Joshua:It really was.

Same:Well if you want dinner, you are free to come over at my place for food.

Joshua:sure.

He walked to the kitchen and looked for the Tupperware. When he found it he walked back to the lounge and handed it to Same.

Same: Thank you. I have to get going.

Joshua: Thank you once again,

Same: pleasure, just talk to me if you need anything.

He nodded and she stood up.

Same: bye (directed at Marang)

Marang: Bye bye..

She said with a brief smile before her head dropped and she stared at the phone screen once again.

Same walked out and closed the door. Joshua looked at Marang expecting her to say anything, something...

Marang: we are going to buy food now?

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## THE GAME

#53

At Joshua's house

Marang:Let me go wear my shoes then we can do the grocery shopping..

She stood up and walked to the bedroom. She didn't even ask anything. He followed her to the bedroom as he watched her wear her sandals. She tied her hair and turned to grin at him.

Marang:I'm okay? I look fine akere?

Joshua:Yes.

Marang:You look bothered. What's wrong?

Joshua:just surprised, that's all.

Marang:By what?

Joshua:you didn't ask anything.

Marang shrugged.

Marang:she wanted her lunchbox she got it, is there something wrong with that?

Joshua:Not at all. I-I-(pausing to take a deep breath)I didn't eat the food mme, I threw it away.

Marang frowned.

Marang:that's not good, she made food for you though, I'm lost now.

Joshua:You're not angry that another woman made food for me?

Marang:Why would I be mad unless it's more than food? Is it?

Joshua:No..

Marang:then it's okay, I guess though she kept interrupting my sentences..

Joshua:I thought you would sulk..

Marang:over food le skaftin? Ae. You taught me how to trust you and I do, just like how you trust me..

Joshua:I don't deserve you do I?

Marang:You do, man you have been there for me(laughing) and Seelets-

She paused.

Marang:Forget it..

Joshua:say it..(walking towards her)

Marang:Say what?

Joshua:what you were about to say..

He helped her up on her feet.

Joshua:But I can promise you, that was the one time she gave me food and never again okay?

Marang:Bathong ee! I'm not mad or anything though but thank you.

Joshua:that sentence where you said I have been there for you..

Marang:Thank you, so so much. I don't know where would I be if we didn't meet under those unexpected



circumstances.

Joshua:I don't even want to think about it..just as long as you are okay.

Marang:I am. I really am. I love you.

Joshua:You have no idea how much I love you..

Marang:Okho! I love you, I love you, I love you Dr Colton.

Joshua:Let's go(pecking her lips)

Marang:wear your shoes..

Joshua let go of her and slid his feet into his slides and got his wallet.

Joshua:My phone?

Marang:lounge.

Joshua:list?

Marang:I'll know.

Joshua:sure.

Marang:yeah..

He held her waist from behind as they walked to the door. Marang smiled and she was sure he didn't see her smile. Was it safe to say this love was true and she was done or would she still taste the heartache and war that was often associated with the game of love? She had no idea but this one she could say love didn't meet her at her best, it met her in her mess. Joshua felt her small hands on his and a secret smile graced his lips. He guessed he knew from this moment in that she was the one. He could say they were one soul in two bodies.

At London, Britain

Seeletso hung up and screamed into the pillow. So she was going to Maun for the holidays, she had to start making travel arrangements and her parents agreed to make it a family holiday so that Joshua doesn't travel all the way to Francistown.

She assumed they didn't know Marang was there. Seeletso shook her head. All that rung in her head when Marang said she was going to Maun was that she was going there for dick. Who travels 5+ hours for cuddles? She wasn't stupid.

Her roommate walked into the room and Seeletso smiled at her South African roommate. She was glad she wasn't the only African in school.

Seeletso:I'm going home for the holidays.

Her:That's nice. You live where again?

Seeletso:this time I'm going to Maun..

Her:I've heard about it.

Seeletso:it's really nice, let me show you pictures.

She walked to her roommate's bed and sat next to her as she scrolled through the photos.

At Maun

At the store

That late afternoon, Joshua pushed the trolley as Marang picked stuff from the shelf.

Marang:it's not too much akere?(biting her lip)

Joshua:Tsenya whatever that is needed sweetness.

Marang:okay.

He pushed the trolley closely behind her as she stopped and looked up before looking at him.

Joshua:What do you want from the top shelf?

Marang:That..it's too high.

Joshua:You are too short.

Marang:Ijoo..

He let go of the trolley and stood behind her before picking her up to get what she said she wanted.

Marang:Thank you..

She said after he placed her down on her feet.

Joshua:We still need more things?

Marang:I think we are done.

She looked at the full trolley and walked behind Joshua as he walked to the till.

Marang:Wait...I'll be back..

Joshua:I'll be in line.

Marang walked around the store and she found the section she passed earlier. She picked two packets of pads and walked to the till where he was already paying. She placed the pads by the till as the cashier scanned them.

She waited patiently till all items were scanned and Joshua looked at her.

Joshua:Sure sure that's all?

Marang:Ee rra..

He took out his card as all the items were put in plastics and loaded into the trolley. Marang waited and when he was done paying he pushed the trolley as they walked out.

Joshua:You're going to cook?

Marang:Ee, your shelf is literally empty kana.

Joshua:We fixed it.

Marang:But still you should buy food..

Joshua:And who will cook for me when you're not there?

Marang:you do know how to cook right?

Joshua:A little..

Marang:Iyoo...

Joshua checked his pockets for the car keys and

unlocked the car before he started loading the food into the boot.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo looked at the pills she used to take while she was still healing, she put them away. She was stronger than that but....

She sat on the carpet and leaned against the bed while tears streamed down her face. What she wanted to do was selfish and it would hurt her parents.

Her mother mostly and she will feel that she failed her when she didn't. She was just too rebellious to listen. But it would save them the heartache she might cause them in future. She sighed.

At Joshua's house

Joshua stood behind Marang, wrapping his hands around her waist as she stirred the meat in the pot.

Marang:I'm cooking tlherra..

Joshua:It smells nice.

Marang:And it will be ready if you could at least help me with anything, cut an onion or something.

Joshua:Bathong babe..

Marang:Cut the onions ebile..

Joshua:di a hatlha(they make one teary)

Marang:Ke batla gone mme(I want exactly that)

Joshua:I'll get cutting then sweetness.

Marang:Thank you...

Joshua:I can't believe I let you rearrange my kitchen.

She moved from the stove and opened the fridge, he paused watching her work her way round the kitchen.



Marang:You should be cutting onions.

Joshua:on it mam(laughing)

Marang:Keore wa tshega(you are laughing)

Joshua just walked to her and pulled her to him and rubbed her chin.

Joshua:look at your short self bossing me around..(laughing)

Marang:Bathong!

He laughed kissing her..

Joshua:I love you..

Marang:I love you too..Uh..

He picked her up and placed her on top of the counter.

Joshua:Did you know you are just here to tempt me?

Marang:I didn't..

Joshua:You are(biting her lower lip)

He placed his hands on her thighs, kissing her before he went to her neck, sucking it with her hands rubbing his back up and down.

Joshua:I have to be patient right babe?

Marang:Uh..

Joshua:hmm?

His kisses went to her shoulder, leaving tiny kisses there before he looked up at her. He bit his lip looking at her till she opened her eyes and he pecked her lips.

Joshua:I think the food needs your attention now.

He helped her off the counter and she stirred the pot before she excused herself and made her way to the bathroom. She sat down on the toilet seat and pulled down her panties, when he was caressing her she felt a tickle down there, she even had the urge to cross her legs and she wasn't sure if it was the novels said it was.

She looked at her panties and they were wet, the clear liquid looked fresh. She sighed and wore her panties before washing her hands.

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A WEEK LATER

## THE GAME

#54

At Maun

At the Lodge

Joshua laughed at Marang who stood by the edge of the pool of the pool,

Joshua:Tsena!

Marang:I don't want to drown.

Joshua:Why wear the swim suit if you won't swim?

She looked at the clear blue pool again, it seemed deep.

Joshua:it's not deep babe. You're standing by the shallow end.

Marang:Ng ng..

Seeletso walked out wearing her sun hat in shades with her weave flowing down her back and holding a glass of wine.

Seeletso:Bathong these holidays are nice.(with an accent)

Joshua:We have dinner later akere?

Seeletso:Yep, the family Christmas dinner. They went sight viewing while I relax in the water or I should sunbathe first. Soft life my people..

She held the glass walking to the lounge chairs where she placed her glass by the table.

Seeletso:Marang the water won't bite you motho wame..

Marang:Your accent..

Seeletso:I can't live in the UK for more than a year and remain the same. I'll sunbathe first.

She laid down and crossed her legs with a contented sigh.

Joshua walked by the pool and held Marang's waist.

Joshua:I'll show you ee babe.

Marang:I don't want to drown.

Joshua:I'll resuscitate you..

Marang:Mxm..

He let go of her and she rubbed her hands. Joshua pushed her into the water as she screamed.

Marang:lyooo aaahhh(screaming)

He got inside the water as Marang's head resurfaced and she used her hands to try and wipe the water away.

Seeletso:Your scream is not sexy ray ray..

Joshua:don't mind her.

Marang breathed in and out.

Marang:Why did you push me?

Joshua:You weren't going to swim, I got you baby..

He held her waist.

Joshua:move your legs.

Marang:the water is heavy..

Joshua:You are stiff baby..relax autwe my love?

She nodded as he showed how it is done.

Joshua:We are still at the shallow end.

Once she got the hang of it, he let her go.

Joshua:Try swimming on your own.

She did and he smiled. He swam to where she was and held her waist. He kissed her briefly and she grinned.

Marang:This is now nice.

Joshua:you didn't want to a few minutes ago..

Marang:Now it's nice..

She splashed water on his face and he laughed splashing water on her face. Seeletso was just unbothered while sunbathing.

At Phemelo's parents

Ma Phem worriedly looked at Phemelo's door. She had been closed off for the past week and she barely ate with them.

She knocked on the door a few times.

Phemelo:I'm okay.(low voice)

Ma Phem:You didn't eat Christmas lunch with us.

Phemelo:I will eat mama.

Ma Phem:Open the door baby..



Phemelo forced herself to get out of bed and she grabbed the crutches that were near the bed.

She made her way to the bed and unlocked her bedroom door.

Ma Phem touched Phemelo's face.

Ma Phem:Phem it's Christmas time and time to be happy and spend with family.

She forced a smile.

Ma Phem:take a bath and we can prepare dinner together.

Phemelo wanted to argue but she sighed and agreed. She closed the door and leaned against it holding back tears.

Meanwhile outside Theo looked at the gate and he thought about his options. Most probably her parents were going to going to have him for lunch

for the condition their daughter was in. He sighed and pressed the intercom. The gate slid open. The dogs ran to the gate and he shooed them away, trying not to get bit by the dogs.

Walking to the door, he rehearsed his speech over and over again. He finally knocked on the door and Ma Phemelo opened the door with a baby on her hip. The smile dissolved only to be replaced by a stern face. He swallowed.

Theo:Dumelang!

Ma Phem:Hello, what do you want?

Theo:I want to apologize to everyone including Phemelo.

Ma Phem:Isn't it enough that my child's life has been altered in such a way that can be undone and you are here.

Theo rubbed his neck.

Theo:I am genuinely sorry. I really am.

Ma Phem:Okay. I will pass on the message. Have a good day.

She closed the door and Theo sighed. His mission failed. He was genuinely apologetic but no one will ever see that will they? He walked out and the gate closed as soon as he stepped out. He wanted to see Phemelo and talk to her too.

In the house Phemelo splashed her teary eyes with water while she was in the bathtub. Simple tasks on their own were a struggle and she didn't want to get out of bed. She spent most days in bed either crying or listening to said music if not that, she contemplated suicide time and time again. She held onto the side of the bathtub to try and get down but she slipped and fell, she bit her lower lip holding back tears.

She tried again and finally managed, picking the crutches that were near. She sat on the toilet seat

naked and covered her face with her hands crying.

At the lodge

Joshua covered Marang with the towel and just then, Seeletso jumped into the water.

Joshua:A shower to wash off the chlorine.

Marang:Okay..

She wore her sandals as they walked to their room. Joshua didn't know why his parents thought they were intimate. Just because he was living with his baby girl for the past week didn't mean they did sleep together. He was patient but the past week with her around his patience was wearing thin.

He opened the door and she walked in first before he closed the door and locked it.

Marang used the towel to cover her braids.

Marang:I'm going to take a shower okay?

He nodded as she walked to the bathroom. She got out of her swimsuit and got inside the shower. She opened the shower and let the water hit her skin. She sighed and closed off the water.

Joshua sighed. He was a patient man.

The door creaked open and she stuck her head out.

Marang:Do you want to join me?

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## THE GAME

#55

At the lodge

Marang waited for his answer.

Joshua: Sweetness, I won't be able to control myself in there..

He stood up and walked to the bathroom. Thankfully she was in a towel but he knew she was naked underneath it. He swallowed and held her chin.

Joshua: I would do anything to have you underneath me believe me I would baby...

Marang: I just wanted us to shower to save time.

Joshua: wait what?(shocked)

Marang: Yes..

Joshua rubbed the back of his head. So he was the one with the dirty thoughts while baby girl's request was innocent.

Marang:it's okay babe..

Joshua just nodded and walked out. She closed the door and he rubbed his jaw. He really needed to get a grip over himself. He heard the water running.

Marang walked out minutes later all wrapped in a fluffy gown and he made his way to the bathroom.

She played music from her phone as she started to apply her lotion after removing the gown before she walked to the wardrobe and picked her panties and the dress, he had bought for her for the dinner. She liked that it was long even though it had a slit that ended a little bit above her thigh. She turned her head to look at the bathroom door. She sighed clasping her hands together. Each and everyday she

could notice that he was kind of holding back and what he said when she wanted him to join her in the shower proved that. He was really going to wait till her birthday on then 3rd of January?? The bathroom door opened and he walked out with a towel wrapped around his waist. They shared a look and she looked down, she sat down on the bed placing the panties and dress down.

Joshua swallowed, knowing very well she was naked in front of him. She looked at him again, feeling the sexual tension that was in the room. He just took a cold shower but nothing's changed. They didn't say anything to each other, the music played in the background and Marang pulled up her panties and stood up to wear the dress. Joshua quietly watched her while licking his lips.

Marang:Uh I'm done..

Joshua:Come here(deep voice)

His voice bounced off the walls as she walked to him.



Joshua:Turn around.

She did as he told and she felt his warm hands start to unzip the dress, it was not fully zipped but he unzipped it. The dress fell down her shoulders and in seconds it was a pool of black on her feet. He turned her around and softly kissed her lips. She placed her small soft hands on his chest, letting the kiss take another turn on it's own.

Joshua:And you're sitting there being a temptress(breathing against her neck)

Marang closed her eyes feeling the familiar pooling between her legs as he said this in his low deep voice.

Joshua:Fuck! Babe....

He kissed her lips again and picked her up walking to the bed with her in his arms. She wasn't protesting or anything and he wasn't going to fuck her into oblivion. Intimacy was another important

thing.

He laid her down on the bed and smiled hovering on top of her. Joshua hooked his finger against the elastic of her black panties and pulled them down her legs..

He still had that towel wrapped around his torso when his kisses went lower and lower and her back arched automatically. He kept his hands on her midriff and a soft sigh escaped her tiny lips.

Joshua:babe?

He asked looking up at her.

Joshua:Do you trust me?

Marang:with my life(softly)

He kissed her tummy and used his other hand to open her legs and he chuckled, seeing the moisture glistening her sex. She was wet for him already?

Joshua:You've never touched yourself before?

She shook her head looking at him with those beautiful eyes of hers. He held her hand guiding it to her apex. She felt the wetness and looked at him.

Joshua:That's you being turned on by what I do and your body releasing those juices...

He held her hand and sucked on her fingers licking off the juices from them and she moaned wanting to close her legs.

Joshua:You like that?

She nodded. He sucked on one finger and closely observed her. This was so cute.

Joshua:After this, I want you to touch yourself for me..I'll show you..

She watched him dip his head low between her legs and soon after felt the sensation that came with his tongue licking her lady parts.

Marang:aaah(softly)

Joshua's held her knees in place as he licked her wetness. In that sweet kid like of voice she moaned and his erection strained against his towel. Not yet.

His tongue darted inside her small slit and Marang gasped, her back arching against the bed. She didn't know what to do with her hands and she grabbed the sheets. Her moans got louder as she buckled her knees but he held her steady.

At the door Seeletso was just about to knock asking for something when she heard the moans.

Seeletso:Oh shit!

She quickly walked away. Not her brother doing the nasty with his girlfriend who was also her friend and future sister-in-law. She'll pretend she didn't hear anything.

As Joshua ate her out her hands touched his head,

this was nice and pleasurable. She unconsciously pushed his head more before her toes curled and it just felt like a wave full of something wonderful, her breathing was already heavy as more sweet moans escaped her lips.

Marang:Uh...mmhmmm..

Joshua let go of her legs as they started to shake and her moans got louder and louder. It all happened so fast as Marang's let go of his head to hold onto the sheets tightly with shaky legs, Joshua was looking at her as she moaned, releasing more liquid as she called out his name in the sweetest way. To Marang it felt as if the world was spinning and she weakly laid flat on the bed trying to process what happened to her.

Joshua hooked her legs on her shoulders and sucked all her cum before he placed her legs down.

Joshua:You just came baby girl..

He used his thumb to flick her clit and she arched her back with a soft moan. Baby girl was sensitive. Nice.

She breathed heavily as he hovered over her and pushed her hair back. He kissed her neck..

Joshua:I think we need that shower you asked me to join you in having.

She opened her eyes as he smiled looking at her.

Joshua:Hey baby..

Marang:Hi(softly)

Joshua rubbed her lower lip. She was too cute not to cuddle. He looked at the clock, calculating the time they had left till the dinner. They had said 8pm and it was around five. They still had time..

Marang faced the other way, blush creeping on her face and he turned her head.

Joshua:Hey, look at me.

She did and he just moved to the other side and spooned her. She felt him against her butt and

closed her eyes.

Joshua:How are you feeling?

Marang:relaxed.(softly)

Joshua:Good.

She yawned and he kissed the top of her head before covering them with the blanket.

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## THE GAME

#56

At the lodge

Joshua woke up first rubbing his eyes. He checked the time and It was nearly half seven.

He shook Marang who was sleeping peacefully.

Joshua:Babe? Sweetness?

She faced the other way muttering something incomprehensible.

Joshua:Sweetness? Marang?

She opened her eyes as a yawn escaped her lips. She closed her eyes again and changed direction once again. Joshua sighed and got out of bed leaving her to sleep peacefully on the bed. Joshua



opened the bathroom door and turned on the water from the shower. They were going to be late. He was sure of that.

He walked back inside the bedroom and picked her up, losing his towel on the way to the bathroom with her. He got under the water with her and she opened her eyes as soon as warm water hit her skin almost screaming till she realized he was holding her.

Joshua:Sorry to disturb your sleep sweetheart but we need to freshen up before dinner or else we will be late.

Marang:oh.

He put her down and she faced the other way without looking at him, at this point Joshua didn't have the time to quiz her. They were already going to run really late.

Joshua was the first to leave the shower and she

waited till he was out of the bathroom before she closed off the water and got out. She made sure to dry herself before she walked out of the bathroom.

She hoped the dress wasn't creased or else she would be forced to look for something to wear. In the bedroom Joshua was in his briefs catching the sight of his firm butt but facing the other way as he wore his pants. She walked to the chair to sit down and lotion herself.

More than ten minutes later they were done as Joshua's cologne filled the air. She was somewhat astonished that he used the cologne she had bought. He had said it was his scent now and she couldn't be more happier.

Marang pulled down the dress a bit trying to finish zipping the dress when Joshua stepped behind her and zipped it up. He kissed her neck and she smiled leaning against him.

Joshua:Done baby?

Marang:shoes..

She wore her shoes while her boyfriend walked to the wardrobe. He came back with a box and opened it. He took out the necklace and stood behind her.

Joshua:Wear this too, it would look good on you..

She touched his hand and he smiled. She moved her braids away as his fingers touched her skin. She sucked in a deep breathe as he put the necklace around her neck and touched her exposed collarbone from the strapless dress.

Joshua:Beautiful. You're beautiful.

Marang:Thank you.

Joshua:come see how it looks good on you.

She stood up and they walked to the mirror. Now in front of the mirror, she could see how short she

really was. Of course she knew she was way shorter than him.

Joshua lightly touched her neck as she looked at their reflection. What would look good right now would be his hands around her neck but he had to keep a few of his thoughts in check.

He saw some red spots on her neck, a bit light to be noticed unless a person takes a really close look. He lightly kissed her neck before turning to check the time. Ten minutes after 8. They were not that late.

Joshua:shall we sweetness?(extending a hand)

Marang:of course(taking it)

Joshua checked his pockets for the hotel card and looked at the lady by his side. She looked away, breaking the eye contact.

Joshua:You're beautiful.

Marang:Thank you(blushing)

They walked out of the room.

At Francistown

Phemelo like always, was cooped in her room with just her phone. She shouldn't even dare bother anyone with her problems. She sighed as she faced the other way. She went to Facebook and was surprised to see a message. She opened it and read the contents of the message. Easy they came and just as easily they were gone. People like Raine whom she regretted calling a friend. But then cruelty wins in the movie if karma truly existed.

A part of her wanted to block him again while another part of her saw it unfair that he was still fine. She did say she accepted his apology, what more did he want?

She placed her phone away and stared at the white ceiling in silence and darkness. The darkness being her only escape from her already dark reality. She swore they saw right through her, she could see right through herself. This life thing was getting a bit too much for her, she felt more like a liability in the lives of the people around her.

At Maun

At the lodge

The couple walked to the dinner table, finding everyone seated.

Marang:Good evening.

Joshua:She greeted everyone for the both of us..

Ma Josh:Evening.

Seeletso:You guys are late mme..

Ra Josh:as long as they are here, you can take your

seats.

The sat down and Joshua placed his hand on Marang's thigh under the table.

Ma Josh:we can finally order, Sara is not a patient child.

Seeletso:yes yes...

She looked at Marang before she drank the water on the table. She shook her head. The way she looked so innocent and what she heard earlier were two different things.

The waiter came to the table and took all their orders. Honestly this was a very much needed break for everyone. A new environment and they turned it into a family vacation.

Ra Josh:Marang what do you want to study?

Marang:I'm not sure yet, we are still looking at my

options and trying to see what I would love. There are just too many good courses.

Seeletso:we?(whispering)

Ma Josh:You said something?

Seeletso:No, no...

The night went on with food, drinks and jokes shared at the dinner table. One thing was for sure, nobody missed the looks Joshua and Marang threw each other's way even though they were sitting next to each other.

Once the dinner was over, Joshua excused himself and Marang from the dinner table. She held onto his bicep as they walked back to their room.

Marang:I'm already full.

Joshua:Call it a night?

Marang:I don't think I'll fall asleep that fast.

Joshua:What do you want us to do sweetness.



Marang:A movie or just talking.

Joshua:I'd go with the talking.

He opened the door and they stepped inside before he closed and locked it.

Marang walked to the dressing table and got her phone. She dialed Phemelo's number and it rang unanswered for more than a minute. She walked to the couch and sat down dialing her again.

She answered this time.

Marang:Hey! Merry Christmas Phem.

Phemelo:thank you, same to you(low voice)

Marang frowned as she removed the sandals and Joshua was undressing the other side.

Marang:What's wrong? I won't judge..

Phemelo sighed.

Phemelo:You won't understand.

Marang:Try me.

Phemelo:Kana these days it feels as if the walls are closing in, I'm suffocating slowly but surely and there is nothing that can be done. I- I don't have much to live for. My new normal is not something I can get used to a(pausing while holding back tears)everyone says it's okay at least I'm alive but I wish that accident killed me.

Marang leaned back as she listened to Phemelo talk about everything.

Marang:I hear you.

Phemelo:But it's okay, don't worry about me.

Marang:Phem you lost a leg and it's been a year, it should hurt like it should but how long are you going to be in that fragile bubble of 'I don't want to live' most of not all of us have been through trauma. If I dwelled on the fact that my own aunt sold

me(pausing to breath and trying to not think about it)and listened while I got r-raped I wouldn't be here. I would've killed myself too because who would want damaged goods? Who would want the defenseless dumb girl who was too stupid to say something smart and couldn't pick up the signs? Or could be said to have led the rapist on, a mere 15 year old(wiping tears with her thumb)They are still out there walking Scott free.

Joshua frowned as he walked to her. She is not damaged goods. Not to him anyway. He sat next to her and she smiled tearfully looking at him.

Marang:Everyone has demons that they are trying to slay silently but at some point if the demons don't want to be slayed, you live with them and learn to accept that they are a part of you that will always be there. Phem you are not the only one fighting your pasts, healing is up to you and if Theo is really remorseful hear him out. Maybe what you are seeing is the physical and just because you lost an integral part of you, you think he is fine.

Phemelo:It gets hard and I-

Marang:it gets hard before it gets better. Someone taught me that. It's okay to cry from the things that haunt you in the middle of the night, it's okay to be down but you have to learn to be okay the following day and move. You are alive and have family(sadly) family that loves you unconditionally. Your parents would kill to see you happy, you have that. You have love, you are loved and I love you Phem Phem! Don't let yourself be defined by your past, it altered your future but you have years to do what you love. You are what you love..

Joshua held Marang's hand.

Marang:Do what you love, life is too short for regrets. It happened and you played a part in it, no one forced you to go to the party but you went because you only live once right? Don't be too harsh on yourself. I still want to be your best friend till life forces you into a good man and you have kids one day and I become their aunt. But I'll stand by you forever.

She interlaced her fingers with Joshua's.

Marang:Healing is a personal choice, talk to a therapist, therapy does help and trust me you will be happier. I love you, just sleep knowing that everyone loves you and forget the people you lost. I love you okay? I love you a lot Phemelo and you killing yourself will hurt me too...

Phemelo wiped her tears.

Phemelo:when did you get so wise?I love you Rangz(laughing tearfully)I'll try.

Marang:Yes Phem. Eat, shop, do your hair. Next year I'm coming back and we'll spend time together.

Phemelo:Okay. Goodnight.

Marang:Night.

Joshua kissed her hand.

Joshua:We are your family babe, you don't have to feel alone.

Marang:And your parents are so loving. They treat me like their daughter and it's beautiful.

He kissed her forehead,

Joshua:You are not damaged, you are not dumb sweetness. You are perfect, whole,beautiful and smart.

Marang laughed softly as she moved he head up to kiss him. He picked her up, walking to the bed and laid her down before hovering on top her with his knee between her legs. She broke the kiss.

Marang:You are my daylight, ever since you showed up you brightened the darkness that was in my life. You showed me love is golden and that love is action, patience, trust and effort. You chased away the shadows that lingered around my life. I love you.

Joshua swallowed looking at her, so young and she loved him with nothing holding her back. You could never hurt a heart pure as snow. Never could taint her flawless soul. It was at this very moment he wanted to show her how much he really loved her.

Physically and connecting with her on a much deeper level.

Joshua:I love is not enough to vocalize my feelings.

Marang smiled and lifted her head to peck his lips.

Marang:I hope I never lose you and what we have never ends.

Joshua:I love you being the queen in my chess game, who I would do anything in my power to protect..

She wrapped her hands around his neck. Her eyes shining with the love she had for him. Nothing felt better than this.

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DAYS LATER

## THE GAME

#57

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo got out of the car. She sighed. She was doing therapy again. She wasn't wearing her leg and had opted to use crutches and she will admit she got weird stares from people but not from the counseling center.

Ma Phem: I'm glad you are trying to get better.

Phemelo smiled as she pushed her hair back.

Phemelo: It was my fault and no one forced me to go there, the sooner I understand the faster the process.

Ma Phemelo nodded sadly. She hated to admit that Phemelo was right.



Phemelo made her way to the already open door and greeted the helper. The baby was fast asleep on the carpet. So young and stress free. She envied him right now.

She made her way to the bedroom and dialed Marang's number. Marang answered immediately.

Phemelo:and just a day left till you are 18..

Marang laughed.

Marang:It's not a big deal mme...

Phemelo:It is..

Marang covered her face with her hands. Tomorrow she was 18? Wow!

Phemelo:when you get here, I'm taking you out because I can't go to Maun right now. You deserve to feel special.

Marang:Thank you.

Phemelo>Welcome. I have to go love okay?

Marang:Okay..bye.

Phemelo:Bye..

Phemelo hung up and she went to her Facebook messages where she finally responded to Theo's message.

At Maun

At the lodge

Marang slipped the phone in the pocket of the fluffy white robe. She smiled as she sat down on the chair. Honestly they didn't have to do this for her. Ma Josh just paid for a full spa day when she didn't have to. Well two days after Christmas, Joshua decided they should go back to his house and he drove over here when they checked on the family because they were here till the end of this week. She wasn't sure if she should go back with them or stay another week here

with Joshua. She will see.

The facial ladies walked in.

Ma Joshua was relaxed as Marang looked at the things on the small table next to her chair. She wasn't used to all of this. She laid back and closed her eyes as the lady instructed. Her hair was tied up and she willed her body to relax. Her birthday was tomorrow though.

At the hospital

Joshua checked his watch, the person he hired said she will arrive in an hour and he was done with work anyway.

His office door opened and Same walked in placing the patient files on his desk. He didn't look up as she

looked at him. She sighed and walked out. There was no use. He liked that little girl.

Joshua opened the file and closed it minutes later. He had to go and supervise the lady who said she will come.

At the lodge

Marang walked to the hotel room and sat down. She knew Joshua was at work and she was thankful he didn't make a big fuss out of her birthday, just Seeletso and his mother were fussing over her. The door opened and Seeletso sat down.

Seeletso:how was the spa day?

Marang:My body is just(stretching a bit) feels different.

Seeletso:A thank you would be good.

Marang:Thank you Seeletso.

Seeletso:I'm the best sister aren't I?

Marang:thee best...

Seeletso:You're finally going to be 18..

Marang:it's nothing major really.

Seeletso:it is mma...There is this dress that I saw and thought would fit you for dinner today.

Marang:dinner again?

Seeletso:we need you to wear the 'happy birthday' seatbelt mma..ijakg..

Marang shook her head as Seeletso walked out. She dialed Joshua who answered immediately.

Joshua:Sweetness.

Marang:Gatwe there is a dinner.

Joshua:It doesn't involve me.

Marang:Ijoo. Bye.

She hung up and laid flat on the bed. She half

screamed. She was going to be 18 and all that.

At Joshua's house

It took the lady more than an hour to get finished but once she was done it looked like a romantic scene from a movie. He was sure baby girl would appreciate it so much and he had to get ready too.

Joshua:thank you.

Lady:welcome. I'll send the rest of the bill and she is a lucky girl.

Joshua:She sure is.

The lady walked out and he smiled alone. He was sure. He wasn't sure if he has ever been sure of anything in his life but he was sure about this and what he was doing.

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## THE GAME

#58

At the lodge

That evening Marang got out of the shower and wore the dress, of course it was silly that they wanted to celebrate her birthday the day before but she was excited. Mrs Thuso had called earlier and had promised to call her tomorrow on her birthday.

She was excited and she tried so hard not to show it. Well Joshua had done a lot for her so she didn't expect him to go all out. Him being in her life at this time was just a blessing, one she would be always grateful for. He was one of the blessings she counted twice when praying. Hoping he succeeded in his life and everything goes well for him.

She wore the strapped sandals and the dress along with a fur coat. Who would have thought that she would be this girl today? Even if in the near future she and Joshua don't work out...

She paused. She wanted them to work out, she really hoped they do because he showed her how love is supposed to be and she wasn't going to find it in anyone else. They would work out. They have to right? This whole love thing was not a game, it was both their lives and they were too invested in it. She bit her lower lip as her thoughts shifted. What if all he wanted was sex?

She shook her head, Joshua was not like that. He loved her wholeheartedly. The door opened and Seeletso walked in wearing a red dinner gown and smiled.

Seeletso sat down next to her and just hugged her.

Seeletso: Thank you for existing.



Marang:I-I

Seeletso:my brother is at his happiest because of you. Thank you.

She broke the hug and tearfully looked at Marang.

Seeletso:Our family wasn't always this close, there was avoid and dad was always too busy for anything. I don't know what it was with your presence and everything took a turn for the best.

Marang:Seeletso I-

Seeletso:don't say anything. Thank you. You are a ray of sunshine..

Marang smiled as Seeletso took her hand in hers.

Seeletso:We should get going. Just food. A pre-birthday thing.

Marang:Thank you so much!

Seeletso:Don't sweat it.

They walked to the room.

Seeletso:It's just a limited number of people, we couldn't book the conference room.

Marang:I don't want anything big or extravagant.

Seeletso:We know..

Seeletso opened the door and it was silent with the lights turned off. She switched on the lights and she covered her mouth. They decorated the room and there were balloons written 18 everywhere.

Joshua:Surprise!

She staggered back. This must be the best birthday she has ever had.

He looked dapper in his casual wear and was that a new haircut? All trimmed up and handsome.

Seeletso:I want to take pictures. You are the lady of the moment.

Marang smiled as Sara walked to her and she bent down to her level talking to her. Would it be too ambitious to say she already felt at home with the Coltons? They were so warm hearted and she had never done anything for them but they treated her like their daughter already.

Ma Joshua:We are not singing happy birthday.

Seeletso:it's not yet midnight. We can eat while I take photos of the birthday girl.

Ra Josh:You and pictures..

Seeletso:There has to be photo evidence people..

They laughed as Marang looked at the mini setup. These people were not real right? She was going to wake up from this dream and smile wistfully at the fact that she had a nice dream where people loved her for her.

Arms wrapped around her small frame and she

smiled.

Joshua:Your mind seems far.

Marang:Am I dreaming?

He laughed close to her ear, sending subtle shivers down her spine. She touched his head with a smile.

Marang:You look good and I'm jealous.(smiling)

Joshua:Jealous of what pumpkin?

She laughed. The nicknames kept increasing.

Marang:that everybody wants you and wonders what it would be like to love you.

Joshua:I'm yours, you know that?

Marang:I know. I like the haircut.

He laughed pecking her lips.

Joshua:O simolle go becha mma(start spending money on me)

She placed her hands on his chest.

Marang:Once I go to school, ke romelle madi a eng?

A hair cut?(I should send money for what? A haircut?)

Joshua:mxm..I love you.

Marang:Same. But ten times more..

Seeletso:Kgm kgm there is food people.

Marang placed her head on Joshua's chest laughing soft,y before he let go of her and she held his bicep as they got their plates. Everyone sat down as they engaged in conversation. Easy flowing conversation that had everyone debating. It was always fun to eat together honestly.

Marang cut the cake first and they were really serious that they were not going to sing happy birthday since it wasn't her birthday yet.

Joshua smudged the cream on her face and she did the same laughing. While everyone smudged her face with cream because she was the birthday girl. It was not fun but to them it was funny. When no one

was looking, Joshua licked her cheek and she pushed him off laughing, he was something else.

An hour later she had finally washed the cream off her face and they were left with a few minutes before the clock struck twelve.

She held his hand as they started the countdown.

Them:5, 4, 3, 2, 1.....Happy birthday(screaming)

They sung happy birthday to her, making her emotional. They waited till midnight and they had food and snacks prior just for everyone to wish her a happy 18th birthday.

Marang covered her face with her hands to not show her tears.

Joshua pushed her hands away and she smiled

tearfully as he held her hands.

Joshua:happy birthday sweetness..

At Prison

Lebo was woken up abruptly by one of the wardens.  
She handed her the phone as Lebo rubbed her eyes  
a bit disoriented.

Voice:where is she?

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## THE GAME

#59

At prison

Lebo's heart pounded as she recognized the voice. They had let her to rot here while she took the fall for everything and they are calling now asking about her.

Lebo:Who?

Voice:don't act dumb, Marang..

Lebo:I don't know. They probably moved her out of the city for all I know because I'm a danger.

Russel:You are supposed to know.

Lebo:Aren't you the trafficker? I don't know. I'm serving my prison sentence and even if you kill me from the inside of the prison, at least I won't be living in this horrible place.



She handed the warden the phone and laid down, closing her eyes.

The caller hung up and the warden looked at Lebo as she walked out.

At the Lodge

The small party came to an end as they all hugged Marang and retreated to their rooms. Marang was left with Joshua in the room and she looked around, keeping a grip on his bicep. It was nice holding him like that.

Marang:At times I think I'm in dreamland. All this good fortune on my part can't be real and it scared the hell out of me, that what if something bad happens to me or those horrible men come after me again, I live with those questions each and everyday wondering what I deserved to be here at

this moment.

Joshua:Marang you are a rare breed, no comparison there. You deserve all the good things that happen in your life. You have been through a lot and I will never stop saying that, you never deserved what happened to you when you were younger and no one deserves that.

Marang just placed her head against his hand.

Joshua:the future is unknown but it is what we do with the present that matters the most sweetness. We can't predict how life is going to turn out, of course we will plan and just pray that everything is good but then the universe never works that way. We'll do our very best to make sure those men don't come after you, maybe get good lawyers to make your aunt name them so they can be hunted down.

Marang:I don't have an aunt. I have you.

He chuckled kissing her forehead.

Joshua:Smooth.

Marang:she stopped existing when she did what she

did, I was too trusting but I was only 15.

Joshua:No one blames you for that sweetness.

A bout of silence filled the space.

Marang:I like these conversations we have.

Joshua:Insightful and you are a wise little thing.

Marang:Not so little anymore.

Joshua:You are still short.

Marang:Don't use my height against me. Thank you for this. Thank you so so much.

Joshua:You deserve nothing but the best. I think we should go.

Marang:Let me get my phone and can I take five balloons? That one ya 18..

Joshua laughed. She was his girl wasn't she? He knew that it might seem as if he was grooming her but it wasn't intentional. You don't choose who you fall for, it just happens on it's own.

She walked out and he picked out the balloons for her. She was a weird combination of innocent, sweet and wise. He prayed she never changed regardless of what happened.

He smiled thinking about the relaxed setup he had at home. Everything was arranged and he wasn't going to let her birthday pass without gifting his girl.

In the room Marang picked the phone, she had missed calls from Phemelo and she saw the message. She sent a text and she had received a bank notification.

Phem: Money for your birthday, buy whatever. I love you. You're probably sleeping right now † ♀ Love you

Marang smiled. She will definitely call in the morning. This was so sweet of her best friend.

She walked to the room finding Joshua with the balloons.

Marang:Thank you.

Joshua:Take your balloons mma.

She just held his bicep.

Marang:Are they embarrassing you?

Joshua:No..

Marang:Hold them akere you love me...

Joshua:that's blackmail...

Marang:Joshua(softly)Hold the balloons for me okay love?

She looked into his eyes with a little pout.

Joshua:Okay sweetness.

She smiled and they walked out of the room with him holding the balloons and Marang quietly holding

his bicep, his body heat warming her body.

As soon as they stepped out of the lodge she held him tightly.

Joshua: Cold?

Marang: a bit chilly but okay..

Joshua wasn't even wearing jacket but he placed her in front of him, handed her her balloons and wrapped his arms around her.

Joshua: Better? We are almost near.

Marang: Better. Thank you.

They slowly walked to the car, with Marang inhaling his cologne. The one that she bought for me. She smiled a bit.

He let go of her and unlocked the car. He opened the

car door for her and she got in, fitting in her balloons. He closed the door and walked to his side. He got inside and started the car, he turned the air conditioning on. He fixed Marang's seatbelt before he softly kissed her lips.

Joshua: Comfortable?

She nodded looking into his eyes and he bit his lip before he kissed her again with his hands on her thighs.

He moved back, rubbed her lip before smiling and reversing the car with one hand while the other one was still on her thigh. He fixed his seatbelt and Marang placed her hand on top of his.

Joshua: A silent drive?

Marang: no..

She connected her phone and played Sevyn Streeter's It Won't Stop..

Joshua looked at baby girl with a smile as he drove, his hand slipped under her dress and she shivered. He bit his lip keeping his eyes on the road and used his finger to pull her panties down.

Joshua:Babe?

Marang:hmm..

She looked at his hand, her breath quickened while his eyes were on the road.

Joshua:Open your legs.

She did as he said and he continued to pull her panties down. She breathed softly.

When the panties were at knee length he looked at her.

Joshua:Babe?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:Get rid of the panties sweetheart..



She did as asked while his hand moved up and he used his thumb to rub her clit and her back arched as she moaned softly.

Marang:baabeee aaah(moaning)

Joshua:We are almost home sweetheart...

He kept on stimulating her while he drove home. Marang placed her hand on his moaning wanting to move from the seat.

Marang:Josh-aaah....uhm....(moaning)

Marang looked at him once again through hazy eyes while Joshua was focused on the road. They weren't far were they?

The car finally drove through the open gate and she looked at him but he wasn't looking at her.

He parked the car and finally looked at her. She

looked beautiful when she was in this state.

He undid his seatbelt and undid hers. He got out first and went to open her door.

Joshua:The balloons baby..

She sucked a breath and closed her legs. She got out of the car handing him the balloons.

He held her waist and unlocked the door.

Joshua:okay baby girl.

Marang:yeah(softly)

They walked inside the house and he tied the balloons to the vase.

Joshua:You'll find them when you wake up sweetness..

He led her to the bedroom and she gasped covering

her eyes before half screaming.

Marang:Joshua?

Joshua:Did I say happy birthday properly?

Marang:Babe...

The room was decorated in white roses and white candles. The bedroom smelled of vanilla and it was like a scene from a movie. This was the romantic kind of love she read of in the movies.

He closed the door and she was confused as she looked at him. Joshua just led her to the bathroom and it was all decorated in red roses. Bubble baths and candles with a cold bottle of wine.

Marang:When did you do this?

Joshua:I have my ways baby girl..the wine is non-alcoholic sweetheart.

Marang:Thank you..

She hugged him and he unzipped her dress while hugging her.

Marang:You can't wait can you?(laughing softly)

Joshua:I've been a very patient man sweetness..you know that..

Marang:You've told me babe..

Joshua:You can unbutton the shirt..

She looked at him.

Joshua:I want your soft hands on me. Please..

He was actually pleading with her?

She started to unbutton his shirt and he quietly looked at her till she was done. She helped him get out of it and dropped it on the floor. She placed her hands on his chest and he released a sigh.

Joshua:Fuuuck! Baby undo my pants...

In her dress she bent down and removed the belt buckle and undid his fly. She looked up at him wanting to know what to do next.

Joshua:Continue love..

She pulled them down revealing his briefs and what was beneath that. She stood up and he made her turn around and brought her dress down.

His hands covered her slim waist and she felt him on her back.

Joshua:A bath will do right?

She leaned on him and he kissed her neck. This wasn't even rushed.

He removed his shoes, socks and briefs before they got inside the water. With her on his chest in the bathtub.

Marang:I should expect this everyday?

Joshua laughed.

Joshua:I spoil you too much.

Marang:Because you love me and I'm your soul's equal.

Joshua kissed her lips and she laughed.

Marang:I thought I would be sleepy and you surprise me like this?

Joshua:Relax in the water sweetness.

Marang sighed with his hand on her thigh. She got the glasses and handed him one.

Marang:No wait, open the bottle.

She got the glasses and she watched him open the bottle. He poured the non-alcoholic wine for them and he poured it.

He placed the bottle back and she handed him the glass as they toasted to more life and success.

What seemed like an hour later they were laughing in the water, they had refilled the tub and a part of Marang was scared of what was going to happen once they were out of the water.

Marang:I still don't know what to study though. We went through the lists and options...

Joshua:You'll think about it baby girl...

Marang:maybe in a month or so right?

Joshua:Yep..

Marang lifted her hand, it was already wrinkly. She laughed softly and touched his face.

Marang:look at my hand.

Joshua:we should get out..

He lifted her out and wrapped her in a fluffy towel as he removed the stopper. He was going to clean all of this when they wake up.

Joshua:Tired?

She shook her head before he picked her up heading to the bedroom. The candles had already died down and he put her down on her feet. He removed the towel and wrapped his hands around her waist.

He smiled, this was really happening. After more than a year of patience waiting for her. He wasn't sure if he was going to be able to control himself. She looked at him and wrapped her arms around his torso, ignoring the machine that was already erect. This was bound to happen and the sooner the better.

He brought his head down as their foreheads touched and she licked her lips looking into his eyes. He brought his lips onto hers, softly kissing her and she tightly held his torso.

Their kiss deepened with every second as her pointy breasts rubbed against him. He picked her up and



she wrapped her legs around his torso as he closed the door with his leg before pinning her against the door. He broke the kiss and they shared a look for a brief second before he dipped his head again taking control of the kiss. She touched his head and they moved from the door and he walked to the bed, laying her down on the sheets.

He pinned her hands over her head and he  
#EXPLICIT

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## THE GAME

#60

At Joshua's house

Marang woke up to strong sturdy arms holding her. She moved closer into him, he was warming her body with his. His hand rubbed her bare thigh as the sun warmed the whole room. His kisses started from her bare back moving down before he used his other hand to massage her breast.

A soft sigh escaped her lips and he kissed her neck, gently sucking on it. She felt his c\*ck on her butt, that was some sturdy erection.

Joshua:Morning baby..

Marang:morning...

He flipped her body, allowing her to lie flat on her

back on the bed. He got between his legs and ate her out, letting her moan as loud as she wanted. She fisted her hands against the sheets as her legs started to shake when she came. He came up and kissed her before he guided himself inside of her and fucked her into oblivion that late morning.

An hour later, Marang laid her head on his chest, feeling his beating heart while he played with her braids.

Joshua:Happy birthday Sweetness.

Marang yawned.

Marang:Thank you..

She sighed in content against his chest. She didn't want to move, she felt swollen down there and she just wanted to lay in bed doing nothing.

Joshua:Babe?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:How much have you saved up?

She turned to look at him.

Marang:Uhm a lot. I'll show you.

Joshua:I want to help you open an account and you won't have to go around carrying cash. I'll show you how to use your bank card once it's out.

Marang:Thank you..

Joshua:And it's a good thing you are saving money. A very good habit if you ask me.

Marang nodded and he ran his finger along her back, thinking...

Marang kissed him and he smiled.

Joshua:Let's take a shower before I take you out. For brunch, you're still the birthday girl aren't you?

He rubbed her lips as she nodded. He picked her up and walked to the bathroom with her.

Joshua:Does it hurt?

Marang:only a little bit...

Joshua:A bath will do then, I'll clean this up when we come back.

He rinsed the bathtub before filling it up with warm water and pouring some bath salts inside. He picked her up and placed her in the bathtub.

Joshua:I'll shower okay, just relax inside(kissing her lips)

Marang let out a sigh and closed her eyes, the pain went down a bit.

Minutes later Joshua was out of the water and he looked at her, she was almost asleep in the water. Maybe they should spend the whole day indoors but he didn't want to leave her alone and what if she walked funny?

He picked her out of the water and she opened her eyes. He grabbed a towel and covered her with it,

heading to the bedroom.

He placed her on the bed and went through her wardrobe.

Joshua:What do you want to wear?

Marang:I'll look for the clo-

Joshua:It's fine, let me okay?

He picked one of her dresses along with her underwear. Marang watched silently as he got dressed. She won't lie and say what they did wasn't nice. It was just that she was a little bit sore at the moment.

After they both got dressed he changed the sheets and got a fresh set of linens. He opened the windows to let the fresh air fill the bedroom. He was still going to clean. All the rose petals but it was worth it. She was the sweetest and he looked at her. He didn't deserve her did he? All innocent and sweet.

Joshua:Babe I'm done and I swear I'll clean later.

Marang:I can help..

Joshua:I won't let you...We are getting brunch but I want us to pass by somewhere first okay?

She nodded and got her phone. She was taking slow steps. She was sure there might be a tear but he didn't mean to.

Joshua paused walking behind her.

Joshua:What did I do?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:I hurt you didn't I? Stop..

She did and he wrapped his arms around her neck before picking her up and placing her on the bed. He pushed the dress up and pulled down her panties.

Marang:Joshu-

Joshua:Babe I've seen all of you before, relax and let me check...

He opened her legs and used his fingers to check, thoroughly touching her.

Joshua:Fuck! There is a slight tear...I'm sorry okay?(looking up at her)It needs a few days to heal and you'll be alright. Baby I'm sorry about that okay, I'll let you heal for the few days. Just let me hit after you're fine?

Marang laughed and sat upright trying to close her legs but he stopped that.

Joshua:please(smiling naughtily)there is still a lot I want to show you..

Marang:I'll think about it(smiling)

Joshua:O batla go gana ka kuku yame?(you want to refuse with my p\*ssy?)

Marang:Nnyaa Rra.

He kissed her inner thighs and pulled up her panties.

Joshua:You'll be okay and I'm sorry baby girl.



Marang:You already apologized babe..

Joshua:I know, I just don't want to see you hurt.

She pushed down her dress and he helped her get off the bed. He handed her both of their phones and his wallet. He walked out of the house, holding her waist from behind. He unlocked the car and she walked to the car while he locked the door.

She got inside and wore her seatbelt. She had no idea where they were going and she didn't want to ask him. He got inside the car and Marang decided to call Phemelo as Joshua started the car.

Marang:Hello?

Phemelo started singing happy birthday to her and Marang laughed trying to make her stop.

Phemelo:Happy birthday Rangz.

Marang:Aah bathong, thank you and I saw the message..

Phemelo:Good. Enjoy your day my love. I love you a million. Byeee!

Marang:Bye!

Mrs Thuso's call came through and she answered with a huge smile. Mrs Thuso got the children to sing for her over the phone and it was so cute.

Marang:Thank you. That was so special. I'll always remember this..

Mrs Thuso:God bless you my girl..bye.

She hung up and Marang used her fingers to wipe the tears. Everyone cared for her and it was precious to see.

Joshua held her hand with his other hand as he found a parking spot. Marang looked around. They were at the hospital. She knew he worked here but she has never come here before.

Joshua:We won't be long sweetheart, come along,

He got out of first and walked to her side as she opened the door. Marang stepped out and he locked the car then held her hand as she held their phones with the other.

Joshua:We are just going to my office okay?

Marang:Okay..

They walked inside as Joshua greeted a few of his colleagues before proceeding to his office. Most of them had decided to mind their own business seeing him walk inside with that looked like a child.

Joshua closed his office door as Marang sat down.

Joshua:I won't be long, I promise sweetheart.

He opened his drawers and found the pills he was looking for. He is probably killing his own child right

now but then his baby needed to finish school.

He handed her one pill and walked out. Marang looked at the pill wondering what it was for. He came back minutes later with water in a cup.

Joshua:Those are morning after pills my love. We are ensuring that you don't fall pregnant or do you want to fall pregnant? Not that I would mind or anything..

Marang looked at the pill. She had to go to school so she'll wait.

Marang:I'll take it..

She put the pill in her mouth and Joshua handed her the water.

Joshua:You'll drink the second one later and I was planning on putting you on contraceptives, I'll have to see first how they will affect your current ADHD prescription and if it will have a negative impact on you. I have a feeling that they won't be good for you but I'll tell you.

Marang:you're my personal doctor...

He laughed.

Joshua:I guess I am. You know I want the best for you. At all times...

Marang:and I'm grateful.

He smiled.

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## THE GAME

#61

At the hospital

Marang sat on his desk as he went through a few files.

Joshua:I'm not even supposed to be doing this right now...

He put them aside and held her waist. Marang held his arms and he groaned.

Joshua:Just a few days, two or three for you to heal. I can be patient.

Marang:Yoh!

Joshua:And we'll be apart for most of the time, till you go to school anyways..

Marang:what if I don't want to go back to Francistown?

Joshua:Huh?

Marang shrugged. It was just a suggestion and when you reach 18 and go to school you have to make space for other kids to stay at the orphanage.

Joshua:Baby look at me..you want to stay with me?

Marang:It was just a suggestion though.

Joshua:One I'm really considering at the moment(smiling)We should get going love..

She got off the table and he took her hand in his.

Marang looked around making sure she wasn't forgetting anything. She let go of his hand and held his bicep instead.

Joshua:I love you too baby girl.

Marang:I love you too...

They walked out of his office and he locked it before they started walking. From a distance Same

watched them and she rolled her eyes. This was so unnecessary to be honest. He didn't have to flaunt his girlfriend around the hospital.

At Francistown

Phemelo wore her long dress and stretched the prosthetic leg. It felt fine. She needed to do this for her own personal healing.

She walked to the lounge with a smile on her face.

Phemelo:Mama I'm going to do my hair.

Ma Phem:I can take you.

Phemelo:it's fine. I need to learn to adjust and do some things on my own.

Ma Phem:But you are so scared of car rides these days, what if you freeze or can't breathe in a foreign motor vehicle?

Phemelo:I'll try..the therapist gave me a few



activities to do while in a car.

Ma Phem: Call me if you want me to pick you up and I'm happy you are really trying.

Phemelo: Me too.

She walked out of the house and covered her face with her hand, the sun was coming on too strong. She was lazy to go back and get the sun hat. She pushed open the gate and stepped out before closing it. She walked to the taxi stop. She breathed in and out before stopping a taxi.

She did her breathing exercises as she got inside and tried being positive. It was okay, she was going to be okay.

At Maun

At Joshua house

Marang walked inside the house holding more balloons. She was full from their brunch, one she was really grateful for. He walked in behind her as he held the cake along with the snacks she wanted. She was the birthday girl today and her wish was his command.

He placed the things in the kitchen and searched his pockets. She had his phone. He forgot she held the phones.

Meanwhile in the bedroom Marang changed her clothes before making her way to the lounge.

Joshua: Babe can I have my phone?

Marang walked back to the bedroom and got his phone. She was hoping that they would watch a movie today since he was still off. When she was in the lounge she handed him the phone. He kissed her cheek.

Joshua:I'll be back later baby, don't cook okay?

Marang:Okay...

He saw the disappointment in her eyes and he held her chin.

Joshua:I won't be long baby okay?

Marang:Okay..

He kissed her cheek and forehead before he walked out dialing a number.

Joshua>Hello, can we talk?

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Half loaf is better than nothing, test week this side so excuse the short inserts.

## THE GAME

#62

At town

Phemelo sat by the benches and looked at her feet. No one could tell but she knew there was something different. A missing part of her. She waited for him since he had said he will come just so they can talk. She was finally going to let it all go.

Theo could see her backside as he approached the bench. She didn't know how ecstatic he was when she said they can finally meet. He sat down next to her and Phemelo looked up. Her forehead was out there and shiny because of the new hairstyle.

Theo:Hi.

Phemelo:Hey..

She placed her hands on her lap and faced him, for him to start the conversation or say something.

Theo:You look beautiful by the way.

Phemelo:Thank you, uhm(clearing her throat)About what you said in the text..

Theo:I still want to apologize Phemelo. I know what happened changed your life and it really wasn't intentional.

She nodded and flashed a smile.

Phemelo:You apologized and it was selfish of me to put the blame on you, you didn't force me to go to the party, I'm the one who decided to go and you weren't the person behind the wheel. It happened(sighing)the past will always remain the past and we have to be optimistic about tomorrow.

Theo:I guess you are right. Thank you so much for your forgiveness.

Phemelo:how are you? I've been so engulfed in my

own worries that I never asked, how is your cousin too?

Theo:My cousins eh..Shortly after you left the hospital, he had to go through an operation again. Something had went wrong and they operated. Unfortunately he can't see anymore.

Phemelo nodded sadly bringing her hands together. She couldn't imagine not seeing anything at all. Imagine living in a bright world only for abrupt darkness to be your reality moving forward. That was the worst kind of pain. She was so lucky to be alive, she lost a piece of her but like Marang had said, she had so much to live for.

Phemelo:I'm so sorry, how is he coping?

Theo:It's hard. I last saw him a week ago and it's hard. Really hard on his part, he is learning Braille but some days he breaks down.

Phemelo:I'm sorry. I really am. Hope he heals and learns to accept it.

Theo:yeah(sadly)

Phemelo:how about you? Are you fine?

Theo:Are you a therapist now?(laughing)

Phemelo:Mxm! But I want to know.

Theo:I'll live..

Phemelo:that's not an answer Theo.

Theo:I'm okay and healthy, had to regain lower strength overtime but good.

Phemelo:that's good.

Theo looked at her and she blushed pushing the curly hair backwards.

Phemelo:Is there something on my face?

Theo:No, not at all(with a small smile)

Phemelo:Ok..

Silence enveloped them as Phemelo looked down while Theo looked at her. He sucked in a deep breath. He still had s5ring feelings for this girl and she

probably won't trust him and think he wants to get in her pants. Maybe after this she wanted nothing to do with him, he could not voice out his feelings with fear of being told that he is a liar besides her parents already hate him because of the accident. He just hoped one day they forgive him, he already has his infertility as a reminder, that he will never be able to give a woman a child. He sighed sadly.

Phemelo:What's wrong?

Theo:Nothing. Should I walk you to the taxi rank?

Phemelo:If you aren't busy..

He chuckled. He never was busy for her honestly.

Theo:Where is your friend?

He asked. He was a bit surprised when she hit on him. That was a whole other kind of weirdness and awkwardness.



Phemelo:Which one?

Theo:Raine...

Phemelo looked down.

Phemelo:it's over, I guess and I'm okay with it. Real friends don't abandon each other when the going gets tough, they are there for each other and it showed that she wasn't a sister nor a real friend..I thought I could trust her but never mind. I was too naive to read the signs that I was a friend when the going was good.

Theo:I understand, she was not good for you was she?

Phemelo laughed softly.

Phemelo:Not in the ways that mattered but we did have good times.

Theo:Yeah..

Theo helped Phemelo stand up and he held her

small bag.

Theo:So what do you want to study?

Phemelo:Still thinking about it really. I have a lot of options to choose from.

Theo:The results are not yet out mme Phem...

She shrugged.

Phemelo:I trust my abilities Theo, you do forget I was the best ko form 4 even form 5 though I wasn't satisfied with the results.

Theo:We love to see it..

Phemelo:Kanye when are you finishing your degree?

Theo:In two years...

Phemelo:Serious you still want to venture into farming?

Theo:Just because at the moment I'm pursuing a degree in statistics doesn't mean I want to be confined to the four walls of an office..

Phemelo:Wena kana...

They started walking to the taxi rank.

At Joshua's house

Marang ended up cleaning the whole house till it was spotless. Joshua had been gone for almost two hours and she wasn't about to call him. She went to the kitchen to eat something and maybe watch a movie waiting for him to come back.

Her phone beeped and she checked it as she poured the popcorn in a bowl. It was a message from Phemelo. She read it and smiled texting back. She leaned against the counter as she texted back.

She walked to the sitting room with the bowl and sat down placing her phone away. She scrolled through the channels and looked for a movie she wanted to watch. Her phone beeped again and she checked for

the message and it was Phemelo. She sighed as she sat cross legged in his t-shirt to watch tv.

## At the Lodge

Joshua looked at his father, who was deep in thought. He wanted to hear what he would say about the issue he just laid out. He had been thinking about this for sometime but now he was so sure of it, nothing could change his mind about it...

Joshua:Dad I'm waiting...

His father leaned back holding his beard before he spoke up.

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## THE GAME

#63

At the lodge

Ra Joshua: Joshua I hear you. She is still young for such a huge commitment considering the fact that she still has to go through school and she hasn't explored the world. This is a very huge commitment to place upon a child really.

Joshua sighed rubbing the back of his head. He knew that but he had a feeling that maybe once she knows of the world she will find someone better than him or feel like he was just a stepping stone in her life and she needed better things.

She was the one for him but then there was the age gap but yet again he really loved that little girl. His heart and mind were both focused on making her his

wife.

Ra Joshua: You have to take that into consideration, she might make mistakes along the way because she is just getting started with the explorations. She is also not mature like you, you had your chance to explore the world and bear in mind that she can be slow at times..

He knew that. They were dealing with her ADHD and so far so good.

Ra Joshua: You are getting older and you will want children in future maybe two years from now but she will still be studying. This is not to discourage you or anything of that sort, do what makes your heart leap for joy and brings a smile on your face but note that she also has a life and has her own future plans. As young as she is, she might say no to getting married not that she doesn't love you but because she is not ready for that kind of commitment. You do know that right?

Joshua: I do.

Ra Joshua:All in all, the fact that you are ready to settle down makes me happy. Talk to her and hear what she says, talk to her current legal guardian Mrs Thuso and hear what she has to say. Your mother already loves Marang, she sees her as part of the family but the final decision lies with Marang, don't pressure her to agree when she is not ready because if she is not but agrees for the sake of it, trust me the marriage will start off on a wrong note and everything will be messy from there on. We can only support whatever decision you make and you have to respect her final decision in the end.

Joshua:That's clear and it's something to think about. Thank you.

Ra Joshua:Anytime.

Joshua checked his wrist watch. He has been gone for quite sometime now, she was probably waiting for him at home.

Joshua:Tanki. For the advice and hearing me out. I

have to go. We'll talk about it.

Ra Joshua:Okay. We are leaving Maun by the end of this week.

Joshua:Noted.

He walked out of the hotel room.

At Joshua's house

Marang tried to keep her eyes open but she struggled to do so, it wasn't even that late for her to be sleeping but she must have not gotten enough sleep this morning. She yawned and made herself comfortable on the couch. She will wake up maybe around 8pm. Maybe.

At Phemelo's parents



Phemelo helped set the table for dinner with a small smile. She was eating better these days and not that she had gotten over everything in a few days but it was getting better each day.

Ma Phem and Ra Phem shared a look. Phemelo was doing much better these days and they could see the difference, she was slowly building herself back up again.

Phemelo: Is there anything else I can do?

Ma Phem: You can keep your brother company.

Phemelo: Alright..

She walked out and they looked at each other once again.

At Joshua's house

He parked his car outside and the lights were on, she

must be awake. The talk took much longer than he thought. He will make it up to her though. He got out of the car and went to knock on the door.

Joshua:Babe?(knocking)babe I'm home.

There was no response but he could hear the tv playing in the background. She wasn't sad that he didn't spend the rest of the day with her was she?

Joshua:Baaby?

He knocked several times and he decided to try and use his key but there was a key from the other side. He knocked again.

Joshua:Sweetness, Marang open the door sweetheart.

Meanwhile in the house Marang almost fell off the couch, she didn't know what she was dreaming about but she felt like she was falling off a high place. She opened her eyes immediately before she

fell. She wanted to close her eyes but she was cold.

She heard a door knock and a voice similar to Joshua's voice. She yawned and rubbed her eyes sitting up right. She yawned again and stretched her body. She wanted to sleep.

Joshua: Babe tlhemma open the door for me..

Groggily, she stood up and held the couch arms to remain steady. Marang yawned once again walking to the door. She listened again. The voice was like Joshua's and she was sleepy, her eyes shut close and she opened them again, a yawn escaping her lips. She might be dreaming..she held the door lock and turned the key.

The door opened immediately as she rubbed her eyes. She came face to face with him yawning.

Marang:I-I(yawn)want to sle-sleep...hiiii(covering her mouth)

She walked away and walked to the bedroom, trying to walk straight. Now he was feeling bad. He woke her up from her sleep.

He closed the door and locked it before he switched off the tv. He walked to the bedroom where he found her on the bed already asleep.

He got undressed and walked to the bed and picked her up. He gently peeled back the covers and laid her down. He walked out and switched off the lights. She had cleaned too..

He joined her a minute later under the covers and spooned her little body.

Joshua: Goodnight baby Colton..

Around midnight Marang was wide awake. She

turned to face Joshua. Her mind was fuzzy and she couldn't remember when he came back exactly. He must've come back when she was sleeping.

Marang:Joshua?

He turned and faced the other way.

Marang:Josh, babe?

He faced her way and opened his eyes lazily, he wanted to catch up on some sleep.

Joshua:What is it?(sleepy)

Marang:are you awake?

Joshua:O batla eng babe?(what do you want babe?)

Marang kissed his lips softly.

Marang:Babe, I want you to uhm...

Joshua yawned listening to her...

Marang:It's okay. You can sleep..

Joshua:no, bua..

Marang:What you did in the morning..to uhm..

Joshua:What did(yawning)I do in the morning?

Marang:You slept with me..

Joshua laughed softly. He wanted to sleep but baby girl over here had her own things.

Joshua:I didn't sleep you in the morning, I fucked you an-and it resulted in a tear my love..fuck is the correct word to use

Marang:Please..

Joshua:You have a tear baby..

Marang:You'll be gentle akere? It was really nice and it's something I want to experience again..

He sighed closing his eyes for a few seconds.

Joshua:Get on top, are you wearing panties?

She nodded.

Joshua:Get rid of them..

She quickly removed her panties and was naked underneath the t-shirt.

Joshua:Get on top...

She did and felt him harden against her.

Joshua:Baby the d\*ck is yours to do as you please(yawning)

She looked at him as he looked at her lazily. She didn't know what to do now. Joshua just looked at her wanting to see what she would do.

Marang looked at his boxers, she breathed in deeply as she put her hands inside his boxers and he groaned.

Marang:Is this what I should do next?

He nodded.

She decided to push his boxers down and his erection sprung up. She used one hand to hold a part of it as gentle as she could. Joshua groaned, those soft hands wrapped around his d\*ck was something he had always wished for. He muttered a curse.

Joshua:fuck! Hold it steady and direct it inside baby...

She held his d\*ck in her small hands, she lowered herself onto it, inch by inch releasing a soft moan. Feeling that same feeling she had. She was already full but she looked down and it wasn't all in. She didn't know how it was supposed to look like..

Joshua groaned and he held her waist. Her warmth kept him captive. He should probably take control and teach her when he is more alert. He just wanted her to orgasm then he sleeps.

He flipped them and she was on her back with him on top of her. He kissed her neck.

Joshua:I'll try to be be gentle okay?

He started to slow fuck her till they both came at the same time. He remained inside of her for a few minutes before he slid out and kissed her neck. He cuddled her.



Joshua: Goodnight babe..

He closed his eyes while Marang remained wide awake in his arms. This was getting nicer and pleasurable each and every time. She sighed. She wasn't even sleepy...

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## THE GAME

#64

The following morning

At Marang's old home, Russel and his goons prowled around the area. They had sent their men to look around the whole city. There was no sign of her unless she was moved to another area because of what happened.

One of his men walked to him.

Man: We searched and looked around without raising any suspicions. She is not here.

Russel sighed. So she disappeared like that? Just like that?

Russel: No one can disappear like that? She is perfect and would make a lot of money. She is

probably grown up and we would never recognize her.

Man:We should give up boss.

Russel:Not yet, I have a feeling that we will find her. I don't know how but we will find her.

He kicked the stone before he walked to his car and got inside. He looked at the house one last time and drove off.

His men got in another car and they drove off leaving behind a dusty trail.

At Joshua's house

Joshua brushed his hair getting ready for work. He was in his scrubs and he had his stethoscope around his neck.

Joshua:Sweetness?

Marang turned to face him pushing her hair back.

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:I'm going to work, if you need anything just call.

Marang:Okay. Have a good day.

He walked to the bed and kissed her.

Joshua:Sorry about yesterday, I'll make it up to you.

Marang:Okay..

They shared another kiss, this one longer as Marang's hands wrapped around his neck with the stethoscope dangling between them. Joshua broke the kiss and smiled.

Joshua:I'm going to be late li'l mama. I love you okay?

Marang:I love you too.

He rubbed her cheek, kissed her forehead and

walked out. Marang stretched her body and started planning her day in her head. She picked her phone up and it was just a few minutes after seven.

She just covered herself with the blanket and went back to sleep.

At Prison

Lebo sat in her cell as she thought about her actions. What vendetta did she have against Marang or was she just too bitter about her sister being better than her in every aspect that she transferred that bitterness onto the child?

She rubbed her chest. She just ruined her whole future, instead of protecting her like her mother wished she would, she sold her and now they are after her.

Her eyes scanned the four walled cell, she protected them because she thought they would get her out and ever since she was arrested, Marang has not passed by. It dawned on her that she was that evil person. Selling your own niece for your own personal gain, she really did deserve to die here.

At Joshua's house

Marang took out his laundry, he did show her how to use the washing machine and she was making lunch too. Maybe she should give him lunch?

She will see. She searched his trouser pockets so that she will be able to load them into the washing machine. She frowned as she took out a small box from the pants he was wearing the day before her birthday. Her heart skipped a beat as she opened the small black box. She gasped softly and closed it, slowly putting the pants down.

She looked at the box and put her hands over her head. She put the box on the dressing table and picked the clothes putting them in the washing machine before she walked back to the bedroom.

She picked the box sitting down on the carpet against the bed. She opened it again and closed it, placing her head on her knees.

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## THE GAME

#65

At Joshua's house

After what seemed like an eternity she placed the box away in one of his drawers. She tried to pretend she didn't spend hours thinking about what his intentions were. She was already done with lunch and the laundry.

She didn't want to call anyone and talk about this, she sighed and sat on the bed. Her mind reverted back to the ring she saw in the black velvet box. She knew what that meant, she wasn't that dumb. She ran her hands through her braids thinking about what her response would be if he was to ask her. She didn't want to hurt him in anyway. She could never do that. She decided to go take a bath.



At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo sat in front of her laptop researching about available course. Only a month was left for the BGCSE results to be released and she just hoped she had A\*s and nothing else on those results.

Her phone beeped and she checked the message. It was Theo. She replied him and placed the phone down. She closed the laptop. She knew that Theo loved her and although yesterday he didn't say a thing she knew.

She shook her head. They were over and she wasn't about to string him along, knowing very well that her family doesn't even like him ever since the accident although it was not his fault in any way. Her phone beeped again.

Theo:Are you free on Saturday?

Phemelo:Yes(texting back)

Theo:Can we meet?

She placed her phone on her lap and thought about it. They were just friends now and besides he would be leaving for school in a few weeks and she guessed she will never see him again after that and she wasn't sure if they will keep up with this communication. She honestly did not want to lead him on in any way and give him ideas that they would get back together.

Phemelo texted him back and switched off her phone. She couldn't wait for Marang to come back and tell her about all the progress she has made so far. She was so proud of herself that she was healing. Slowly but surely. Maybe in a few years she will have the confidence to walk around without the prosthetic leg and still feel whole and normal. Like she is human.

At the hospital

Marang held the lunchbox as she removed her hat. Maun was way too sunny and she just navigated her way here since it was a walking distance from Joshua's house.

She greeted the staff as she made her way to his office. The staff recognized her from the day before when she had shown up with Dr Colton.

In her light pink dress and sandals Marang knocked on his office door. It was the right one right? She knocked again till he said come in.

She opened part of the door and peaked inside. He had his head down writing whatever that he was writing.

Marang got inside and closed the door behind her.

Marang:hi...

He looked up and smiled.

Joshua:Hey you, this is a nice surprise.

Marang:You didn't eat this morning. I brought lunch.

Joshua:And I can get used to this, might need dessert too shortly after lunch.

Marang:I should make dessert? I didn't know..okay next time I'll make dessert.

Joshua threw his head back laughing.

Joshua:Marang Bathong!(shaking his head)you don't need to make dessert.

She was lost.

Marang:But you said you might want dessert. I didn't make dessert.

Joshua:You have a lot to learn baby, come sit here..

She walked to him and placed the lunchbox on the

desk along with her hat then sat on his lap.

Joshua:what did you make for me?

Marang:uhm ke rice, di salads le koko. Di sharpo?

Joshua:Is the chicken fried?

Marang:I grilled it, I think...

He kissed the top of her head. It was normal for her to not remember something even though she did it but she remembered most stuff and that was all that mattered. He still had to see which contraceptive method will work on her and he had to write out another prescription of her ADHD meds. Hell she needed another appointment and to check in with her therapist.

Joshua:I think I'm going to enjoy this meal...

He opened the lunchbox and the arom of the food hit his nostrils and he gave her a wet cheek kiss.

Joshua:Thank you baby..

Marang:welcome.

She watched him eat as he fed her a few spoonfuls here there. Once he was done, he closed the lunchbox.

Marang wiped the corner of his lips.

Marang:Better. You are full?

Joshua:Yes. Thank you..

Marang:You need to always eat, especially since you work night shifts.

Joshua:You are a sweetheart.

Marang:I can go now akere?

Joshua:Ng ng, I want dessert.

Marang was still perplexed about that.

Marang:I'll make dessert next time..

He laughed as his hand slipped underneath her dress. He pulled her panties down and she looked at

him, her breath getting caught up in her throat.

Joshua:That's the dessert I want baby girl...

Marang:Ok..

He pushed the stuff that was on the table aside and picked her up placing her on the table. He kissed her lips holding her neck.

Joshua:Don't be too loud okay?

She nodded and he continued pulling her panties down. He placed the panties on his office chair and got between her legs.

At the lodge

Rra Joshua sat down talking with his wife about Joshua's request.

Ma Josh:It is wonderful but honestly she is bound to make mistakes.

Rra Josh:That's what I said about the issue. It's a huge commitment to place on her.

Ma Josh:But if she is ready to marry him, she will do so. We can't stand against young love.

Rra Josh:we are not, whatever that makes them happy right?

Ma Josh:yes, we can only support them but Marang would be a lovely daughter-in-law..

Rra Josh:she is lovely already.

Ma Josh:those two would give me beautiful grandkids. Imagine a baby that looks like Joshua and has Marang's lovely eyes. A cutie pie.

Rra Josh:yoh yoh!

Ma Josh:Think about it, even if she is to fall pregnant right now she could even bring the grandchild here while she continues with school.

Rra Josh:woman yoh!

Ma Josh:If they ever decide to have kids, I'll look after them. I miss having a newborn in the house.



Rra Josh:Sara is not even 8 yet.

Ma Josh:she is not a newborn is she? Exactly and I don't want more kids but I would welcome grandchildren anytime.

Rra Josh shook his head laughing.

At the hospital

Marang gasped moaning as he went deeper. Her arms were around his neck as he moved his waist.

A door knock interrupted the session.

Joshua:Shh..who is it?

Same:I brought the files..

Joshua:I am kind of busy right now..come back later.

He kissed Marang's neck as he thrust in and out

of her and a moan escaped her lips.

Same:It is really important.

Joshua:Later...

His hand held tightly onto her hips as he increased his pace and Marang let go half screaming while moaning. He came inside of her as her head dropped low on his shoulder. They both breathed hard and he slid out. He kissed her neck and pulled away. He found wipe in his drawers and wiped her clean before he found her panties and pulled them up her legs.

Joshua:I love you..

She nodded as he kissed her again.

Joshua:Should we go back home together?

Marang:Will that be okay with you?

Joshua:Yes and I do want to show you around the hospital. We are still looking at your career options

akere my love?

Marang:That would be nice..

Joshua:And we get to buy supper...

Marang pushed down her dress and looked at him with a small smile.

The door opened and Same walked in holding the files. Joshua and Marang looked at her as she placed the files down on the desk. She sucked in a breath. The office reeked of sex.

Joshua:You should learn to knock next time. Thank you.

She walked out and Marang looked at him.

Joshua:I'm still on my lunch break, you good?

Marang:Yes..

He picked her up and placed her down on her feet.

He got the stethoscope and placed it around her neck.

Marang:This is so cool, how does it work?

Joshua:Place it on your ear and that large part place it on my heart.

She did and she heard his heartbeat.

Joshua:That's my heartbeat beating for you..

She blushed keeping it on his chest and stood on her toes to try to kiss him. He laughed when she couldn't reach his level.

Joshua:Let me help you with that.

He lowered his head and kissed her gently before breaking the kiss.

Joshua:You have no idea how happy you make me Marang. I have no control of my actions because I love you so much. You make me weak and I hate being weak.

He pushed her braids aside his big hand holding her cheek.

Joshua:I don't think words will compare.

Just then Marang looked into his eyes. He was the only safe haven she has ever known. Would she risk losing him and her whole world falls apart at the seams because of something so little. A minor detail.

She placed her hand on top of his and smiled.

Marang:Yes.

Joshua:I'm not following..

Marang:Yes. I will marry you.

Joshua was dumb struck as words failed him. She will marry him?

Marang:I found the ring when I was doing the laundry. So my answer is yes...

Joshua let go of her, walking away to rub his chin. He wanted this but he never expected it to be like this.

Marang:or it's not mine?

Her heart raced at that thought. Maybe she was too young and he got wanted he wanted and the ring was not hers right? These things happen and this might be her first heartbreak.

Joshua:No, no. It's yours...just that I wanted to do it right. Come here..

She walked towards him and he picked her up. She let out a little scream and laughed.

Joshua:You want to be Mrs Colton?

Marang:I want to study medicine..

Joshua chuckled.

Joshua:Serious?

Marang:Mhmm..

Joshua:We have a Dr Colton in our hands..

She laughed as he put her down on her feet and she adjusted the stethoscope around her neck.

Joshua:Then I should show you around then ..

He held her waist as they walked out of his office.  
He kissed her neck.

Joshua:Thank you okay?

Marang:I love you.

Joshua:I love you more baby..

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3 MONTHS LATER

# THE GAME

#66

## At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang was woken up by one of the caregivers. She has been sleeping and it was already noon.

She rubbed her eyes as she looked at the lady.

Marang:is it morning already?(yawning)

Caregiver:It's already noon, wa batliwa kontle(Someone is looking for you outside)

Marang:(rubbing her eyes)okay. Good afternoon.(smiling)

The caregiver smiled shaking her head and walked out. Marang got out of bed and stretched her body.



Her mind was still fuzzy as she walked to the bathroom where she washed her face.

Minutes later she walked back into the room and changed out of her pajamas. She slipped into one of her long dresses and walked out with the doek still on her head. She saw the kids playing outside while some watched tv. She usually helped with the homeworks of the older kids who were at school at this time.

She saw Phemelo sitting on one of the chairs under the tree.

Marang:Hey..

Phemelo:You just woke up?

Marang rubbed her eyes.

Marang:Yes...

Phemelo:When did you sleep last night?

Marang:around 8...I'm tired yoh.

Phemelo:Did you study?

Marang:for the MCAT? I should be studying right now tlhemma. It's being written a few weeks from now and I need it to secure my spot ko the medical school.

Phemelo:What the Coltons are doing for you is beautiful.

Marang smiled.

Marang:I didn't know that they would sponsor me, that means I will work for their hospital.

Phemelo:That's good. You did really well.

Marang:thank you...Ga ke ise ke tlhape tlhemma(I haven't bathed)

Phemelo:Go take a bath..

Marang:Okay. I also want to go somewhere, will you go with me?

Phemelo:Where?

Marang:to check my granny's house..

Phemelo:Don't be too long.

Marang nodded and walked to house. She got inside the bedroom and checked her phone. She had missed calls from her fiancée. It felt so good saying that. She always put the ring in the box every time she slept and wore it once she was clean and relaxed.

She called him back.

Marang:Baby..

Joshua:Sweetness why weren't you answering your phone?

Marang:I just woke up.

Joshua:What's wrong? Maabane I was supposed to help you ka bo nine to prepare for the MCAT..

Marang:I fell asleep Joshua, ne ke sa dire ka bomo(it wasn't intentional)

Joshua:Okay. I'll be done by 3pm this side and I will help you, don't fall asleep tlhemma.

Marang:Ee rra.

Joshua:Good, I love you Dr Colton.

Marang smiled.

Marang:Soul equal.

Joshua:Baby I have to go, don't fall asleep and I'll call later..

Marang:Ee rra(softly)

Joshua:Don't do that baby..

Marang:what?

Joshua:You're far and I can't do anything..

Marang:Should I go there?

Joshua:I'll be there ka weekend..

Marang:Can't wait, I have to take a bath..

Joshua:okay. Bye.

She hung up and placed the phone down.

At Maun

At the hospital

Same knocked on the door and she was told to walk inside.

Joshua:Take a seat.

Same sat down and faced Joshua.

Joshua:Same we are colleagues and work together, the attitude you are giving me shows me that you might have an issue with me. What is it that offended you?

Same's mouth went dry and she brought her hands together. Was her attitude that bad that he wanted to address it?

Joshua:Anything? Because from here on I expect professionalism since there are no issues.

Same:None at all.

Joshua:Good. You can walk out. Thank you.

She stood up and walked out. Same breathed in and out. She was trying so hard. Too hard.

Joshua leaned back in his chair. He thought of calling Marang again but he let it go. He dialed his mother's number.

Ma Josh:Hello..

Joshua:Mother hi, have you seen Marang recently?

Ma Josh:She was here a week ago.

Joshua:is she sick or anything?

Ma Josh:she is good. Okay even.

Joshua frowned.

Joshua:Okay. Thank you ma.

Ma Josh:welcome and bye.

She hung up and he rubbed his chin.

## At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang wore her sun hat and walked outside holding her phone and the keys. It has been over two years since she had been in that house. As much as they were too poor for anything, that was where she had lived with her grandmother. She would be so proud right now. She always wished she would do well in school and they didn't even know she had ADHD from a young age.

Marang:Phem we should take a taxi, you'll get tired on the way.

Phemelo nodded as she stood up. They walked out of the orphanage and minutes later they were by the taxi stop. Phemelo hailed a taxi and they got inside.

Phemelo just held Marang's hand and Marang squeezed her hand. She was going to get over this

one day. Marang understood that.

As soon as the taxi stopped in front of the yard Marang froze and her heart raced recognizing the car in the yard. Phemelo slapped Marang's thigh.

Phemelo: Marang we should get out and check the house, we arrived.

Marang's eyes welled with tears as she saw the man who ruined her whole childhood. He wasn't looking at the taxi.

Marang: Drive off, re tla duela special...

The taxi man did so and that was when Russel turned only for the dust to be left behind, it was probably no one.

Russel and his men looked around. So she was really gone?

Russel: It's of no use.



Man: We will get other girls, we already have girls working for us willingly so we should let this one slide.

Russel: O lucky gore...

He got inside his car and his men did so.

At the prison

Lebo sat on a chair in the interrogation room.

Lebo: I'll talk, I have nothing to live for.

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## THE GAME

#67

In the taxi

Phemelo looked at Marang who was now silent and holding back tears.

Phemelo:Marang what's wrong?

Marang shook her head and put her hand over her mouth. They were still there, looking for her?

The taxi man looked at the two girls at the back.

Taxi man:Where should I go now?

Phemelo directed him back to Sunshine Orphanage and minutes later it was parked in front of the yard. Phemelo searched her pockets for that extra P50

and gave it to the driver. They wasted his time and energy.

Phemelo:Marang?? We are home...

She got out first and absentmindedly got out. As soon as the car drove off, Marang started to shake like a leaf in a tree during a windy storm.

Phemelo:Marang what's wrong?

In Marang's head all the buried memories came back, how she screamed for help and no one helped. How that man got his way with her and she was lucky he didn't move on to another part of her. Fat tears rolled down her cheeks as all the pain came back tenfold and her hand subconsciously moved to her butt, recalling every little detail.

Phemelo just held her hand, leading her to the house. Her mind was not there and she was crying. It was like she was remembering something that completely set her off.

She made Marang sit down and looked at her.

Phemelo:Marang what's wrong? Talk to me?

More tears rolled down her eyes but she didn't make a sound.

Phemelo:Rangz?

One of the caregivers walked out and found Marang crying.

Caregiver:Marang? What's wrong?

Marang's lips quivered and that first sob escaped her lips, breaking her silent cry sobbed into her hands. It would always be there right? That constant reminder that she was raped and was worthy to be sold and raped when her aunt was present. That she had been reduced to nothing but an object. That she used to be so helpless and that the man might meet

her years later and she will still breakdown like she just did.

Marang:I-I want to sl-sleep(shaky voice)

It was still unbelievable that she saw the guy. Out there roaming the streets, if they had decided to walk and he took her, what would be of her? She was an orphan and Joshua was too far to do anything.

She slowly stood up and walked to the room.

Marang and the caregiver looked at each other.

Phemelo:We were in a taxi on the way to her grandmother's house then we saw men and their cars parked in the yard. That's when she froze and started to cry..

Caregiver:We will hear what she says tomorrow, we should give her time.

Phemelo:Probably.

Caregiver: Let me make sure you are in a taxi.

Phemelo smiled and thanked her. Did she have money to get a taxi?

Phemelo: wait...

She walked to the room where Marang was curled into a ball and sobbing. She sniffed.

Phemelo: Rangz what's wrong?

She didn't answer her and Phemelo looked for Marang's wallet.

Phemelo: I'm taking P20 for a taxi, ke tla a busa...

Marang pulled the pillow close to her chest as Phemelo walked out.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo sent a text that she was home safe but she

couldn't help but wonder what it is that triggered Marang's crying episode.

Phemelo found the nanny and her baby brother in the house. Her parents were working and she just made her way to the bedroom. She called Theo who answered immediately.

Phemelo:Hello?

Theo:Hi Phem, how are you?

Phemelo:I'm good. I have a question.

Theo:Shoot..

Phemelo:How do you talk to someone who keeps what they feel private. Like my friend okay the only friend I have, kana she went through something traumatic and she never talks about it. Today we were fine and jiki jiki she starts crying and won't talk.

Theo:give her space...

Phemelo:I really want to be there for her. Space sometimes might not be the best thing to give someone when they are going through shit. You die

a slow death starting with loneliness then contemplating suicide. People being around might show that they still care..

Theo:You have a point. I don't know tota Phem.

Phemelo sighed and pushed her hair back.

Phem:I'll think of something. How are you and how is school?

Theo:Dunny you mentioned school...

He started to tell her about what has been going on at school as she laughed softly holding the phone.

At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang's phone rang over and over again. By this time her eyes were red and puffy, she was sure her voice was dry as sand. She didn't have the energy to talk and those lower abdomen pains must be her period pains. She rubbed her abdomen. She didn't



even have the strength to get out of bed and wear a pad just in case.

Her phone rang again and she finally picked up the annoying mobile device.

Marang:Hello..

Joshua:Mara-baby what's wrong?

Marang's eyes filled with tears once again and her lips trembled.

Joshua:Sweetheart are you there?

Marang nodded.

Joshua:Baby?

A sob escaped her lips and she ended up hanging up before he could say a word. She rubbed her stomach and turned to rub it again. Her period pains weren't this intense but from the time she started her periods Seeletso had always told her that other girls get severe period pains so maybe this was one of the pains.

She rubbed it and closed her swollen red eyes as her phone rang again.

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## THE GAME

#68

### At Sunshine Orphanage

The phone kept on ringing and she opened her eyes to hit the answer button once again.

Joshua:Baby what's wrong? Don't hang up on me..

She wiped her tears and tried to speak but no words came out.

Joshua:Sweetness relax and talk to me..

Marang:I-I sa-saw(crying)the m-man wh-who Ra-raped me.

Joshua was silent at the other end of the line as he took the news in. They needed to notify the officer who was heading the case as well as Mrs Thuso.

Joshua:Where?

Marang:Gr-mmaiye's place..

Joshua:Baby listen to me, try to rest. I will deal with it from this side.

Marang:ke nale di pp gape...

Joshua:Take a painkiller and place a hot water bottle over your tummy. Wait o nale di pp? You never have period pains but do as I say okay?

She nodded wiping her tears.

Joshua:I love you and rest Sweetness. I'll deal with it. I'm hanging up okay? I love you...

He hung up and she placed her hands on her tummy sniffing. He said painkillers and a hot water bottle. She just didn't want to get out of bed.

At Joshua's place

Joshua dialed Mrs Thuso's number who answered immediately.

Mrs Thuso:Hello..

Joshua:Dumelang. Uhm we have a problem.

Mrs Thuso:I'm listening..

Joshua:Marang says she just saw the man who raped her years ago at her granny's house.

Mrs Thuso:I'm heading to the orphanage right now okay?

Joshua:Thank you and alert the police about this.

Mrs Thuso:Thank you..

She hung up and Joshua checked the time. He had a patient to attend in a few minutes but he called Marang. It rang unanswered for more than a minute till she picked up.

Joshua:Baby?

Marang:I'm sleeping, my tummy hurts and I have a headache.

Joshua:Did you take the pills? And did you place a hot water bottle on your tummy?

Marang:Go botlhoko. I'm sleeping..

He sighed.

Joshua:Okay my love. Rest and I will call later.

She nodded and he hung up.

Marang closed her swollen eyes with a heavy heart and her hands around her stomach. She wanted to just sleep. Botswana was such a small country and she hated the fact that she might see the man who defiled her anywhere and he might steal her away from her current life.

Her small hands kneaded her tummy and she groaned with her eyes closed.

Two hours later Mrs Thuso was at the orphanage with the police lady who was handling Marang's

case.

Amantle:And we have new developments on the case too. It will be better if I tell you with Marang present.

Mrs Thuso:That will be okay, I just hope that she is fine..

She greeted the caregiver.

Mrs Thuso:Where is Marang?

Caregiver:In the bedroom, she was crying when she was back here with her friend Phemelo. Phemelo also doesn't know what's wrong?

Mrs Thuso:Poor thing. Thank you.

Mrs Thuso and Amantle made their way to the bedroom where Marang was fast asleep but there was an irony smell in the room.

Mrs Thuso's nose crinkled as she walked to the bed, they should open the windows more. She shook

Marang who finally opened her eyes. They were almost closing as she looked at Mrs Thuso before she frowned feeling the wetness on the bed and how sticky her legs were. It wasn't like this when she fell asleep.

Mrs Thuso's heart broke seeing Marang's swollen eyes and red face, she looked so helpless and sad. They needed to get this case over and done with, the poor child has been through a lot.

Marang pulled back the blankets and Mrs Thuso gasped. That was where the iron like smell came from. That was a lot of blood. Marang's heart raced as she looked at the blood, it was too much and it was all over her pink dress and on the sheets. Her lips quivered again. What was wrong with her, of course she could stain herself when her period started but this was a lot of blood, too much that it scared her.

Mrs Thuso: Marang are you okay?



She shook her head as she got out of bed with tears in her eyes. She was sticky and bloody and a sob escaped her lips. Mrs Thuso looked at the sheets, this was too much blood unless...

Mrs Thuso, we should take you to the hospital..Take a bath my dear and we will take you there.

She slowly walked to the wardrobe where she got her toiletries and towel then walked out to bathroom.

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# THE GAME

#69

## At Sunshine Orphanage

Marang walked back into the bedroom and the sheets were changed and also the blankets. She sat on the bed and rubbed her eyes. She didn't have the energy to really go anywhere. She wanted to sleep and escape the reality of life even if it was just for a few hours. She sighed and walked to the mirror. Her eyes were puffy and she looked so sad. She rubbed her stomach and walked to the wardrobe. She took out a pair of panties and a pad before she headed back to the bathroom.

When she came back, she dressed up in warm clothes and picked the ring from the velvet box. She wore it and smiled. After that time she had said yes,

weeks passed before he officially proposed to her. It was beautiful. All those doubts she had, were wiped clean. This man had nothing but good intentions for her life and was willing to share his whole life with her, a mere no one. If that wasn't the purest form of love she didn't know what was love then.

She placed her hand over her beating heart. Love so pure, untainted and fragile. It was theirs and despite their age difference, her opinion meant a lot to him. She sighed and picked her phone walking out of the bedroom. The headache was still there but she was going to the hospital. Today was just messed up and seeing that man threw her off.

She made her way to the lounge and the two ladies looked at her.

Mrs Thuso:Marang you remember her?

She nodded. Amantle noticed the shiny piece of jewelry on her finger. That didn't look like any cheap ring, it looked quite pricey.

Mrs Thuso:We can go and we'll ask questions on the way.

Marang nodded. Amantle had to admit she looked sad and it must be the trauma coming back. People who had a traumatic childhood never fully recover from that.

They walked to Mrs Thuso's car and Amantle left the police car she had come with. Marang sat down and rubbed her stomach.

Amantle:Marang hey.

Marang:hi...

Her voice was low and coarse. Probably from the crying.

Amantle:Mrs Thuso told me what happened.

Joshua must've told her, he said he will deal with it.

Amantle:Can you mind telling us what happened?

Marang breathed in and started to tell them, wiping tears in between as Mrs Thuso drove to the hospital. When she was done, they had arrived and Mrs Thuso sympathetically looked at her. She had been through a lot and that man was just a blast from the past she didn't want to remember.

Just then her phone rang and she answered.

Joshua:Hey baby how are you feeling?

Marang:Mrs Thuso brought me to the hospital.

Joshua paused as he took of his stethoscope at his house. He was done for the day.

Joshua:What's wrong sweetheart?

Marang:I don't know. I found a lot of blood when I woke up..

Joshua:Blood?

Marang:Ee rra..

Joshua sat down on the couch. Blood? Cramps?  
Marang sleeping a lot all of a sudden?

Joshua: Tell me what the doctor says okay baby?

Marang: Ee. Bye.

Even her voice was not her normal one.

Joshua: Bye baby...

He was about to hang up when a question popped up.

Joshua: Which hospital..

Marang looked around.

Marang: Jubilee..

Joshua: Okay. I love you.

Marang: Ee rra. Bye.

She hung up and placed her phone on her lap.

Mrs Thuso:We can go see a doctor or a nurse..

Mrs Thuso and Marang got out of the car while Amantle opted to stay. Their consultation was private.

Meanwhile Joshua called his mother.

Joshua:Hello..

Ma Josh:Hi..

Joshua:When you last saw Marang what did you mean that she was fine and more than okay?

Mrs Colton smiled.

Ma Josh:when last did you see Marang?

Joshua:It's been two months, I've been busy and we call instead of video chatting.

Ma Josh:Her skin was so smooth, Bathong o tlo nn-

She paused. They both didn't know and Marang was too young to know or even recognize the signs. She was waiting for the both of them to find out.

Joshua:She is going to be what?

Ma Josh:stop quizzing me and ask Marang..

Joshua sighed. His mother was beating around the bush and his patience was wearing out.

Joshua:Mother just talk..

Ma Josh:I'm not your age mate Joshua.

Joshua:Sorry..

Ma Josh sighed.

Ma Josh:She is glowing like a pregnant woman..

Joshua's heart skipped a beat. Pregnant. He didn't want to make himself believe that. Pregnant...so if she is pregnant then sh-



His hand shook slightly as he brought his head down.

Ma Josh:Joshua? Are you still there?

Joshua:yeah. Bye mom.

He hung up and covered his face with his hands. Not his sweetness and th-

His throat dried up and she was all alone.

He stood up, heading to the bedroom to get out of his scrubs, maybe he was overthinking things but he can go, even if it's a six hour drive there, he will be there before midnight and he is fast enough probably around 10pm...

At the hospital

The nurse assessed Marang, she didn't want to give a false diagnosis but she was already sure of what happened.

Marang looked at the screen with a frown. Joshua had showed her what the screen was for.

The nurse gave Marang a sad look. From everything she had said and from this scan it was quite obvious but she looked clueless. Innocent even, she found it hard to believe she was even 18.

Nurse: Well I'm sorry to break it to you.

Marang listened attentively.

Nurse: According to the scan, your womb was carrying a two month old fetus.

Marang's eyes widened. A fetus? Two months? She used past tense too.

Nurse:What happened earlier was a miscarriage, you lost the baby a few hours ago.

Mrs Thuso looked at Marang to see her reaction.  
Marang looked at the nurse.

Marang:I-I...a baby?

Nurse:Yes mam, you miscarried. It is quite common to miscarry during the first trimester because that time pregnancy is delicate and there are a lot of factors can cause it, stress which often causes high blood in pregnant women being the cause. I'm sorry.

Marang had nothing to say. The nurse and doctor looked at her, expecting her to cry or react but there was nothing. She kept a straight face and nodded.

Nurse:We will clean you up and no sex for two weeks.

Marang just nodded again and the nurse walked out.  
Mrs Thuso looked at Marang.

Mrs Thuso:Marang it's okay to cry, you lost a child.

Marang:Ee mma..

Mrs Thuso just waited for Marang to react but she didn't. Her face was blank.

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## THE GAME

#70

At the hospital

Marang was cleaned up and given a few pills. She sat quietly on the bed. Not sure what to make of this. She looked at the phone next to the stand and sighed. She closed her eyes, she was spending the night her. She closed her eyes and fell into a deep slumber.

Later that night, Joshua didn't go back home first and decided to go to the hospital. Marang had not called back and he had a feeling his gut was right. He asked around by the reception till he was told her room number.

The fatigue he felt on his way didn't even matter because he had to see her and see how she is doing. He walked to her room and opened the door.

There she was, sleeping peacefully with her hand beneath her head, the ring on her finger. He closed the door softly and walked to the bed. He sat on the edge and looked at her. You could tell her eyes were swollen and that she was tired. Now that she was studying for the MCAT and going to study abroad, how was he going to be there for here like that now?

He held her small hand and rubbed it while she turned. He kissed her hand and looked at her, she must be exhausted and he was hoping to hear from her or anyone about what happened.

Minutes later Marang turned and opened her eyes. He just rubbed it.

Joshua:Hey sweetness..

Marang tried to sit upright, those pills really knocked her out.

Joshua:It's okay baby..

He fixed the pillows and helped her sit upright. Her eyes were all swollen and he rubbed her cheek.

Marang looked at Joshua for a few minutes not saying anything and that was when it actually hit that she, she lost their baby.

Sure she wasn't ready for a child because she was a child but he was going to be the working parent who will get to stay with their child and imagine seeing a Joshua lookalike, tears made their way to her eyes. She was weak. Weak weak and couldn't even keep a mere fetus.

Joshua:Hey babe talk to me, I'm here(softly)

Marang:Uhm..(pausing to wipe her tears)the nurse says I-I..lost our baby.

Joshua pulled her to him and rubbed her back.

Marang:I didn't know I was pregnant. I'm sorry..

Joshua:You have nothing to be sorry about...I'm here okay?

Marang sighed. He was trying to be strong for her but it was all her fault. Why did she decide to go to mmaiye's place today all of a sudden. She rubbed her chest as he held her.

Joshua was hurt by the fact that she apologized for something she didn't even do. He didn't want that, he was here and it hurt but he could see it was something she would never move from.

His heartbeat sounded in his chest and more tears made it to her eyes, she robbed him the chance of being a father. Would she make it as his wife? A low sob escaped her lips.

Joshua:I'm here sweetness...We are in this together okay?

She nodded and closed her eyes with tears running



down her cheeks, wetting the shirt he was wearing.

Once she was asleep, Joshua just got in the small bed and spooned her. Her small breaths and her tiny lips slightly apart. He looked at her sadly. His poor baby didn't know and she was shattered about the fact that she lost their baby. He could imagine a little girl who had her cute eyes and her light skin tone running around while mommy was in school or them going to visit her. The sharp pain in his chest was something he had ignored on his way here but now it had intensified. He closed his eyes.

The following morning

He woke up first and got out of bed. He pushed her hair back as the door opened. A nurse walked in and looked at him. Joshua rubbed his head.

Joshua:Hi..

Nurse:Hi..

He wasn't here yesterday when they were attending to the patient. She was sure she should discharge her after checking on her again.

Marang woke up and she looked around and saw Josh. That was when her heart stopped racing, he didn't leave her alone.

Nurse: One last check up and you are good to go.

The nurse did what she did while Joshua watched from the sidelines. He should let the nurse do her job. Marang keep glancing at him for assurance. He nodded and held her hand.

Nurse: I am done.

Marang nodded and the nurse walked out.

Joshua: I'm taking you home okay?

She nodded.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo woke up and tried calling Marang again. It wasn't going through. She really wanted to know what was going with her dear friend. She was worried about her.

She got out of bed and headed to the bathroom.

At the Coltons

Joshua knocked on the door and his mother opened. She was surprised to see Joshua there and Marang looked terrible.

Joshua:Hi mother..

Marang greeted her and Joshua led Marang to his room so that she can rest.

Joshua:Wear my shirt and get into bed okay? I want to go to the police station, I'll be back a little bit later.

Marang nodded as Joshua opened the wardrobe to get her a shirt.

He kneeled in front of the bed.

Joshua:I'm not leaving you alone sweetness..

She nodded. He kissed her forehead and walked to the shower to clean up before heading to the police station. When he got out she was fast asleep with her hands over her tummy.

Joshua:I'm the one who is sorry(whispering)

He started getting dressed and kissed her cheek when he walked out.

His mother looked at him with questions in her eyes. He sighed.

Joshua:We lost the baby..

That was all he said before he walked out of the house and Ma Josh covered her mouth with her hands.

At the police station

Dani was talking to Amantle in her office while laughing. She had thirty minutes to be at work and what a nice way to get late after talking to her friend. After the Joshua saga, her love life was a mess and she had given up on men. Totally.

There was a door knock and Amantle frowned. It was early though.

Amantle:Come in..

Joshua walked in and Dani tucked her hair behind her ear. She knew she was hot, the glow up that hit her was massive. It had been more than a year since he has seen her.

Joshua:Hi..can we talk?(looking at Amantle)

Amantle:Sure about what?

Joshua:The case..

Amantle checked her watch.

Amantle:We'll talk later okay friend?

Dani:Sure. Joshua it was nice seeing you.

Joshua:Same..

She stood up as Joshua sat down, his cologne filling the room. He was clean, smart and looking good even better than the last time she saw him. She walked out leaving them in Ammie's office.

Joshua placed his hands on the table.

Joshua:About he case.

Amantle:I didn't tell Maranga but her aunt talked and we finally have the name of the culprit, Marang could

describe the face so that we see if it matches her aunt's description.

Joshua:I see..

At the Coltons

Marang woke up alone in bed and she found food next to the bedside. She rubbed her eyes and looked at the food before tears made their way to her eyes. She laid down again and brought her knees to her chest, sobbing softly. She was too young for this. This wasn't how her life was supposed to be like.

The door opened and Joshua's heart broke hearing her sobs, she was showing to make herself sick with all of this crying. He sat next to her.

Joshua:Babe? Sweetness.

Marang:I'm sorry.

Joshua:Don't apologize, we are in this together.

Marang:I always have problems and you don't need my problems.

Joshua turned her and made her look at him.

Joshua:Where is this coming from?

Marang:You are always stressed because of me, you don't need that.

Joshua:And you don't know what I need Marang. I love you and would do anything to see you happy. You are what I need. Baby I'm also hurt that we lost something precious but that doesn't mean to me you are a burden. I still want you and need you to be my wife. How I love you is crazy because if I was to ever lose you I would lose my mind Marang. Ke ipheditse ka wena ga ke le ha..

He hugged her and she sighed softly against his chest.

Joshua:Baby whatever that happens don't give up on us.

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FOUR YEARS LATER

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I will post the sponsored bonus insert after my morning test. This was last night's insert.

# THE GAME

#71

At Toronto, Canada

The aircraft landed on the ground and Joshua looked out of the window. He looked at the gold band on his ring finger and leaned back. Once they were out of the aircraft he dragged his bag along the runway, it was a bit chilly but not too cold. She had no idea that he was coming. She said she was busy with school and had to use these Easter holidays to study ahead so that she doesn't struggle when they open schools once again.

Her grades are something he was proud of and the mere fact that his wife was working very hard was something any man should be proud of. Besides he had a surprise for her.

## At Marang's apartment

She looked at the negative pregnancy test. She last slept with Josh almost four months ago and she waited till today to check. She sadly threw the pregnancy test in the trashcan. She walked out of the bathroom and made her way to the bedroom where she opened the drawer that had all her supplements and the fertility pills. She didn't why she couldn't fall pregnant. They made the joint decision to try a year ago for a child and she was ready for that. He was almost thirty and she was 22 and left with only a year to finish school. Tears made their way to her eyes. She has been taking these for the past eight months and nothing. He didn't know and when she knew he was visiting she would hide them away. She wiped her tears with her thumb and sighed.

She checked her phone and checked her cycle. Her

periods were irregular but if they were regular she would be ovulating today. She took out the small bottle and injection. It wouldn't hurt to take the injection along with the pills. Maybe she will be more fertile once she gets back to Botswana and she will give him a child. That was the plan. They were both healthy and fertile, hell they were compatible in all aspects and she didn't know what the problem was. They once made a child that she lost. She rubbed her tummy as a lone tear rolled down her cheek. She quickly wiped it and sniffed.

She removed the towel and drew the liquid from the bottle using the syringe. She gently put the needle on her hip and she yelped a bit, injecting it into her system. She closed her eyes and once the syringe was empty she removed it and went to throw it in the trashcan in the bathroom. She rubbed the area a bit and stood up getting dressed.

She pulled her weave back and walked barefoot to

the small kitchen to make a healthy snack to eat. She made changes to her diet and everything, she wouldn't ruin her chances of conceiving for her husband. With that she made herself a healthy snack.

Meanwhile Joshua walked up to the elevator. She was going to be surprised he was sure of that but he missed her. Keeping up with this long distance relationship was hard work but they both put in the effort besides he helped her with most things. Including her studies..

The lift stopped and he walked out. He searched his pockets for the key to the one bedroom apartment. He didn't forget it back home did he? Aah. He found it.

He put the key in the lock and it turned. Marang frowned as she picked up a knife, this was the safest apartment ever. She walked to the door

holding the knife and the door opened.

Joshua lifted his hands up as Marang pointed at him with one hell of a sharp knife.

Joshua:Whoa little mama, it's me..put the knife down baby...

She breathed a sigh of relief and placed the knife down. She ran to him and jumped on him as he caught her.

Joshua:Hey sweetheart(deep voice)

Marang:Hey, why didn't you tell me you're coming.

Joshua:Because I love surprising you.

Marang:That's why you didn't answer last night?

Joshua:Yes mam..

Marang:Bummer, I wanted to put on a strip tease for you...

He kissed her lips and she wrapped her legs around

his torso.

Joshua:You can do it here personally and service me..

She laughed against his neck and kissed his neck.

Marang:I would love that.

Joshua:And do that little thing I like..

Marang:Yes sir..in turn you are helping me study.

Joshua:Have I ever refused?(against her ear)

She bit her lip and shook her head with a little laugh..She slid down him and walked behind him to pull his bag.

Marang:I'll take this to my room, I'll cook okay?

Joshua kissed her cheek.

Joshua:Thank you.

Marang pulled the bag to the bedroom and she picked the pills from the bed to put them in the drawer.

Joshua removed his jacket walking to the bedroom, when he got there Marang was already unzipping the suitcase.

Marang:ka packer autwe baby?

Joshua wrapped his hands around her small waist. She felt his hard on on her back and smiled.

Marang:Bathong!

Joshua:I missed you..akere ga o abe kuku yame?(you are not giving away my p\*ssy?)

She giggled.

Marang:I would never.

Joshua:Nka go bolaisa diatla Marang.

Marang:Ee rra..

He turned her around and pushed up her t-shirt a bit.His hand pulled her thongs down her legs..



Joshua:Fuuck, I missed this...

Marang hooked her leg on his as he brought his head down to kiss her. His hands moved under the tee and he held her waist to pick her up. He threw her on the bed and she giggled when her husband climbed on top of her. The two kissed each other hungrily as Joshua ran his hands in her hair and Marang's hands moved to his fly and zip. She did quick work of the trousers and pushed them down.

Marang's hands then hovered on his chest and she broke the kiss.

Marang:Baby apola..

Joshua flipped them and she was on top.

Joshua:Do it yourself..

She pulled the t-shirt over his head and touched his muscles with her soft hands and smiled. Joshua looked at her, he literally made a sex addict with his little wife here. In all her tiny form, she honestly

loved it when they got it down. He laughed remembering when she was interning at the hospital and she was wearing a sexy little thing under those scrubs, making her way to his office.

Marang:You gym a lot...why are you laughing?

Joshua:Nothing..

Marang raised an eyebrow and he held her waist.

Joshua:I still want that strip show you promised.

Marang:Why are you laughing?

Joshua:It's nothing...

She got of him and walked out of the bedroom. He groaned. He swore sometimes her moods were those of a pregnant woman.

Joshua:Marang?

He pulled up his pants and followed her out.

Joshua:Baby?

Marang:What do you want to eat?

Joshua:You..

Marang:I'm off the menu..I'm making chicken okay?  
Kana tla ga gotwe ga ke go jese.(they will say I'm not feeding you)

Joshua:Marang o ngadile?(Marang are you upset?)

Marang:Ng ng.(no)

Joshua was about to speak when a phone rang from the bedroom. Marang walked to the bedroom and picked up the call with a smile.

Marang:Dumelang.

Ma Josh:How are you ngwanaka ?

Marang walked out,

Marang:Fine ma and Josh just arrived.

Ma Josh:He said he will call when he arrives.

Marang placed the phone on her chest.

Marang:You didn't call?(whispering)o tla ntlhobosa

my mother in law..

She placed the phone next to her ear again.

Marang:Mama you can talk to him, he is right next to me.(looking up at him)

Ma Josh:It's alright. I was just checking up on you, you are fine?

Marang:Ee mma.

Ma Josh:That's good. I'll call you later so we can talk when he is not around.

Marang:(laughing)Ee mma..go siame.

She hung up and placed the phone down. Joshua laughed and kissed her forehead and cheek.

Joshua:If you want it, I'll be in the shower o lese go ngala.(stop sulking)

He walked away and Marang folded her arms.

## At Francistown Airport

Phemelo dragged her luggage across the runway. She was here for the Easters and she had news to share. She hoped her parents won't freak out when she tells them.

She got her phone and called her mother who answered immediately.

Phemelo:Mama I'm at the airport.

Ma Phem:Hee..I'm coming my girl..

Phemelo smiled as she sat down on the benches waiting for her parents.

## At Marang's apartment

Marang bit her lip and switched off the stove. She walked to the bedroom. The shower wasn't running. Was he done showering?

She walked inside the bedroom and he was sitting on the bed holding the fertility pills and doses

Joshua:Care to explain?

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## THE GAME

#72

At Marang's apartment

Marang looked at him while Joshua expected an answer. He read the names of the pills and he looked at her again.

Joshua:Marang?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:Sit down o nkarabe...

Marang brought her hands together as she sat by the edge.

Joshua:Come closer.

Marang shook her head.

Joshua:Marang!

She moved closer and looked down. She should've hid those pills somewhere he couldn't find them now she has to answer and she hated being reprimanded by him. It would end with her crying and he would let her think about what she did all alone in bed. She hated fights.

Joshua: Explain...

Marang: They are fertility pills..

Joshua: I can see that.

Marang: Yeah...

Joshua: And?

Marang: Josh I just want to give you a baby, we have been trying and nothing is happening kana, we are both healthy but I don't know what's wrong with me, the fertility pills will increase my chances.

Joshua: How long have you been using fertility treatments?

Marang: Eight months.



Joshua:Marang we should communicate, you do know that fertility treatments do have side effects.

Marang:Ee rra.

Joshua:Marang we use pills to keep your ADHD under control and you using fertility treatments might change that..you do know that right?

Marang:I know but bab-

Joshua:Did I put you under pressure to have my baby?

Marang:No..

Joshua:Then?

She rubbed her eyes.

Joshua:Did I hit you Marang?

Marang:Nnyaa Rra..

Joshua:I'm listening..

Marang rubbed her eyes once again and looked at

him. She really did want to give him a child, she didn't want to fail as a wife.

Marang:kana you won't understand, now you are angry..

Joshua:Marang you are supposed to talk to me if you want to take pills, you are messing up your own system and you are stressing. Marang you should know better you are a doctor yourself..

Marang:I'm desperate okay? I don't want to fail as a wife kana. What if I can't give you a child?

Joshua:that's stupid and you know it..

Marang:I should be able to give you a child and it's not stupid Joshua. Mpuise sentle..

She wiped more tears looking at him.

Marang:This is also important to me, I saw the longing look you gave your co-worker when he announced that his girlfriend was pregnant. You want that and I'm afraid I can't give you that so I should try everything in my power to give you that

Joshua. You have been putting my happiness above yours for years and it is the sweetest thing ever but I also want to make you happy too. I want a baby as much as you do, someone you can love more than life itself other than me...Understand that.

He looked at her as she continued to wipe her tears.

Marang:I'm sorry for not telling you about me taking the fertility pills..ke tla di latlha ee(I will throw them away)but I will not apologize for wanting to give you a child Joshua. You are my husband and I want us to be happy. I really do.

She picked up the pills from where he was sitting and the pills filled her small hands. She walked to the bathroom and stepped on the pedestal to open the trashcan, throwing it inside.

She placed her hands on the sink and looked at the mirror. Her lips shook and a sob escaped her lips. She was useless as a wife. Really useless at that. She sat on the toilet seat and covered her face with

her hands crying softly.

Joshua was in the bedroom, hearing her soft sobs in the bathroom. He rubbed his head and walked to the bathroom, opening the door to find her sitting on the toilet seat.

He kneeled before her.

Joshua:Marang?

She looked up with tears in her eyes.

Joshua:Do not pressurize yourself to fall pregnant, you are stressing yourself kana. It will happen on it's own time autwe?

She nodded.

Joshua:Come here...

He helped her stand and hugged her.

Marang:A baby is all I'm asking for, it's not a hard

request is it?(crying)

Joshua:It's not..

Marang:And I feel it's my fault I lost our baby, if I wasn't stressing an-we would have a baby right now. A whole 3 year old with us..

Joshua rubbed her back.

Joshua:Sweetness...

Marang:I'm weak. It hurts everyday seeing a pregnant woman somewhere around in town or when your grandmother asks me gore re tlhatswa lesire leng..Kooteng gatwe ka gana mme ke go jela madi..

Joshua's heart was crushed hearing her say that.

Marang:It hurts, right here in my heart(touching her chest)I love you so much and have no control and it hurts not giving you something that will add more brightness to your world. I always rush home in tears, a strange woman pregnant and I cry my eyes out praying it was me, that it should be me..

He rubbed her back as she cried some more.

Marang:Everytime you say goodbye as I watch you go, knowing that there is a woman out there that might give you a child, it's like no other pain I've ever known..

Joshua:Shh..

Marang:My heart hurts, it's crushed and I can't control my body. It's been eight months of fertility treatments and nothing Josh. Why?

Joshua:Don't put yourself under pressure.

Marang:It's hard not to..

He just hugged her silently as she cried on his chest, he picked her up and walked to the bedroom. He placed her on his lap and rocked back and forth cradling her for her to stop crying...Not his poor baby this stressed.

At Francistown

Phemelo excitedly took out the scan and smiled. She placed her hand flat against her tummy. She wasn't

even jet lagged. She wanted to tell him first then tell her parents. She was 23 and she knew they were going to freak but she would be okay.

This was exciting and she could wait to tell Marang the good news too.

Phemelo walked out of the bedroom and she told her mother that she would be back. She took a cab to his place with a huge smile on her face.

Minutes later p, the cab stopped in front of the house and she paid him. She got out and opened the gate. She walked to the door and knocked on it. She waited for a minute before he opened the door shirtless.

Phemelo:Heyy..

He smiled rubbing his head and moved from the door.

Theo:Hey babe...when did you get back?

Phemelo:An hour ago I think.

Theo:And you're glowing, come here..

He held her waist and kissed her softly, she smiled and removed his hands and she sat down. She removed her prosthetic leg and placed it down.

Theo:Should I get you something to eat?

Phemelo:Yoghurt should be fine thank you..

He walked to the kitchen and she looked around. Only a year left then she will be done with this school thing and she can come home.

He came with the yoghurt and handed it to her, there was something about her he couldn't put his finger but maybe it was it's been three months since he last saw her.

Phemelo silently ate the yoghurt and she slipped her



hand into her handbag and handed him the scan.

Theo took it with a frown and he looked at it.

Theo:You-

She nodded with a smile but it disappeared in seconds because Theo wasn't even smiling.

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## THE GAME

#73

At Theo's house

He looked at the scan again and back at Phemelo.

Theo:It's not mine..

Phemelo just nodded and grabbed her prosthetic leg, wearing it. She stood up and held her handbag.

Phemelo:Sure? A 100% sure that it's not yours?

He nodded and she sucked in a deep breath. She wasn't going to be dramatic about this, if this baby was her only blessing then it's fine. She was just disappointed that he didn't want to take responsibility of the life they made together.

Theo:You should find your baby daddy because it definitely is not me. I'm just disappointed that you cheated and wanted to pin a pregnancy that's not

mine on me.

Phemelo looked at him and shook her head.

Phemelo:Okay. Have a nice life...

She walked out leaving him with the scan in his hands and he looked at it again. He turned it and saw the dates written at the back, he frowned and re-read the dates again,trying to make sure that they were real.

Meanwhile Phemelo walked to the taxi stop with tears in her eyes. She stopped a taxi and got inside.

Phemelo:to the taxi rank please...

She got her phone and switched it off as the taxi man drove off.

At the taxi rank Phemelo got out of the taxi and she felt the nausea coming up. She searched her bag for

sweets but there were none. She usually had sweets in her bag for times like this in public, she can't exactly throw up in public can she?

She stopped by one of the street vendors and took out a P10 note.

Phemelo:Dumelang, kopa di sweets tsa P10. Ke bokahe e one?(hi, can I have sweets worth P10. How much does one cost?)

Her:30t..

Phemelo frowned and looked at the street vendor. Her voice sounded so familiar. She looked at her for a few seconds as she had her head low counting the sweets. The street vendor looked up and Phemelo gasped.

Phemelo:Raine? Is that you?

Shame gnawed at Raine as she pushed the sweets forward. Wow! Phemelo looked nice and she

smelled good too. She looked like one of the girls from Magazines who were effortlessly beautiful.

Phemelo:Ke wena motho yoo ?(is it really you?)

Raine:Ee...

Phemelo was surprised, she never expected this at all. She looked at Raine and she wasn't the same girl who went to a private school.

Phemelo:What happened?

Raine looked down at her cracked hands.

Raine:My parents died mysteriously one day and masika a bo ba tsaya gotlhe...

Phemelo:Your parents are late? My condolences.

Tears filled Raine's eyes as she looked down.

Raine:It's okay. It's been three years without them.

She finally looked up and Phemelo's heart broke.

Phemelo:Where do you live?

Raine:Somereset...

Phemelo took the sweets and put them in her handbag. She then opened her purse and took out a P200 note.

Phemelo:It's okay, you can keep it. It was nice seeing you and I'm sorry once again.(sad smile)

Phemelo walked away and Raine noticed the limp in her walk. She didn't have to be so kind to her,she stashed that note between her breasts. It will be enough to feed her child at home and she might make enough rent money if she takes up that offer to sleep with that man even though she didn't want to but she was desperate for cash.

She fixed her small table and waited for more customers to appear but she knew she got only close to ten customers per day. She wasted money buying stock like this.

Phemelo clapped her hands as she got inside the taxi. This was so unexpected. After all these years and she even looks older than her. She is like close to forty, she aged so fast and it was sad. She will call Marang and tell her about this.

To say she was surprised would sure be an understatement. She placed her hand over her tummy as the taxi drove off.

At Marang's apartment

Marang was sound asleep when Joshua covered her with the blankets. He kissed her forehead and walked out heading to the kitchen. He opened her cabinets looking for a strong alcohol then remembered that she doesn't even drink and she didn't keep alcohol in here. If he wanted to drink he had to buy his own alcohol. He sighed and leaned

against the counter thinking about earlier.

This was not how he envisioned his arrival here to be like, she was just putting herself under so much pressure that it made him question if it was the right decision to decide to have a kid. He had no idea she felt this way and she didn't let him in.

Her phone beeped and he picked it up unlocking it. He read the message and frowned. Babe?? He placed the phone down and sighed. It was probably nothing.

He decided to make her something to eat, she won't be able to make food once she wakes up.

Two hours later Marang woke up alone in bed. She touched his side of the bed and it was cold. She sighed and got out of bed. She walked to the wardrobe and got her knickers. She wore them and



walked out of the bedroom.

There he was, shirtless making food for her in the kitchen.

Marang:Hey..

Joshua:Hi, you good?

Marang:Better..

She picked her phone and went to her messages. He had sent a message and it had been opened. She placed her phone down and looked at him. He didn't confront her or anything.

Marang:What are you making?

Joshua:Your favorite, mushroom soup along with some fried chicken.

Marang:Thank you but I should be cooking.

Joshua:You were sleeping and you were so peaceful sleeping.

Marang:I'm sorry about the emotional outburst earlier.

Joshua turned to look at her.

Joshua:It's okay to be vulnerable in front of me.

Marang sat down on one of the kitchen chairs. She didn't deserve him, she knew she didn't deserve him but she won't let him go.

Joshua:Let me finish up here and we'll talk.

Marang:Yes Sir!(smiling)

Her phone rang and she picked it up.

Marang:Colton speaking hello...

Joshua shook his head with a little smile and Marang stifled her laugh.

Phemelo:Dr Colton hiii...

Marang:If it isn't Phem Blair...

Phemelo:How are you today?

Marang:course e thata(this course is hard)

Phemelo rolled her eyes.

Phemelo:Tswa haa, then you'll ace everything..I have to tell you something..

Marang:I'm listening..

Phemelo:Before that mma ke bone Raine(I saw Raine)

Marang:Uhu! O teng?(she is still there?)

Phemelo:Mmh..o ntlhomosa pelo gore. O rekisa nzamela le di sweets ha station.(she sells airtime and sweets by the station)

Marang:ao batho! What happened?

Phemelo:Something about her parents being late and the relatives taking away all the property.

Marang:shems, iyooo...

Phemelo:I wanted to be happy that she was suffering but I can't.

Marang:life is one big university we're trying to graduate from with distinctions, there is no manual

on how we are going to pass the tests and exams but we try neh, she will be fine.

Phemelo:Hers was rough on her..

Marang:really rough but you see you didn't have to do a thing. You didn't have to get lost in these petty things, your nemesis defeated herself before you had a chance to swing.

Phemelo:Yeah...back to the main issue.

Marang:what main issue?(smiling with confusion etched on her face)

Phemelo:you friend are going to be a godmother.

Marang's smile faded as she listened.

Marang:What?

Phemelo:I'm pregnant, 3 and a half months pregnant love..

Marang swallowed a lump and faked a smile which she knew Phemelo couldn't see.

Marang:Congratulations Phem, I don't know what to

say love.

Phemelo:Our kids will be play buddies and we'll schedule play dates akere love?

Marang:yeah...most definitely(low voice)

Phemelo:Can't wait for you to be pregnant and have your own bundle of joy too mma and Theo denied the pregnancy.

Marang:Why?

She coughed and rubbed her neck, feeling something stuck there. Phemelo was pregnant. Wow!

Phemelo:Le nna mma ga ke itse(I also don't know) I let him be, a baby is something to be excited about and if he doesn't want to be part of that, his loss..

Marang:Mmh...congratulations Phem. I have to go.

Phemelo:Okay. Bye bye Rangz.

She hung up and Marang placed the phone down choking on her own spit. She was supposed to be

happy for her friend but she was jealous instead. A door knock sounded and she stood up to go get the door. She opened the door and as if he owned the place Gabriel waltzed inside her apartment like he always does.

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## THE GAME

#74

At Marang's apartment

Marang sighed rubbing her head. Joshua paused to take in the man who just walked in. Well not man exactly but that.

Marang: Babe meet Gabby and Gabby meet my husband.

Gabriel: I thought you were joking when you said you are married and he is our husband now.

Marang: Oh God!

Gabriel: I sent a message that I'm on my way.

Joshua was a bit uncomfortable as Gabby or whatever his name was looked at him.

Joshua: I think I'll give you guys space.

He walked out and Gabby laughed looking at the tattoo on his back.

Marang:You scared my poor husband..

Gabriel:Babe you didn't say your husband was one hot chocolate and his voice oooh! I would kill to have him rail me all night.

Marang:Hands off my husband.

Gabriel:It won't hurt to share..

Marang rolled her eyes laughing as Gabby sat down his eyes in the direction Joshua had headed towards to.

Marang:So do you have tea to spill?

Gabriel:Do I have tea? Of course I have tea...You weren't at school yesterday and there was drama.

Marang:This needs hot tea, I'll be back.



Marang walked to the bedroom.

Gabriel:Bring your husband with..

Marang:Ijoo!

She opened the bedroom door and he was laying on the bed. She sat on his stomach and looked at him.

Marang:Sorry if she made you uncomfortable..

Joshua:I'm not uncomfortable..

Marang:You are, her full name is Gabriel and she prefers to be a she and to be called Gabby. You don't know her because she moved downstairs three months ago and we go to the same school so yah. I only have two friends. Two..Phemelo and Gabby and you my scared baby are my best friend.

Joshua:I'm not scared.

Marang:She doesn't bite babe yoh!(laughing)

Joshua:Marang!

Marang kissed his lips and got off him and walked to the wardrobe looking for her pants. She found them

and looked at Joshua as she wore them.

Marang:But you weren't done with the cooking.

Joshua:Marang go...

Marang:Are you scared of Gabby baby?

Joshua shrugged. It was weird that another guy looked at him that way, like he was a piece of meat.

Marang:anyways gatwe o hot chocolate baby!(laughing as she walked out)

Joshua shook his head. This was weird but that explained the babe text from Gabriel on her phone.

Marang:Tea or juice..

Gabriel:Tea babe! Make it hot because the tea I have is scorching.

Marang:I won't be long.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo rubbed her flat tummy and smiled. Her parents will forgive her. This pregnancy was unplanned but she was happy to be with a child. Her phone started ringing and she looked at Theo's calls till the phone stopped ringing. She got off from the bed and walked to the lounge where her parents where chilled with her little brother in the lounge.

Phemelo:Hi again..

Ma Phem:Someone is happy.

Phemelo:I am. Uhm I have something to tell you guys..

Ra Phem:Okay. We are listening.

Phemelo smiled looking at them, they will be angry but they are parents. Black parents for that matter, they will reprimand her and start saying a lot of unnecessary things before supporting her pregnancy. Very soon you'll be hearing her mother dote over her grandchild, her only grandchild.

She took a deep breath and placed her hands over her thighs.

Phemelo:I'm pregnant..

Everything went still and her parents glared at her. That was when the trepidation kicked in and she held her breath waiting for their response.

At Theo's house

Theo tried to call Phemelo but she wasn't answering. The date on the back of the scan matched with the dates of the time she was here, visiting. He rubbed his head as he walked to his bedroom and went through his medical records. He was so sure he was infertile that was why he was never worried about pregnancy whenever he was with her. He loved her but what he had said to her was cold.

She needed time to be calm about it all but he messed up without getting his facts straight. He needed to book a doctor's appointment and get tests run because Phemelo was pregnant. He will have to explain himself from there on.

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## THE GAME

#75

At Phemelo's parents

Ma Phem:Ma?

Phemelo sucked in a deep breath before she repeated what she just said.

Ma Phem:Wa peka?(are you crazy?)

Phemelo: Nnyaa mma..

Her father shook his head disappointed and she hated seeing that look on his face. He wasn't a man of many words and seeing him disappointed in her was

Ma Phem:O mosadi yaanong wena?(you are a woman now?)

Phemelo:I'm 23 mom!

Her mother clapped her hands.

Ma Phem:Who can be able to afford her own house, maid and food for a baby while schooling outside the country?Sure!

Phemelo shut up. She put her hands together looking at them. Her mother stood up and held her waist looking at her. She clapped her hands again.

Ma Phem:Nnyaa o mpeile hatshe ka marago(You amazed me today)

She walked away and her father just shook his head standing up and followed his wife. Phemelo's eyes welled with tears. They will come around right?

Meanwhile in the parent's room Phemelo's mother pushed her head back. Where did they go wrong with her?

Ma Phem:I don't know ka Phemelo.

Ra Phem:Calm down and breath in and out.

Ma Phem:Why does she do this to us? We do everything for her and all she had to do was wait till she finished school..

Ra Phem:It happened, we have to accept it.

Ma Phemelo sighed sitting down on the edge of the bed.

Ra Phem:I don't know..

Ra Phem:Let it sink in..

Ma Phemelo just shook her head.

At the hospital

Seeletso removed her white coat as she moved from the counter. She walked out of the cubicle with a small smile and freed her hair from the tight puff it was in. Her day was over and done with. All she had to do was relax at home and call her sister-in-law



since she had no life.

Some of the male doctors at the hospital looked at her as she said bye to some of the ladies. They knew she was off limits, after all the boss's daughter was the hospital pharmacist. On top of that her brother worked here as well, her older brother and you knew what they said about older brothers being protective of their siblings especially their younger sisters. They wouldn't want to risk a lecture.

Seeletso walked to her father's office and walked in without knocking.

Seeletso:Ke tired dad yoh!

Rra Josh:When are you moving out of my house?

Seeletso:When I get married which is when? After ten years or so.

Rra Josh:Yoh yoh!

Seeletso:I love you too, I'm going home and bye.

Rra Josh:You should move out of my house..

Seeletso:I'm saving my money father, I don't pay the bills so all I have to do is look pretty for work.

Rra Josh:Bye!

Seeletso:see you later daddy.

She walked out of his office with a little smile.

At Joshua's parents

Ma Josh fixed the guest room for her mother in law. She wondered why the old woman didn't call instead of saying she should be picked at the bus station. As much as she was married into the family, she had to tell them in advance.

Ma Colton:I'll be here for two weeks or so, where is Joshua and his wife?

Ma Josh:Canada..

Ma Colton:uhu! Canada? Ehe...

Ma Joshua stuffed the pillow as the old woman sat down on the chair. She wasn't that old but she was annoying in her own way and she couldn't wait for her to leave.

Ma Colton:when are they having a baby?

Ma Josh:when they are ready mme.

Ma Colton:three years into marriage and ga ba ready?

Ma Josh:Marang is still studying, a baby would only delay her...

Ma Colton:During our day, women didn't even have to go to school. As soon as you got married you give your husband kids gape she is still young. Ke ipotsa gore go pale ha kae...

Ma Josh seriously wanted to roll her eyes. She heard the front door open and she walked there. Sara was

fast asleep. Seeletso walked in holding her coat and bag.

Ma Josh:Your grandmother(whispering)

Seeletso:shit!oh sorry(whispering)yoh yoh!

Ma Josh walked back to the guest room where her mother in law was.

Ma Colton:Who was that?

Ma Josh:Seeletso..

Ma Colton:naare ene ga a nyalwe(isn't she supposed to be married?)

Ma Josh:No, she is happy.

Ma Colton:Okho!monyana yoo o tshwanetse go nyala(that girl is supposed to be married)who will marry her if you guys don't push her?

Ma Josh:everyone will do everything at their own time mme.

She clapped her hands.

Ma Josh:Do you need anything?

Ma Colton:No, it's okay. I need to rest.

Ma Josh:okay. Boroko.

She walked out and rubbed her temples. This was going to be a long two weeks and she wasn't looking forward to it.

Seeletso slid her feet into slip ons and walked to the kitchen. She was going to receive that boring lecture about getting married and making kids blah blah! It was rather annoying that she wasn't regarded as an independent female or someone of importance because she was not married. Old people and their ways. Always seemed to rub her off in the wrong way. She was quite sure that Marang would be happy she wasn't here. That old woman was going to blabber on about kids all day long, Marang wouldn't even breath. Same goes for their relatives. Always on her and Marang's case. "When are you getting married?"the kind of questions directed at

her. "When are you having kids?" The question that always left Marang's mouth dry and she would fumble about looking for an excuse to leave.

She poured water in a glass and silently drank it, losing herself in her thoughts.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo rubbed her belly. There was a whole human being growing in there and she would make it work alone. As a single parent and if her parents didn't come around soon she will see what to do, she was really willing to bring this precious life to earth. Maybe it was God's way of making her smile regardless of her unfortunate circumstances.

Her phone rang once again and she looked at Theo's call. She sighed and picked it up.

Phemelo:Hello..

Theo:Hey, Phem can we talk?

Phemelo:We have nothing to talk about.

Theo:Please! It won't take too much of your time.

Phemelo:We have nothing to talk about. You made it clear Theo. We have nothing to talk about!(raising her voice with tears in her eyes)

Theo:Babe? Phem are you fine? Where are you?

Phemelo wiped her tears.

Phemelo:Leave me alone Theo. Tswa mo go nna..

She cut the call and covered her face with her hands crying.

At Marang's apartment

Marang saw Gabriel out and laughed out loud closing the door and locking it.She always liked the chats they had and she wasn't the one to take her

sulking to heart and instead cheered her up in a lot of ways. Plus Gabby always chased off the boys on her behalf because they made her so uncomfortable it showed.

She walked to the bedroom where her big baby was sleeping, laying on his back.

She removed her pants and her t-shirt. She was only left with her knickers as she walked to the bed. She sat on top of him and he opened his eyes, feeling her weight on him.

Marang:Hey..(softly)

Joshua rubbed his eyes yawning and looked at her breasts as she sat on top of him.

Joshua:Hey sweetness..

Marang:I hope I'm not disturbing your sleep.

Joshua:not at all.

Marang sucked in a breath as her clit throbbed. His



voice when he was sleepy had a way of turning her on. With his eyes squinted and him a little off from the remnants of sleep. She kissed his chest and sucked his manly nipples, her hair all over his chest. He groaned and she rubbed herself against him. Too many clothes.

Joshua: My little baby..

She stopped sucking and cracked her knuckles before she unzipped his jeans. She pulled it down and his full length sprung forward and she looked at it, all veined and big. He said it was hers so... He wasn't wearing anything underneath? Slick.

She pulled down his jeans and smiled as she pulled down her panties.

Marang: Much better..

She got on top of him as started kissing his chest with her soft tiny lips. Joshua just fisted his hands in her hair.

Marang:I love you..

Joshua:I do too. I taught you well..

Marang:You did..My body is for your pleasure and your body is for my pleasure..

Joshua:Yes,fuck..Go down on me kitten..

Marang:Yes sir...

She kissed him going down and she #EXPLICIT

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## THE GAME

#76

At Marang's apartment

Later that night

Marang laid on her husband's chest as he played with her hair and she placed her hand on his stomach.

Joshua:Babe?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:I love you.

She giggled as he pulled her up for a slow kiss and she felt his length against her stomach. She was really tired now.

Marang:Tomorrow babe..

Joshua:Tired?

She nodded and placed her head back on her chest, her soft hands touching his chest in a gentle motion that made Joshua shudder.

Joshua:You remember the plot we applied for?

Marang:Ee, akere plots take years gore di tswe. We applied when? Three years ago right? I'm not sure.

Joshua:Three years ago ee. It's not yet out but I'll keep on checking. I found someone who wants to sell their plot.

Marang:How much?

Joshua:P100 000.

Marang:How big is it? We saved how much? I know the money I save from my student allowance is not that much but..

Joshua:It's a lot from a student. If I manage to negotiate with the seller we can get it at 80k and start laying the foundation.

Marang:Does the builder's warehouse account have money?

Joshua:That one I've been saving into it ever since varsity. It has enough money for the building materials.

Marang:So that plan you showed me is the one we are using? Ya the double storey, will it be enough?

Joshua:We'll reconsider our plan after I see the builders if we buy the piece of land.

Joshua:In a year or two our house would be complete.

Marang:I can't wait tota..and imagine kids running around the place..

Joshua:Marang...

Marang:it doesn't hurt to dream mme, a little boy and a girl or maybe two boys and a little girl hmm? That would be beautiful.

She looked down at her flat tummy and sighed against his chest.

Joshua:I thought we agreed that no pressure.

Marang:We did agree. No pressure right?

Joshua:stop thinking about it Dr Colton.

Marang:okay. I'm hungry..

Joshua:I never did finish cooking.

Marang:You were scared of Gabby but let's go, carry me baby..

Joshua:I think I'm going to enjoy the next two weeks here.

Marang:Same..

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo craddled her stomach as she lain awake. Her mind was already making calculations on how she was to go about her baby's stuff considering she was still a student and the father denied the pregnancy.

Phemelo:Baby I will take care of you okay?

She nodded and started thinking all over again.

At Raine's place

She finally arrived at the one roomed house, her baby was asleep and it felt like she was abusing her child by leaving him all alone in the room all locked up only to come later. She didn't even have enough money to pay a babysitter let alone pay rent on time. Life was everyone's game, you win or you lose and here she lost. Big time.

She removed the money from between her breast and sat on the mattress to count it. It would be enough for rent and baby formula and nappies. She touched her baby's nappy and it was so warm and heavy, he might develop rash all over again. She sighed and picked him up. He started crying and she rocked him till he quieted down and recognized it

was his mother. Now she had to bathe him and feed him.

She was doing all of this for him, he is an innocent in all the immorality of this cruel wicked world.

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A WEEK LATER



## THE GAME

#77

At the hospital

Theo looked at the results the doctor just handed him. He wasn't completely infertile, just that there were lower chances of him ever having a child and Phemelo got pregnant by chance.

Theo: So I can still have children.

Doctor: Not as easily as you can think but yes there is a chance of that happening.

Theo nodded. Phemelo still wasn't taking his calls and he decided that it will be appropriate if he lets his family know about it.

Theo: Thank you so much.

Doctor: If it does happen that you get a girl pregnant please do let me know.

Theo:Yes doctor(laughing)

He stood up holding the envelope and walked out. He had to call her and maybe go to her house. If she was still here in the country. He had a lot of groveling to do.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo rubbed her little bump. It wasn't that visible but the mere fact that her baby was growing strong everyday was so comforting. A sigh escaped her lips and she smiled. Her parents were coming around. Slowly but surely they were accepting the fact that she was pregnant. Her mother was warming up to the idea of being a grandmother too. She laughed as she rubbed her bump again. She couldn't stop rubbing it, she was so excited.

Meanwhile at the gate, Theo parked his car and he

pressed the intercom. He hoped this time her parents would be welcoming and he will get the chance to speak to Phemelo.

The maid opened the gate and Theo greeted her.

Theo:Hi. I would like to speak to Phemelo.

She looked at the man a few times before she walked away. This man had never set foot in the yard ever since she started working for the Mosekis two years back but she will call the young lady.

Her:Follow me..

She led him to the shaded chairs and he sat down as the dogs ran around the yard. They were more dogs than he remembered. He last came here years ago when he was still apologizing for the accident. He hated talking about it but he loved it when Phemelo was comfortable around him to remove her prosthetic leg and lounge around. Getting to that

stage of intimacy with her was difficult because she wa so insecure with her body.

The maid walked to the house and walked to Phemelo's door.

Her:Knock knock!!

Phemelo:Enter.

She walked inside and smiled, Phemelo smiled back as she removed her hands from her tummy trying to not make it obvious.

Her:You have a guest.

Phemelo:A guest?

Her:Ee...he is outside..

Phemelo:Okay, I'm coming..

The maid nodded and walked out, leaving the door slightly ajar for Phemelo. Phemelo got her crutches

and regained her balance. She walked out of her bedroom and her stomach rumbled. She laughed softly wanting to touch her tummy again.

Phemelo:Okay, little one. I'll eat after seeing our guest okay?(smiling to herself)

She got out and the dogs jumped around. She squinted her eyes trying to spot who was sitting at the chairs. She should stop relying on glasses and get contacts instead. She groaned and limped to the chairs. As she got closer, the image of the person before her got clearer and clearer. She wanted to turn back and go to her room but maybe at some point she will have to hear him out. He better say his piece and leave.

Theo looked at her, she as glowing and now he was so grateful to her. Really grateful she was giving him something he might not even get in this lifetime.

Theo:Hi..

Phemelo:Hello(with an attitude)

He guessed he deserved that kind of treatment from her.

She sat down and placed her crutches next to her.

Theo:I came to apologize.

Phemelo:Okay.

Theo:I know I always say I'm sorry but ke kopa maitshwarelo. Take this.

He handed her the envelope and she looked at him as she opened it. It took her ten minutes to read the contents of the envelope and when she was done she looked at him.

Theo:That's why I suspected it wasn't mine, the doctor had told me I have a very very low chance of fathering a child ever in this lifetime.

Phemelo:You never told me.

Theo:My problems weren't that important.

Phemelo:Here it says that you were paralyzed for more than 3 months.

He shrugged.

Phemelo hit his face with the papers and he moved his head.

Phemelo:You listen to me ranting and you never talk to me about your problems. O rileng Kanye?

He hid his face as she hit him with the papers.

Theo:Babe..

Phemelo:Wa ntena waitse..

Theo:Are those the pregnancy moods?(laughing)

Phemelo:Mxm!

She stopped hitting him and shook her head.

Phemelo:You could've told me to be honest Theo. I didn't know you were told that you had the lowest

chances of fathering a child. Ke go ngaletse.

Theo:I'm sorry Phemelo(taking her hands in his and kissing them)

Phemelo:You thought I could cheat on you? Ke tla ka STDs? Wow!

Theo:baby I'm sorry.

Phemelo:you don't trust me? No, safe..

Theo:I'm sorry okay? Forgive me..

Phemelo sighed.

Theo:I'll talk to my parents about our baby to pay damages. Thank you my love.

Phemelo:I didn't say I forgive you.

Theo:Take your time(laughing)

Phemelo:Tsamaela koo....

At Marang's apartment

Marang quietly went through cute baby pictures on



Pinterest with a little smile. She was a going to be a godmother and till she got her own child, she was going to spoil Phemelo's baby.

Joshua silently walked behind her and saw the pictures she was scrolling past. He sighed. It was useless telling her to stop thinking about it because she was still going to obsess over having a child. He kissed her neck and she turned her phone.

Marang:Hey, I didn't hear you.

Joshua:You were on your phone.

Marang:So I'm going to take more than 3 months without seeing you.

Joshua:I miss you already..

She laughed and placed the phone on the couch. She turned her head as they shared a kiss. Joshua held her neck and and she laughed into the kiss.

Joshua:I raised an addict.

Marang:You love me like that..

Joshua:I do, don't I?

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## THE GAME

#78

At Marang's apartment

Joshua rubbed Marang's feet as she talked with Phemelo about the baby. It honestly wasn't healthy because it was like she was the one expecting and not the other way round.

Marang:Phem you should also make a cute nursery, I can send you designs and you look at them.

Phemelo:Sure. You sound super excited.(uneasy smile)

Marang:I am though. Make sure you eat healthy and don't stress..

Phemelo:Yes doc. I have to go. Bye!

Marang:Okay. Bye!

Phemelo hung up and Joshua continued rubbing her feet. They were so small and he couldn't help but wonder how they kids would look like. He loved her so much but seeing her go crazy about wanting a baby was slowly frustrating him. It was going to drive her crazy and make her miss the other little details of their comfortable life.

Joshua:How does it feel?

She flashed a smile at him as she searched for baby nurseries so that she can send Phemelo the pictures.

Marang:Thank you..

Joshua's phone rang in the bedroom and he looked at her.

Joshua:Let me go get the phone...

She removed her legs and he stood up while she sat

comfortably on the couch, continuing with her searches.

Joshua saw the caller Id and he answered immediately. Talk about right timing.

Joshua:Dad..

Joshua sat on the bed.

Ra Josh:Hello, I was checking up on you and our daughter in law.

Joshua:We are fine..

Ra Josh:You don't sound fine.

Joshua:Does it show?

He didn't have friends, it was hard to believe that his only best friend was his wife. He shared everything with her and his parents will always be their parents.

Ra Josh:What's eating you up?

Joshua:I feel like Marang is going to go crazy, we made the joint decision to try for a family..

Ra Josh:that's wonderful news.

Joshua:She is getting obsessed over having a child because we have been trying for a year and o ntsenya stress..

Ra Josh:That's a process you don't have to rush.

Joshua:That's what I say, she is putting herself under so much pressure that she is always in baby websites.

Ra Josh:Should I get your mother to talk to her?

Joshua:No...(sighing)It will seem as if I sent her..

Ra Josh:What do you want?

Joshua sighed rubbing his head. Marang stood up, he had been gone for too long though. She walked to the bedroom and stopped by the door.

Joshua:I do want a baby. So bad but I won't put my

wife under pressure. Kana at the family gatherings when they bring kids, I just look at them with some sort of envy. Kids are not everything yes but it won't kill to have a child or two but one day.

Marang sucked in a deep breath and rubbed her flat tummy. She didn't know where she was lacking honestly. She wanted to listen to more of the conversation with whoever was at the end of the line but she walked away with tears stinging in her eyes.

Ra Josh:There is still time..

Joshua:Yes. I can't build and save this much, just for the two of us. I just don't want my wife putting herself under so much pressure that she cracks. She is starting to lose it and it's scary.

Ra Joshua:Talk to her.

Joshua:I will. Thank you dad for listening to my rant.

Ra Joshua:We are here to advise you and we have your back.

Joshua:Ee rra. Go siame.

Ra Joshua:tell her I said hi..

Joshua:okay.

He hung up and covered his face with his hands.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo's mother walked into the bedroom and sat on the bed.

Ma Phem:Hey, are you good?

Phemelo:I am mother.

Ma Phem:You never really told us who the baby's father was and if they are taking responsibility for this pregnancy, considering that you are also a student.

Phemelo:Promise me that you won't freak out.

Ma Phem:What is worse than you showing up



pregnant...

Phemelo:I thought we were making progress mother.

Ma Phem:We are just that...who is he?

Phemelo:Mama don't get angry or anything of that sort. Please!

Her mother breathed in and out before she smiled.

Ma Phem:See, I'm not angry.

Phemelo:Not yet.

Ma Phem:I won't be angry...

Phemelo:The father is Theo.

Her mother's facial feature changed, forming an angry frown line on her forehead. Her eyes narrowed at Phemelo as she convinced herself that she didn't hear well..

Ma Phem:Mang?

Phemelo:Theo..

Ma Phem:The one who derailed you and you got involved in an accident.

Phemelo wanted to argue that it was not his fault but she nodded her head.

Ma Phem:You never cease to amaze me waitse!  
Tota wa makatsa Phemelo..

Phemelo looked at her hands.

Ma Phem:You never stayed away from him? This time you want to lose both legs akere?

Tears quickly made their way to her eyes. That was not nice of her mom.

Phemelo shook her head. As much as she lived with them, she was 23 and her mother stil treated her like a child.

Ma Phem:You've shown me things(clapping her hands)

She walked out after that last statement and

Phemelo covered her face with a pillow, crying into it.

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## THE GAME

#79

At Marang's apartment

Joshua walked out of the room only to find Marang eating ice cream on the couch. Her eyes were a bit red which was odd because he didn't recall seeing her cry today.

Joshua:Babe we need to talk..

She sat upright and forced a little smile which Joshua could see was fake. He sat next to her and held her hands.

Joshua:Marang, I know you want to make me happy by giving me a child but you are starting to be obsessed.

Marang:I am not obsessed.

Joshua: You are, I always see you scrolling through baby websites and pages looking for God knows what and to put it quite plainly you are making yourself go crazy.

Marang: I'm doing all of this for Phemelo.

Joshua: Give her space and let her breathe in her own pregnancy and experience.

Marang: I am..

She let go of his hands and looked at him.

Joshua: Baby you borderline obsessing over getting pregnant, it's not even healthy and stress is not even okay if we want to make a baby.

Marang: I heard you.

Joshua: You are just saying this, Marang I'm serious kana, having a child is not a priority, we still have to build our house and you have to finish school. If it's something, we can even forget about having kids in the time being.

Marang sighed. He was doing it again. Putting her before himself and he didn't understand that she

was grown at this point and not that little fifteen year old girl anymore.

Marang:Don't do that.

Joshua:Do what?

Marang:pushing your needs back to accommodate me. Joshua I know you want a child just as bad as I do but because you want to cushion me, you want to let it slide. I'm not fifteen anymore Josh. I'm 22 and as much as we are in this union together, you also have to be considered.

Joshua:Not at the expense of you losing your mind over it all.

Marang:Isn't loving someone to the fullest all about losing your mind just to make them happy? Joshua from 15 you have been there, you diagnosed my ADHD, you got Seeletso to help me pass at school, you gave me a girlfriend allowance just that now I'm stopping you from doing so because I get a student allowance, you did everything for me. Everything and I am grateful. You have been there every step of the way and I haven't even brought anything to the table.

Yes I make you happy. Hell I know you are at your happiest around me, trust me baby I know but dingwaga di a tsamaya. You are almost thirty and all your age mates have families of their own and you are still cushioning me. I don't want us to be that couple where you are at your fifties and you don't have a child at all.

She paused to breath.

Marang:You want kids, I overheard you earlier on and it hurts you that you don't have one. It's no longer baby fever and we are both learned enough to know that neither one of us has a problem. We are both fit, healthy and compatible in every medically tested way Joshua and in a year from now once our house is finished and I'm done with school, it will get frustrating that we don't even have a single child. Joshua I'm failing as your wife can't you see that? I'm not good enough.

Joshua:Marang you are not.

She stood up and ran her hands through her hair. He didn't want to hear her point of view.

Joshua:Marang I know telling you to stop obsessing won't stop that. Marang get therapy.

Marang:Joshua ke sharpo.

Joshua:Marang you are not.

Marang:Can we stop talking about this? We are going to fight and I hate it when we fight.

Joshua:You are just being stubborn Marang. You never got over our first miscarriage.

Marang:Who ever gets over losing a part of her mme Joshua? Whether I knew or not doesn't make it hurt much less. But you wouldn't understand you weren't the one bleeding and clueless about what was happening when it happened.

Joshua's jaw dropped. Wow!

Joshua:Marang we made that baby together and I grieved too when it happened.



Marang:Well why the hell are you telling me to get over it because I will love with the pain every goddamn second of my life and all the other things that happened to me?(rubbing her eyes)

Joshua:At some point we have to move on.

Marang:I moved on Joshua, you just keep telling me that I'm stuck on it and I think back to that time. Nna I'm done talking. Honestly.

She walked to the bedroom and got her cardigan.  
She walked out seconds later.

Joshua:Where are you going Marang? It's late..

Marang:A breath of fresh air. I'm suffocating in here..

She walked past him, leaving her phone and rushed to the lift and quickly pressed the buttons.

Joshua let her be and he sat on the couch defeated.  
That escalated fast and he hadn't intended for things

to go south.

Marang quietly leaned against the metal walls of the lift as it went down. She stepped out of the lift once the doors opened and walked out. The chilly breeze hit her and she rubbed her nose holding back tears. She pulled her cardigan closer to her chest and started walking to God knows where in search of inner peace.

She held back tears as she walked. The street lights were on and the night life of Toronto was just beginning, she looked up the sky as she saw the stars. She smiled and saw a bench nearby. She wasn't far off from the apartment. An hour just inhaling the night air and regaining her thoughts, so she can approach her husband with a clear mind. She couldn't talk to him when she was like this, her tongue will slip and she might say some things she might regret later when everything was settled.

She truly hated it when they fought. It was hell and it took so much of her energy leaving her drained.

She twisted the diamond ring on her finger and sighed rubbing her eyes.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo wiped her tears. Why did her mom have to be so mean? She didn't mean to fall pregnant but it happened. Now she raised the issue of her losing her leg. It took her more than two years of therapy to accept that and finally be confident in herself.

She rubbed her small bump and more tears filled her eyes. The door opened and she rubbed her eyes.

Ra Phem:Are you okay?

Phemelo:Ee rra..

Ra Phem:You are crying..

Phemelo faked a smile while rubbing her eyes.

Phemelo:Hormones..

Ra Phem:You have been crying...

He walked to the bed and sat next to her. He was disappointed that his daughter fell pregnant before finishing school but she was responsible to tell them and not even think of abortion. She was willing to be responsible for what she did.

Ra Phem:What is it?

Phemelo burst into tears and her father hugged her. She broke the hug and cried on his chest.

Phemelo:Mama asked about who the father of the baby is and she said something mean.

Ra Phem:I'll talk to her okay? Don't stress my grandchild..

Phemelo laughed softly as her father rubbed her back.

Phemelo:You're accepting that you have a grandchild?

Ra Phem:it happened akere we have to accept it neh Phem..

Phemelo:Akere..

Ra Phem:don't stress too much, I'll talk to your mother. She still think she failed you in every aspect as a parent and is taking it out on you.

Phemelo nodded and closed her eyes.

At the Coltons

Ra Josh was in the kitchen thinking about what his son said earlier. He never missed those subtle words that were thrown in Marang's face during family gatherings. The hurtful words about her not bearing a child were disguised as jokes but he was sure that was what stressed her. Joshua on the other hand was the one who avoided gathering because of that very reason. Marriage was a very

tricky institute but he was sure they will overcome it. His son loved Marang so much and so did Marang. If there was such a thing called a soulmate he was sure they were soulmates.

At Marang's apartment

Joshua paced up and down. It had been more than an hour and Marang wasn't back here. In his arms.

He got a jacket and the keys to the apartment before he walked out.

By the benches Marang looked at her feet. She was in a much calmer state, she thought about what he said and what she said as well. She wasn't being fair on him knowing that when she was stressed, that equally stressed him. She looked at her ring once again before looking ahead to watch people walk around while some crossed the street.

## THE GAME

#80

At Marang's apartment

Joshua spotted his wife by the benches and he walked there. He found her sitting alone and he sat next to her.

Joshua:Hi.

Marang:I'm sorry.

She looked at him.

Marang:It was insensitive of me to assume that just because you didn't carry the baby, you weren't hurt. I'm sorry.

She looked at the constellation, hoping all her solutions were written there. Or maybe a wishing

star might fly past and she might wish upon a wishing star.

Joshua kept quiet and just took her small hand in his. She squeezed it and smiled. He was her peace even if they fought sometimes.

Two minutes of silence passed between them before Joshua broke the silence.

Joshua:Marang promise me..

Marang:What?

Joshua:Let's let this go. What happens, happens...

She sucked in a deep breath and looked at her husband. He was okay with them might never having a child ever again.

Marang:You are okay with us might not having a child?

He rubbed her hands and looked up at the sky.

Joshua:I guess. One might say I'm insane to not



want to have a child at my age but if it's at the cost of you losing your sanity, I would choose you over and over again.

Marang:Sure?

Joshua:Marang I'm sure.

She smiled even though a part of her felt like he was sacrificing his one wish just for her. Doing what he did best which was to put her best interests first before his and that hurt her.

She kissed his cheeks and smiled again.

Joshua:But I was serious, take up your therapy sessions again.

Marang:Josh-

Joshua:I was not debating sweetness.

She sighed and nodded.

Joshua:Thank you.

She placed leaned over and placed her head on his shoulder and he just put his arms around her, keeping her warm with his body.

Marang:I love you and I appreciate everything you do for me. You are the safe haven I've ever known.

Joshua:I will never let you go.

Marang:Please don't. No matter how crazy I get, I will be so lost without you.

He kissed the top of her head.

Marang:I'm sorry for stressing you out, you came here to spend time with me because we will go on for month without seeing each other. I went off like a siren just crying. I'm to blame, it's all on me. In my head and I didn't mean that. I hate fighting with you to be honest. It drains the hell out of me.

Joshua:I know baby.

Marang looked up at him. She didn't deserve an inch of this loyal man. She was still young and she was bound to mess up along the way.

Marang: Tell me we'll be just fine even if I lose my mind?

He chuckled and kissed her forehead.

Joshua: Till the end.

Marang: Tell me I'm all you want even if I break your heart...

Joshua: I would never want another. It would take me years to recover from a broken heart Marang. I'm not that strong, if I love you, I love hard and fiercely with no inhibitions.

She kissed his lips with a little smile.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo talked to Theo over the phone as she told him about her next scan. She wanted to do another one before she left for school.

Theo: I can't wait my love.

Phemelo: my love ke mang? (who is my love?)

Theo rolled his eyes laughing.

Theo:Mxm..I love you okay?

Phemelo smiled as she laid on her bed remembering those days when she was still a student at Mater Spei and she would be up all night talking to him.

Phemelo:I love you Theo. Bye daddy to be.

Theo:Bye sweetheart.

She hung up first and moved to the side of the bed where she touched around. She got her crutches and walked out of the bedroom.

She made her way to the kitchen where she tried to make herself something to eat. Meanwhile in the bedroom Ra Phem talked to his wife.

Ra Phem:I understand that you are angry but what you said to Phemelo is not it.

Ma Phem:She should know actions have consequences..

Ra Phem:By bringing up what happened in the past?  
The past she is trying to heal from? Classic  
parenting.

She kept quiet.

Ra Phem:I think you should apologize.

Ma Phem:I-I

Ra Phem:I will ask her.

Ma Phem just nodded and walked out. She walked to Phemelo's bedroom door and it was open. She walked to the kitchen to find her sitting on the chairs eating.

Ma Phem:how is the food?

Phemelo:Good. Thank you..

She sat down next to her and looked around the kitchen.

Ma Phem:Uhm if you need a babysitter once the baby is born, I'll volunteer.

Phemelo almost choked on her food. Was that an apology of some sort?

Phemelo:I would really appreciate it mom.

Ma Phem:and we can have a room for the baby too..

Phemelo hid a smile. Black parents and never saying sorry upfront. Look at her talking about all the good things she will do instead of saying sorry.

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## THE GAME

#81

The following morning

At Theo's place

Theo placed the phone between his shoulder and ear as he talked to his father.

Theo: I'm excited to be honest. What if this is the only child I'll ever have in this lifetime.

Ra Theo: Well then you need to do right by this girl? What's her name?

Theo: Phemelo..

His father frowned at the other end of the line. The name sounded familiar, too familiar. He went quiet

for a while trying to remember where he heard the name from. It finally clicked when Theo asked if he was still there.

Ra Theo:Wait, is she that girl from years back?

Theo:Yes..

Ra Theo:I see.

Theo:I genuinely love her father. I do..

Ra Theo:Pelo e ka serati(the heart wants what it wants)

Theo just nodded.

Ra Theo:I'll call a meeting so we can pay damages.

Theo:Thank you.

Ra Theo:Congratulations and I'll tell your mom. She will be so excited to be a grandmother.

Theo:(laughing) she thought it was going to be impossible.

Ra Theo:We all thought it was going to be that way but God works in mysterious ways.



Theo:He does.

Ra Theo:Theo?

Theo:Rra?

Ra Theo:Cherish her, take care of the child and her. This might be your only chance of ever being a father and kana if you were to hurt her, she will walk away with your child. Imagine another man raising your child and her carrying another man's child on top of that.

Theo's throat dried up at that possibility. It was simply going to break him if Phem was to carry another man's child.

Ra Theo:You are becoming a father soon and it's time to do everything right. O nna le lelwapa jaanong.

Theo:Ee rra.

Ra Theo:Anyway your uncles and I will talk to you about it. Have a good day son.

Theo:Have a good day dad.

He hung up and he rubbed his jaw. He needed to get his finances in order. Phemelo was just a student and regardless of the fact that her family had money, he was going to take care of his baby mama. He dialed her number and it rang a couple of times before she answered.

Phemelo:Hello(sleepy)

Theo:I woke you up?

Phemelo:Yeah kind of..

Theo:Morning..

She smiled rubbing her eyes.

Phemelo:Good morning...(yawning)

Theo:Sleep, I'll call later.

Phemelo:okay. B-bye...

He hung up with a little smile and got ready for work

while Phemelo went back to sleep.

At Marang's apartment

When Joshua woke up, Marang was fast asleep with her tiny lips apart. He yawned and grabbed his phone. He started filming her as she yawned softly. Why was she this beautiful though?

He kissed her lips while taking the video and she turned uttering something non-coherent. He chuckled and kissed her, she pushed him away with her soft hand. He stopped filming, up the phone away and laid his head between her breasts.

Marang opened her eyes feeling the weight on her chest. She wanted to stretch her body but he was heavy.

Marang:O heavy..(sleepy)

He moved his head and she yawned stretching her body before she looked at him.

Marang:Morning baby.

Joshua:Hey sweetness...

She smiled as he got between her legs.

Marang:It's still early babe..put your head here(indicating her bare chest)

Joshua:You said I was heavy..

Marang:Baa tlhe..

He did as she said and she rubbed his jaw with her soft hands.

Marang:Okay talk to me..

Joshua kissed the space between her boobs and she laughed pushing his head away.

Marang:Ng ng..I'm serious..

Joshua:I don't want to go back..

Marang:You have to baby. I just wish I was almost done with school. It is so exhausting gore.

Joshua:It gets lonely without you..

Marang sensed that there were two sides to the loneliness.

Marang:By spring break I'll be home okay? I hate being away from you but we got this right?

Joshua:We do...Gape work is stressful gore mma.

Marang:I hope you are not killing yourself with the night shifts.

He kept quiet.

Marang:Joshua!! We talked about this. They leave you exhausted.

Joshua:tlhemma don't make a big deal out of it.

Marang:It is a big deal, it is mentally taxing you and you never eat kana Joshua. Do the shelves have food at home?

Joshua:Babe..

Marang:Ng ng Joshua, I'll talk to mom gore a dire dijo and Letso a bo a di tlisa at work..

She rubbed his head.

Marang:Eating take out every chance you get is not good..

Joshua:You are worrying over nothing.

Marang:It's not nothing to me rraetsho.

He chuckled against he chest and she continued rubbing his head.

Marang:I need to make you something to eat, when you get back they should see gore o tswa mosading.(they should see that you are from your wife's place)

Joshua:Marang tlhemma o rata dilo!

She laughed and touched his ear, his ears would make their kids look ugly. He was a handsome man but nah, his ears are a no no..if they could have his smile and his soft hair.

She smiled. It didn't hurt that much now that they chose to let it go, if it happens it happens right and if it does not then God shall pull them through.

Marang:I'll shave your beard, well trim it.

Joshua:If you dare cut me..

Marang:I once did it and a bo ke go ha massage hela yoo robust..(and I will give you one hell of a massage)

He smiled.

Joshua:I like the sound of that.

Marang:Not what you're thinking.

Joshua:I love you too baby..

Marang:Waitse baby in this last week, you're going to look good.

Joshua:Akere I am eating the p\*ssy everyday with no breaks in between, how can I not look good?

Marang:Mxm..

Joshua:We talked mma..open wide.

Marang blushed and shook her head, feeling the familiar wetness pool between her legs. He never asked for it really, just took and she loved it.

Joshua:Marang?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:Open wide!

He moved his head and got on his knees and she opened her legs. This man was exhausting.

Joshua:Look at that a bo gotwe ke ska glower?(and they say I shouldn't glow)

Marang:Ka tswala..(I'm closing)

Joshua:Don't you dare...

He put his head between her legs and his moist tongue swept over her folds and she moaned.

Joshua:I love being married..My wife is a whole meal..(licking)my meal.

She covered her face with her hands as she moaned softly.



At the hospital

Seeletso sat on the chair as she went through her WhatsApp statuses around midday. Joshua had updated his status with his wife's morning video. They were so cute together, a match made in heaven to be honest and she sighed wistfully. She saw how love looked good on the both of them and she struggled to find something like that.

She honestly did not want to settle for less. Imagine at this day and age she was still a virgin because she never gave boys a chance. There was just something about seeing love in action on other people that made it hard for her to lower her standards. They sure set the bar high and she was not compromising when it came to her standards.

She sighed and placed her phone away.

## At Marang's apartment

Marang was done with the house chores and laid on the couch exhausted. Her hair stuck to her forehead, she laughed alone, that insatiable beast had fallen asleep again after their steamy rounds in the bedroom. She needed to get started on the food and take a shower. Then join him and sleep. He will help her with her school work later.

She was going to miss him when he leaves. It always hurt like a bitch when he left or she left after they spent time together. On an honest note, video calls were not enough. At times when she wanted to cry when school was showing her flames, she wanted to be in his arms, his voice was soothing but being in his arms was much better. Those were the chronicles of a long distance marriage but as hard as it was there was no cheating from both sides.

Cheating would ruin this marriage because it was

built on trust and it is hard to get trust back,  
especially knowing they could talk to each other  
about it.

She pushed her hair back and got up from the couch.

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6 MONTHS LATER

## THE GAME

#82

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo sat on the big ball, doing those exercises the nurses said she should try out. She was overdue but the baby showed no signs of coming. She typed on her phone talking to Theo to bring her something to eat.

Her mother walked in and sighed.

Ma Phem:The child must be heavy.

Phemelo:Overdue, overweight baby..

Ma Phem:Keep doing those exercises mme..

Phemelo nodded before carefully standing up. She wore her prosthetic leg more because her tummy

was heavy and she had to get assistance when wearing it. Schools weren't closed but through discussion, e-learning was the solution here because she needed to give birth and maybe by January she will be back at school even though she will be leaving a baby that is barely 3 months old if he pops out in time.

She sat on the couch and breathed in and out. Just like she was told. Just a few weeks overdue and she would cry if she was going to be pregnant for a whole ten months.

Phemelo:Mama does my nose look good?

Ma Phem:E maswe gore(it is very ugly)

Phemelo:ah ah..mama you weren't like me when you were last pregnant.

Ma Phem:People are different, you'll be okay after you give birth. Do you have any laundry I need to wash the clothes and is the baby bag ready.

Phemelo:Ee mma.

Her mother stood up and walked to Phemelo's bedroom as she rubbed her tummy.

Phemelo: Boy boy please come out. Your mother is tired..(with a weak smile)

She grabbed her phone and tried calling Marang. It wasn't going through, she was the doctor in training here and she needed hear her opinion.

At Toronto, Canada

Gabby helped Marang with her luggage.

Gabriel: When are you coming back?

Marang: After a week or so. I haven't been home for over 9 months.

Gabriel: Just say you miss that piece of chocolate.

Marang rolled her eyes blushing.

Marang:I miss him. A lot..

Gabriel:You guys are so cute. I'm jealous.

Marang:Your time will come Gabby.

She checked her watch.

Marang:Let's hurry before I miss my flight..

Gabriel:Okay doll...

The two walked through the airport and took Marang's bags for custom checks and she showed them her ticket.

When they were done she hugged Gabby.

Marang:I'm gonna miss you..

Gabriel:Take your sweet time doll..

Marang:Okay. See you when I come back and thank you(breaking the hug)

She walked away and Gabby waved her off.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo rubbed her tummy while she waited for Theo to bring her food. Her mother was staying at home these days because she was due. She appreciated her efforts, she didn't know what would happen if her mother was not here and the baby decides to make a surprise appearance past his due date.

The intercom rang and she knew it was Theo. She slowly walked to the door where she pressed the button. The gate opened and she was sure the dogs would get out but they always come back.

She opened the door slightly and slowly sat down closing her eyes. Minutes later the door opened and he was holding what she wanted. She was all heavy



and ugly while he looked immaculate in his three piece business suit. He was the kind that looked good in anything. Tears filled her eyes and Theo frowned.

Theo:Hey what's wrong? I was in a meeting but I'm here. Phemelo?

He sat down next to her and held her hands.

Theo:I'm sorry, you no longer want the food? I can go get any other thing you want..

Phemelo:You look so nice and then there is me with the big nose, chubby cheeks and all this weight. Ke ntse mompe gore(I look ugly)

He rubbed his jaw.

Theo:You are not. Stop saying that.

She rubbed her eyes and looked at the food he has placed down.

Phemelo:You brought everything?

Theo:I did. How is he?

She smiled and touched her tummy.

Phemelo:Okay I guess, I didn't feel his-oh shit! Take me to the hospital..

Theo:What's wrong?

Phemelo:I didn't feel his kicks today, maybe there is something wrong with my baby Theo.

Theo:Baby breath in and out. Don't be paranoid.

Phemelo:I am not, I didn't feel his kicks(panicking)

Ma Phem made her way to the lounge and Theo greeted her. She acknowledged him with a nod of her head.

Ma Phem:Phemelo what's wrong?

Phemelo:Mama I didn't feel him kick, take me to the hospital..

Ma Phem:Phemelo..

Phemelo>Please, just to be safe.

Theo:Okay..I'll take her.(to Phemelo's mother)let's

go..

Phemelo slid her feet into the slip ons and Theo took her hand. She held on tightly to him as they got out of the house.

Phemelo:I'm still hungry.

Theo:I'll get your food..

Phemelo:Thank you.

Theo kissed her cheek as he opened the car door for her.

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## THE GAME

#83

At the hospital

The doctor placed the wand over Phemelo's protruding belly. They all waited anxiously to hear the heartbeat. Their hearts skipped beats as Theo held Phemelo's hand, rubbing it just for her to calm down.

The doctor frowned and looked at the screen. He removed the wand and placed it there again. The strong heartbeat filled the room and Phemelo held back tears.

Doctor: This is strange.

Phemelo's happiness was short lived hearing the doctor's words. Her mother frowned as she sat

down. They all knew that Phemelo was long overdue and were anxiously waiting for her to go into labor.

Doctor:Mam what did your last scan reveal?

Phemelo:I'm carrying a boy..

Doctor:Let me do this again.

He placed the cold wand over her belly and the heartbeat got stronger and stronger. As long as their baby was still alive in there, they were good. Just waiting for him to pop out and give her a break.

Doctor:There are two heartbeats here.

Theo:What?

Doctor:Two heartbeats sir, that's why it's so loud and strong.

Phemelo:B-bu...(trailing off)

She was confused. How did the scans miss that? That was weird and suspicious.

Theo:Doctor you are leaving all of us confused..

Ma Phem:Same..

The doctor looked at all three of them.

Doctor:From the heartbeat it seems as if there are two babies in here but the scan reveals one..

They all looked at the sonogram and back at the doctor.

Doctor:But we will see when she gives birth.

Phemelo nodded. They will see when she gives birth. Even if it is only one child she will be the happiest. She was so excited to see Theo's face when he holds his son for the first time. She had long requested for him to be in the room when she gives birth and they had arranged everything for her. Her disability was not going to affect the birth of their baby.

Doctor:She is healthy and the baby in there is healthy.

Theo:Thank you doctor.

Theo helped her get off the bed and held her waist as her mother walked out first. She looked at them behind her and smiled a bit. Maybe she had been too tough on her daughter. She was happy with that Theo lad and it seemed as if the boy was excited about being a father.

Ma Phem:Phem you'll find me at home.

Phemelo:Thank you mama..

She walked ahead as the two started talking.

Phemelo:We have decided on names akere? No changing mr..

Theo:I wanted to name him Theodore.

Phemelo rolled her eyes.

Phemelo:Cassian?

Theo:We are still debating?

Phemelo:I'm not giving him your name because he has your last name already.

Theo:You are a very stubborn woman.

Phemelo:Thanks..

They walked out of the hospital, heading to the parking lot.

Phemelo:I'm hungry gore..

Theo:You eat too much.

Phemelo:I don't care Theo. I'm hungry.

Theo:How are you going to begin losing weight?

Phemelo:When I want to...

He opened the door for her and helped her get inside before walking to his side of the door.

At the hospital

Joshua sighed rubbing his jaw. He listened as his uncle spoke over the phone, this conversation was



getting boring and the fact that all his relatives were all up in his business was rubbing him up in the wrong way.

Joshua:I hear you.

Uncle:We are coming that side tomorrow.

Joshua:There is really no need for that.

Uncle:There is a big need for that. Bye motlogolo.

His uncle hung up and Joshua leaned back dialing his wife's number.

'Dr Joshua Colton is unavailable to take your call at the moment please leave a short message(laughter)byeee!'

He smiled sadly and left a message.

Joshua:Sweetheart call me when you get this from the real Dr Joshua Colton(laughing sadly)

He ended the call and rubbed his head. This was so unnecessary and he didn't want to get into that talk with the elders. He looked at the gold band on his ring finger. He smiled alone. He always remembers their vows everytime he looks at it.

At Joshua's father's office

Ra Josh:This meeting is unnecessary.

Uncle:You are failing your home and we have to intervene.

Ra Josh:Joshua is a grown ass man who is capable of doing what is best for his own house, it not necessary for you guys to put him under pressure.

Uncle:We will get to the bottom of this. Tomorrow we are coming brother and it is final.

With that the call was cut short and Ra Joshua angrily punched the table. Not everyone poking their noses in his son's business. He didn't need this

especially after that vulnerable moment he told him he wanted a child but his wife's happiness came first before his. He covered his face with his hands.

At Bobonong

One of the Colton aunties sat down in the kitchen as the pretty Nadia was busy doing dishes. She was so humble and had a decent background. Both parents still alive and she had a certificate in early childhood.

Aunt:Nadia how long has it been since you have seen Joshua?

Her jaw dropped.

Nadia:I heard he was here last December. Unfortunately I was traveling with my parents but it has been a while. He is married right?

The aunt shrugged.

Aunt:Anyway we have a proposal for you..

Nadia rinsed the plate and put it away. She grabbed a kitchen cloth and wiped her hands. She helped out every now and then around here since her parents were friends with the Coltons. Joshua had been her crush when she was young and well to her his sister was stuck up. Always on her own and never interacting with people. That was rude behavior according to how she was raised but Joshua never noticed her other than the girl next door whenever he was here at his granny's place.

Nadia:I'm listening...

The aunt changed her mind mid-way. They will talk to her parents instead.

Aunt:Forget it, have you found a job yet.

Nadia:Not yet, these days they hire people with degrees and I only have a certificate.

Not for long. The aunt thought.

Nadia:But I will find something, God willing.

She moved from the sink and opened the cupboard

to make the old woman tea. That woman loved her as if she was part of the Colton family.

Aunt:I'm surprised you are still not married till this day.

Nadia:I never go anywhere besides I still have to get my life in order.

Aunt:Smart girl.

Unlike someone she knew who was milking her nephew but failed to do just one simple. Just one simple thing.

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1k likes then another follows immediately. Our insert marathon begins now and y'all are gonna wish I had disappeared

## THE GAME

#84

At the hospital

Seeletso stood at the counter giving out the prescription drugs with a small smile on her face. She paused as she took the prescription paper from the man who was hiding behind glasses. Their fingers brushed and she smiled a bit as she looked at the paper.

She went to the shelf and got the pill container. She wore her gloves and started counting the pills. She gave him the pills and he paused. He removed his shades and laughed a bit embarrassed.

Him: Thank you..

Seeletso: Welcome (looking at the prescription paper

once again)Mr Pula..

He laughed.

Seeletso:The correct way to take the pills is written on it.

He glanced at the pills. It was kind of embarrassing for a pretty lady like her to give him pills to help with his low sperm count. She probably thinks he is weak. Most beautiful ladies think so, take his ex for example.

Seeletso smiled as he looked down and back at her. Was he shy?

Seeletso:Sir are you shy?

Him:I'm not.

Seeletso:Okay..(small smile)Have a good day.

Him:Same to you mam..

He walked away and Seeletso watched him walk away then she sighed contentedly. He looked like

the quiet type. She was probably never going to see him again. She walked away from the counter and went to check the stock of the pills available and write down the drugs that are not available at the hospital counter at the moment.

Meanwhile Joshua wore his stethoscope and stood up on his feet. He checked his phone expecting a call from his wife but there was nothing. She was probably busy but she always called him. He needed to de-stress and talk about it with her. She was literally the only person he opened up to and imagine those soft hands rubbing his neck as he told her everything. He sighed and rubbed his chest area before he walked out to resume his rounds around the hospital. He was not on the late night shift this week so he was going to go home and get some sleep. Everything was just not it.

He smiled alone remembering her lecture him about the night shifts a week ago. She said she wanted



him in one piece not all tired and grumpy. Apparently he was grumpy when tired and she didn't like that. Imagine that little nymph telling him all that. He was gone alright. She had him in the palm of her little hands and he wouldn't want to change that on any given day.

The nurse greeted him and he returned a casual smile and walked away. Like always they started talking about him. They only saw his wife sometimes but she was really younger than him but who were they to judge, sometimes he looked lonely. Must be hard having a wife continents and oceans away and seeing each other twice or three times a year.

Ra Joshua's office

Ra Josh talked to his wife as she went on a long lecture.

Ra Josh:Ka utwa..

Ma Josh:Tell your family to stay out of my son's business. Where the hell do they get the audacity to dictate what happens in his marriage? Where they there when the relationship was new? Where they there when Joshua was nursing Marang's broken heart after the miscarriage?

Ra Josh kept quiet.

Ma Josh:Exactly. I love my daughter in law and trust me, I will be disrespectful if ba mo bolaisa dipuo. Marang is literally the sweetest tota.

Ra Josh:I told them to not come but they didn't listen.

Ma Josh:A ba tle ee. Ke tla bo ke ba emetse nna..(let them come then. I will be waiting for them)

Ra Josh:Ee mma..

Ma Josh:They just want to destroy my son's marriage and I won't allow that, what if they don't want to have kids? Mxm, ba ska ba leka go ntsheleka. I'll show them the exact reason why I'm from Kgatleng. Go sharpo.

She hung up without saying goodbye and Ra Joshua dialed his brother's number. He answered immediately.

Ra Joshua:Hello..

Uncle:Hell..

Ra Joshua:Do I ever intervene in your household matters?

Uncle:No..

Ra Joshua:Is Segolo married?

Uncle:No..

Ra Joshua:Have I ever made that any of my business?

Uncle:What are you trying to say?

Ra Joshua:Stay out of Joshua's business. He is my son and this is my home. Don't make me hate you for wanting to involve yourselves in business that does not concern you.

The uncle hung up immediately and he looked at his wife.

Aunt:What did he say?

Uncle:Apparently I should stay out of their business..

The aunt laughed and clapped her hands.

Aunt:They are protecting that barren thing? Ra di bona tlhe..

The granny walked in with Nadia by her side.

Aunt:mmaiye?

Ma Colton:Ma?

Aunt:It is good that we are going to talk to Joshua about starting a family right?

Ma Colton:Yes. You can't be married for so long and not have a child. Nadia make me another cup of tea my child.

Nadia:Ee mma..

She walked out and the aunt conversed with the granny. They were still going.

Nadia walked out with the tea and the aunt smiled.

Aunt:I will be back okay..

She walked out and stood by the door. Nadia would make a beautiful Colton bride but then once people were civilly married it was difficult to take a second wife. She was the kind of wife they needed. But now she wasn't suggesting marriage.

She walked out of the yard and walked to Nadia's parents.

Once she was welcomed in the house she sat down. The woman she wanted to see.

Aunt:Hello..

Ma Nadia:Hii..

Aunt:I have something we can talk about but it needs a hot cup of tea and scones.

Ma Nadia:Let me get those.

The aunt nodded as she crossed her legs with a little smile.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo sat on the big ball doing those exercises she was advised to do. She tried calling Marang but it just led her straight to voicemail. She sighed and rubbed her tummy feeling tiny bits of pain on her lower abdomen. She rubbed it more as the pain intensified.

Phemelo:Mama!

Her mother came running.

Ma Phem:What?

Phemelo:It hurts here..(indicating her lower abdomen)

Ma Phem:Maybe the baby is coming. Let me get your baby bags..

Phemelo:okay.

She moved on the ball and dialed Theo.

Theo:My love..

Phemelo:I have abdominal pains and mama says maybe the baby is coming, she is taking me to the hospital(calmly)

Theo:I will find you there okay? Don't panic okay?

Phemelo:I am not. You are the one panicking Theo..

Theo:Yoh yoh! I will find you guys there.

Phemelo:Ee rra. Sharpo.

She hung up and sent her best friend a text. She stood up from the ball as her mother came out with

the bag and the car keys. She stretched herself, feeling those stabs of discomfort on her lower belly. Wasn't her water supposed to break?

She checked the time. It was almost seven pm.

Ma Phem:Your dad will find us there, he was working on so many case.

Phemelo:Okay..

They walked to the car and her mother opened the door for her.

They got in the car and her mother breathed in and out.

Ma Phem:Phemelo please don't be those women who insult the nurse and midwives tlhe.

Phemelo:Ee mma..

Ma Phem:Be calm baby, be calm okay?



Phemelo:I will try okay?

Ma Phem:Alright. Let's get going..

At Joshua's place

He sat in the couch in his boxers and tried calling his wife again. That was unlike her to switch off all communication with him. Even if she had a busy day. He sighed and rubbed his eyes. He laid down on the couch and closed his eyes. He will wake up when she calls him.

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## THE GAME

#85

At the hospital

Theo came rushing in after he was told the room number. When he opened the door expecting to hear screams he found his baby mama on the bed with a tub of ice cream.

Theo:Kante?

Phemelo:Gatwe these are minor contractions. My water hasn't broke yet but the baby is coming..

She put the spoon in her mouth and licked it. She wasn't even stressed. Her mother peeped in.

Ma Phem:Are you good?

Phemelo:Ee mma..

She closed the door and Theo sat down, the baby bag was placed on the bedside and Phemelo was focused on her ice cream.

Theo:Are you supposed to eat while waiting to give birth?

Phemelo:No but what will I do to keep myself company?

She placed the ice cream tub down and rubbed her tummy. It was getting a bit intense. She breathed in and out.

Phemelo:Breath in and out with me so you don't stress Theo, o tla re golega kana..

Theo:Phemelo!

Phemelo:Do it..breath in and out..

He did so as she sat upright and rubbed her tummy. Theo looked at her, she was so calm. Many women would be going nuts right now at the thought of popping out a baby but she was making him do

breathing exercises.

Phemelo sucked one last deep breath and looked at her baby daddy. She laughed. Why was he so stressed? He wasn't the one who is going to push a baby through his vagina.

Theo:It's not funny..

Phemelo:Rub my tummy for me, I'm tired..

Theo:Sure?

Phemelo:Yes..please do it tlhe..

She laid down and pulled up her hospital gown for him to rub it. She was completely naked underneath the gown. He pulled the blanket up to her lower abdomen and started to massage her tummy.

Phemelo:We will just wait till my water break.

Theo:You are so chilled baby..

She shrugged.

Phemelo:Your son will come. O rata drama gore  
ngwana wa gago(shaking her head)

Theo:Ijoo...

At Joshua's house

Joshua:Watch out!

He said running to the small boy who had already hit  
his head against the wall.

Marang walked out of the kitchen with an infant  
planted on her hip.

Marang:Yoh!

He picked up the small boy and rubbed his forehead  
as he held back tears.

Marang:Is he okay?

Joshua:Don't ask him that, he will cry..

Marang rolled her eyes and looked at the one on her hip.

Marang:I'm going to put her to sleep okay?

Joshua:Okay..

She walked out and he rubbed his forehead.

Joshua:I'm sorry..

The boy sucked his thumb and looked at his father with eyes that were so similar to his mother's. He smiled.

The dream was interrupted by the loud ring tone of his phone and he almost fell off the couch as he opened his eyes. He rubbed his eyes. He couldn't remember what he dreamed of but he had been sleeping so comfortably. He sat upright. He rubbed his arms, he wasn't supposed to sleep for that long.

He picked his phone up.

Joshua:Hello(yawning)

Ma Josh:Hey..were you sleeping?

Joshua:Mother...

Ma Josh:I just wanted to ask if you ate something, Marang always worries about you eating..

Joshua:I did..

Ma Josh:I know a lie when I hear one. I'm sending Seeletso to bring food to your place. Not even debating. Bye..

His mother hung up and he yawned stretching his body. He checked his phone log expecting to have missed a call from his wife but still nothing.

He got up from the couch and made his way to the bedroom. He sat on the bed trying to remember what his dream was about but he was blank. It might

not even be important. At this point he was worried about his wife. If he had Gabby's number he would be asking her about his wife's whereabouts. Maybe he will raise questions tomorrow to find out what was up, maybe he was worrying about nothing.

At the Coltons

Seeletso:Should I take food there?

Ma Josh:Ee...he is your brother..

Seeletso:You see you and your daughter in law are going to pay me.

Ma Josh:Just go..

Seeletso took the two Tupperware dishes and grabbed her car keys. She wasn't going to be long. Just drop off his food and go.

She walked out of the house.



At Joshua's house

Twenty minutes later, Seeletso parked outside the gate and got out of the car with the food. She made sure she had locked her car then she opened the gate.

She looked around and walked to the door. The lights were all off. He was probably sleeping. She knocked on the door a couple of times but there was no response.

Seeletso:Josh? Bro? Open up tlherra..

She heard footsteps and waited by the door. The lock turned and seconds later he opened the door. She looked at him but just today he looked so miserable it hurt seeing him like that.

She walked inside and he closed the door with a yawn.

Seeletso:Josh are you okay?

Joshua:Yeah. Put the food in the kitchen.

She walked to the kitchen to put the food in the fridge and walked back to the lounge.

Seeletso:Wanna talk about it?

Joshua:I'm okay..

Seeletso:You are not. Something is weighing you down. You are my brother and I know you..

Joshua:Seeletso...

She just hugged him.

Seeletso:Whatever it is, it will be okay okay? I love you too and don't overwork yourself tlherra o tla re bolaisa mosadi wa gago..(you'll get us in trouble with your wife)

He chuckled and hugged his sister back.

Seeletso:We are here whenever it gets too much..

Joshua:Thanks.

They hugged for more than a minute and Seeletso broke it.

Seeletso:See you at work. Bye!

She walked out and he stood by the door, waiting for her to get to her car. Once she was safely in her car and driving away, he closed it and locked it.

Seeletso held the steering wheel and sighed. She loved her brother but the fact that he never talked about things that bothered him bothered her. Men have been programmed to be strong that they can't tell when they need help and need someone to be strong on their behalf. She just hoped the husband she finds will be able to lean on her whenever something eats him up.

Around midnight

At the hospital

Phemelo got off the bed and paced the room as the contractions got worse. She was still going to be okay.

Theo:How is it?

Phemelo:It hurts yoh!

Theo:But you are calm..

Phemelo:I might kick you out aah!(holding her tummy)

She looked down, her water broke. The contractions got worse as she kept on pacing up and down.

Theo:Let me call a midwife or a nurse, you should be sitting down.

Phemelo rolled her eyes as she moved up and down the room. Theo walked out and she just walked to the baby bag. She took out all the clothes inside the

bag and started to pack them again while taking deep breaths. She was going to do this. She had this under control.

Minutes later the nurse and midwife walked in followed by Theo and her mother.

Ma Phem:I'll be outside, how are you feeling Phem?

Phemelo:Go bothoko!

Ma Phem:Hang in there and all the best baby..

Her mother walked out as Phemelo was instructed to climb the bed. Theo helped her and held her hand as she opened her legs.

Midwife:We are looking for a ten cm dilation and you are at 2cm..

Phemelo:Okay.(breathing in and out)

Nurse:When you feel like pushing, call us..

Phemelo:Okay..

They walked out and she got off the bed.

Theo: Sit down.

Phemelo: I can't, I need to do something so as to not concentrate on this pain.

She continued packing and re-packing the baby clothes. After she was done she walked around the room singing whatever song that came into mind.

Phemelo: I'm never having unprotected sex ever again (calmly)

Theo: Phemelo!

She sat on the cold floor with her head on her knees.

Phemelo: It hurts yoh!

Theo: You make it seem as if it is nothing.

Phemelo: Hela hela, nna? Boloto? Never be me (clapping her hands)

Theo was calming her down as she stood up again and walked around. She rubbed her tummy as the contractions got closer and closer.

It had been a whole two hours of her doing that,  
Phemelo:Ekete nka screamer gore! Call them  
tlherra..help me get on the bed, I'm hot yoh.

She was already taking off the hospital gown and was stark naked.

Phemelo:Fresh air, call them..

He helped her get on the bed and he walked out as she breathed heavily, breathing in and out.

When the nurse and midwife arrived minutes later, they just checked on her.

Midwife:We are ready to go.

Nurse:She is so calm.

Midwife:No drama here...Start pushing when I get to three motho wame..

Theo held her hand.

Midwife:One, two, three...push!

Phemelo squeezed Theo's hand tightly and screamed pushing.

Nurse:Again. Push!

She did as told and after five more pushes, she stopped to breath and the nurse held the big boy in her arms who was screaming at the top of his little lungs.She screamed again and started pushing.

Midwife:Oh, we have another one...

She pushed again and again and again.

Midwife:Another boy..congratulations.



The second baby let out a small cry.

Theo looked at the two boys in the nurse's arms. Emotional tears filled his eyes. She made him a dad and he turned to look at her. She smiled reaching out loud. He wiped her forehead and kissed it with all its sweatiness.

Theo:Thank you.

She nodded as he looked back at the two new borns who were now crying.

Phemelo looked at the babies. This was precious. Two babies at once? He deserved it.

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# THE GAME

# 86

At the hospital

Phemelo lay exhausted on her back as her parents looked at the children. Theo was holding one of the twins while her mother held one.

Ma Phem:They are healthy..

Phemelo:Overweight is the word used by the doctor.

Ra Phemelo laughed as Phemelo yawned. Her parents walked in after she was stitched up and cleaned.

Phemelo:I'm tired..

Ma Phemelo:Rest, we will be here when you wake up.

Phemelo:Okay..goodnight..

She closed her eyes and Theo just looked at his kids. This was not a dream, she had really given two beautiful babies in a case where it was almost impossible to do so. He was so grateful to her. Nothing in the world could compare to this.

In the morning

At Joshua's house

Joshua checked his phone for any missed calls or messages but there was nothing. This time he was really worried about his wife. This was so unlike her. He should start first by contacting the school to see what was up and the landlord of the place she rented before he headed to work this morning.

He placed his phone down and headed to the bathroom for a quick shower and shave.

At Bobonong

The aunt talked with Ma Nadia over the fence. They had agreed and they didn't think it will be a task to get Nadia to agree. The car hooted and the aunt said goodbye as she made her way to the car. They were going with Ma Colton and Nadia had said she will stay with the house.

The uncle drove out of the yard and they were on their way to Francistown.

At Joshua's house

He tried calling his wife but still voicemail.

Joshua:Where are you sweetheart? I'm worried about you..please call me once you get this message sweetness okay?

He placed the phone down and got dressed in his white scrubs. He looked at them and smiled. She actually bought them for him a year back. She said she saw them and they would suit him really well. He shook his head with a little smile. Those soft gestures of her. She would see something and buy it because it would look good on him. Even the cologne he uses is the one she always buys, she said she didn't want her husband to pick a cologne that any other man has. She was possessive in her little cute way.

He wore his watch and his ring. He picked the bag that had his stuff and walked out of the bedroom. He will grab an apple or something at work. He will start making calls once he was in the car.

At the hospital

Seeletso checked the inventory before she walked over to her cubicle. She was early for work but then

she always was early. She pressed her phone for a few minutes before someone cleared their throat.

She looked up and smiled.

Seeletso:Hi. Mr Pule right?

Him:Hii..

Seeletso frowned.

Seeletso:Did I give out the wrong pills? I'm s-

Him:I think I forgot something.

Seeletso:oh..

He took out his phone with a little shy smile and she smiled back. Why was she finding this cute?

He unlocked his phone.

Him:Kopa numbera ya gago..

He handed it to her and she took it. She typed in her number and gave him the phone.

He saved it and Seeletso awkwardly looked at him.

Seeletso:You didn't ask me my name.

Him:Don't worry about that. Have a day as beautiful as you.

He walked away and she melted in her seat. She pushed her hair back and breathed in and out. She was sure going to have a beautiful day.

At Joshua's house

He sat in the car talking to the landlord.

Joshua:Her house is locked?

Him:Yes. She didn't tell me anything.

He sighed.

Joshua:Okay. Thank you so much.

Him>Welcome.

He hung up and leaned against the steering wheel.

The school was his only hope at this point. He just needed to know his wife's whereabouts that was all.

He dialed the school's number. The secretary answered immediately.

Joshua:Hello?

Her:Goodmorning, how can we help you?

Joshua I wanted to enquirer about the on-going lessons at the school.

Her:Ask away sir.

Joshua:Is school still on?

Her:School is still on for some students.

Joshua:Some?

Her:Medical students are on a short vacation along with students from the school of business.

Joshua:Okay. That's interesting.

Her:It is a week if not two weeks, let me check the dates..



Joshua:Please do.

She told him and he nodded.

Joshua:I see. Thank you.

He hung up and leaned back. He tried calling Marang again but it didn't go through. She always told him everything, why didn't she tell him they were on a short vacation? Why wasn't she answering her phone? She wasn't even in her apartment. He sucked in a deep breath and started his car and drove out.

At the hospital

Phemelo woke up to find Theo holding one of the twins. This was such a beautiful sight to see.

Theo:Thank you baby..

Phemelo:Welcome.

## THE GAME

#87

That afternoon

At Francistown Airport

Marang waited as they checked her luggage. This was one long flight and the fact that the aircraft had taken a different route making it longer was just exhausting. She switched on her phone and waited for it to start.

She took her luggage and walked over to the benches where she sat down. After a few minutes she saw the messages her husband had sent. She smiled as she opened them. He was such a worry wart. She wouldn't purposely ignore him just so he

knew. She listened to his voice messages and frowned. He didn't sound fine. She also read that message from Phemelo. She should also check on her to see if she was fine or not.

She sighed and stood up. Maybe she should call him to come get her but this was a surprise visit and if he did listen to her, he wasn't on the night shift so he was probably at work.

She dragged her bag out of the airport, she should look for a taxi to take her home. She does have the keys right? She didn't forget the house keys.

At the hospital

Joshua's stomach rumbled and that was when he remembered the food he left in her fridge at home. His mother made that food so that he could eat. The least he had to do was eat the food and be grateful.

At this point it was useless calling Marang because her phone hadn't been going through the last 36 hours.

He checked the time and ah his lunch break. A short drive home then come back to wrap up his rounds.

He stood up and got his phone and car keys.

At Joshua's house

Marang paid the taxi driver as he helped her with her bags.

Marang: Thank you so much.

He saluted and got inside the car and drove off. Marang opened the gate and dragged her bags inside the yard. She opened her bag and looked for the house keys. When she found them she unlocked

the house and smiled. Home sweet home.

Well wherever Josh was, that was her home so same difference.

She dragged her bags to the bedroom and took off her shoes. She removed her t-shirt, followed by the bra and jeans. She needed to breath now.

She removed her panties and walked to the wardrobe where she took out his oversized t-shirt. She was comfortable now. Should she start cleaning or rest first?

She shrugged and opened the windows to let the fresh air in.

She walked to the door, closed it and locked it before heading to the kitchen. It was clean and it didn't look

like it had been used for the past few days.

Marang:Joshua!

She opened the fridge and found the Tupperware lunchboxes. She took them out and opened them. They were untouched. Why would this man do this? He shouldn't be eating takeout everyday.

She took out two plates and started dishing the food. She was hungry too and she was lazy to cook from scratch, he will eat this when he comes back. Her mother in law made the food with love and he should appreciate it.

Outside Joshua parked his car outside the gate and he frowned. The gate was closed when he left for work today. He was under a lot of stress so maybe it wasn't.

He stepped out of the car and stepped inside the

yard. He saw the trails and that looked like trails that can be left by a suitcase if he wasn't mistaken. He walked to the door and took out his key to unlock the door but there was a key from the inside. He tried again but there was someone inside.

Marang walked out of the kitchen with a small smile on her face and unlocked the door. The door immediately opened and his jaw dropped.

Marang:Ta dah!

Joshua couldn't quite believe it. She had been on aircraft all this while? Why didn't she tell him to pick her up at least.

Marang's smile disappeared.

Marang:Aren't you happy to see me?

He rubbed his face.

Joshua:I am. J-just that I've been worried sick because you were answering y-your calls..

Marang sighed and hugged his torso. He hugged her back and kissed the top of her head.

Joshua:don't scare me like that again.

Marang:I can't promise that.

Joshua rubbed her back and walked in the house without breaking their hug. He closed the door with his foot and held her in his arms.

Marang:What's wrong?

He picked her up and made her wrap her legs around his waist and sat on the couch. He kissed her lips softly and she smiled.

Marang:Babe talk to me..

Joshua didn't say anything, he kissed her again as she responded. He slid his hands underneath the t-shirt and moved his lips to her neck. They will talk just not now.



Marang:Josh-wait..

He looked at her.

Marang:You look stressed.

Joshua:I'm de-stressing baby..

Marang:Okay.

He removed her tee and threw it on the carpet. Already naked under that. He kissed her lips again as he pulled down his pants along with the boxers. He didn't waste anytime and he fxcked her right there on the couch.

Half an hour later, Marang was all sweaty on his chest as his fingers trailed her back.

Joshua:Sweetness?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:I love you.

Marang:I love you more..

She moved her her head from his chest.

Marang:a you are supposed to be at work baby and you need to eat. Let me get the food and you go back to work.

Joshua:Don't worry..

He held her waist and kissed her again.

Marang:Babe..

Joshua:I missed you.

Marang:I missed you more...

His fingers found her slick entrance and she gasped. She was still sensitive after their short session and he was starting now. He smiled and held her tightly, preparing to stand up. He picked her up and headed to the bedroom.

Joshua:Welcome home my love.

He said as he closed the bedroom door with his foot.

At the Coltons

The uncle parked the car outside his brother's yard. They had arrived and were expecting that the gate will be opened. He stepped out of the car and went to press the intercom.

Meanwhile in the house Ma Josh turned on the speaker.

Ma Josh:Who is it?

Uncle:Us..

She rolled her eyes.

Ma Josh:Us who?

Uncle:Open the gate..

Ma Josh:Go back to where you came from, no one needed you here. Have a good day.

She switched off the speaker and walked back to the kitchen.

Outside the uncle sighed and dialed his brother's number.

Ra Josh:Hello..

Uncle:We have arrived and your wife is being disrespectful. She refuses to open the gate.

Ra Josh:You are still meddling in my family's business.

Uncle:This is an importa-

The call was cut short and he sighed walking back to the car.

Uncle:They refuse to let us in.

Ma Colton:Let me talk to them.

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## THE GAME

#88

### At the Coltons

The uncle handed the old lady the phone as his brother's phone rang. It rang unanswered for some time and he sighed.

Ma Colton:I'll call using mine..

She handed her oldest son the phone as his wife looked at them. She dialed her son's number and it rang for a few minutes before he answered.

Ra Josh:Hello..

Ma Colton:We are at your wife, tell your wife to open the gate for us. Do you want to leave your mother stranded?

He wanted to say something but he kept quiet.

Ra Joshu:Ee mma

Ma Colton:Good.

She hung up and looked at her other son.

Ma Colton:They will open the gate.

Meanwhile in the house Ma Josh answered her phone as her husband called.

Ra Josh:Hey love. Please open the gate for them.

Ma Josh:Why?

Ra Josh:They came with my mother and frankly I'm not in the mood to fight with her.

Ma Josh:But..

Ra Josh:Please..

She sighed.

Ma Josh:Okay..

She hung up and pressed the button that opened the gate. The car started and they slowly drove inside their beautiful yard. She moved the curtain to look at them. Oh how she despised her in-laws. They likes sticking their noses in business that does not concern them. She was not about to give her husband's brother accommodation in her house, quite frankly no one sent them here and if they had the energy to come here and drag the old woman with, they had money for a guest house.

She closed the curtain and walked to the kitchen. She wasn't going to ask the helper to cook for the extra guests. No.

She looked at the plates there and she walked out to go answer the door knock.

She opened the door with a fake smile.



Ma Josh:Hello.

Ma Colton:You wanted to chase me out of my son's yard..

Ma Josh:I had no idea you came with them..

She said the 'them' with so much distaste that the uncle winced.

Ma Josh:Come in and I will make you a cup of tea along with your favorite scones.

The old woman smiled and went to sit down. The aunt sighed. Why was it so easy to make the old woman happy with scones and tea? This time they would be convincing them to let Josh have Nadia play surrogate. Men always fall for women who can give them kids and in no time, Marang would be a thing of the past.

The uncle and his wife sat down.

Ma Josh:Ma, I will make you tea and fix your room. Akere you guys have accommodation? I mean you can't come all the way here with no fixed living arrangement especially for an unnecessary meeting right? Thank you..

She walked to the kitchen.

Aunt:When are we going to talk about the baby?

Ma Colton:I don't know..Sentle wee?

Ma Josh:Ma?

Ma Colton:Bring those sweets that you always keep.

Ma Josh:Ee mma..

The aunt shook her head. The old woman was supposed to be focused on the issue at hand, like really focused.

At Joshua's house

Joshua slid out of her, leaving a trail of his semen and kissed her lips. Marang finally opened her eyes and looked into his. He was stressed alright. She will change the sheets later on. He kissed her salty neck and she felt his erection against her thigh. Was his main goal to kill her now?

Marang:Baby stop! Talk to me tlherra...

Joshua:Sweetness let me de-stress using your body. Please!

The please was so desperate and she didn't have any will power to refuse him. He kissed her cheek.

Joshua:I'll be gentle okay?

She nodded. Just like that he found her entrance and instead of being gentle like he said he was going to be, he was rough with her. Her hands held up tightly in his grasp. Tears filled her eyes as he grunted on top of her. What was eating up her husband?

After he was done, she lay on her back and used her little fists to rub her eyes. He noticed that and he mentally kicked himself for making her cry.

Joshua:Babe? Sweetness?

Marang:Rra?(shaky voice)

Joshua:I'm sorry..

He pulled her to him and rubbed her back.

Joshua:I'm so sorry my love.

Marang:What's wrong?

Joshua:I made you cry and I hate doing that.

He kissed the top of her head. This baby issue was eating him up and the fact that there was a meeting called to specifically talk about that, irked him.

Joshua:I'm sorry okay? Baby girl? Look at me..

She looked at him and he used his thumb to rub her tears.

Joshua:I'm sorry angel..forgive me.

She nodded.

Marang:What's wrong?

He sighed.

Marang:Tell me what's wrong..

Joshua:A family meeting has been called, they want to talk about why we don't have kids as of yet.

Marang felt that little part of her heart she had closed off start to become undone. So seriously her infertility required a whole family meeting? More tears filled her eyes and she shook her head. Most probably they are saying she doesn't want to give their son a child and she was a failure. Her lips trembled and Joshua bit his lower lip, she was breaking again.

Marang:O-Kay..(tearing up)

Joshua:It's not okay. Our marriage is none of their business.

Marang:they are still family..

Joshua held her in his arms and she broke down crying.

Marang:I don't know what's wrong with me(crying)Ga ke dire ka bomo kana..

Joshua:We said it will happen on it's own time..

Marang:I-I-

Joshua:Sssh...

He held her as she cried, those sobs rocketing her tiny body to the extent that he felt that her bones were going to break. They were supposed to be happy and spending time together but now baby girl was stressed and crying.

Joshua:Nana, it's okay. You are whole to me..

Marang:Wha-what if it's the r-a-rape?

Joshua:Baby it's not..

Marang:It hurts again..

Joshua:I know. I'm here for you okay? I'm here for you, whenever you need me..

Marang:I can't live like this..I can't do this anymore...I'm sorry..

Joshua:Ssssh...

He rocked her back and forth as she cried talking. She went quiet and he looked at her red swollen face. She was asleep. She looked so peaceful in her sleep. He looked at the clock in their bedroom. He wasn't going back to work any time soon.

He rubbed her back and touched her forehead. It was hot, she probably has a headache from all that crying.

At the Coltons

Ma Josh had finally asked the uncle and his wife to leave, if they want to talk they will talk the following morning. That will teach them.

She sat down next to her mother in law.

Ma Colton:Marang o kae?

Ma Josh:She is at school..

Ma Colton:she is so small, she is going to be a doctor that one?

Ma Josh:yes(laughing) she still looks like a teenager..

Ma Colton:First time I saw her, I almost smacked Joshua for bringing an underage girl..

Ma Josh laughed.

Ma Josh:Ma, why do you badly want Joshua to have a child?

Ma Colton:Personally I would like to hold my great grandchildren before I die..

Ma Josh:But you are not dying..



The old woman smiled.

Ma Colton:I am..I can feel it. I just want to hold my great grandchildren before I join my husband in his resting place.

Ma Joshua:And your other son ene?

Ma Colton:I don't know, they suggested we talk to Joshua about it. Doreen said something about Nadia helping them out to have a child..

Ma Joshua:Nadia? That girl from next door?

Ma Colton:Ee..bring me more scones and tea..

Ma Joshua:Ee mma..

She stood up and walked to the kitchen. She clapped her hands as she thought about it.

Ma Josh:Hayi!

She switched on the kettle and leaned against the

counter. She touched her mouth before she clapped her hands again.

Ma Josh:Hayi aah ahh!

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## THE GAME

#89

### At the Coltons

Ma Josh came with more tea and scones. She sat down next to her mother in-law and she clapped her hands.

Ma Josh:I'm surprised.

Ma Colton:They said that..

Ma Josh:But this marriage has nothing to do with them..

Ma Colton:Yah neh..

Ma Josh laughed. To think her mother in-law came with them and she switched sides just that quick. She was easy to bribe besides she got her actual

reasons for wanting a grandchild.

Ma Josh:We will hear tomorrow.

Ma Colton:Mhmm...Do you know how to make that cake Marang always makes?

NA Josh:I will ask her..

Ma Colton:Alright. Where is Seeletso? She is still not married?

Ma Joshua:Leave my child alone ma(laughing)

Ma Colton:Okay but she should get married soon or at least fall pregnant(laughing as she sipped on tea)

Ma Josh shook her head with a little smile as she waited for her husband and daughter to knock off from work. Sara was in her room playing video games. She found it odd that she enjoyed video games. She knew that most boys love video games but for her ten year old to delight herself in that but anyway it was just games.

At Joshua's house

He covered her with the blanket as she slept peacefully. He got out of bed and wore his boxers before walking out of the bedroom. He picked his phone underneath the clothes at the lounge. He sighed and dialed his father.

Joshua:Hello.

Ra Josh:Hello..

Joshua:Can we talk?

Ra Joshua:Sure..

Joshua rubbed his chin before he began.

Joshua:Can you talk to uncle to stay away from marriage? The mere fact that I don't have a child with my wife is honestly none of their concern. I don't want to come off as disrespectful or rude but tswee tswee a ko ba tlogele lenyalo lame.

Ra Joshua:I told him the same..

Joshua:I'll talk to him to emphasize the point. Nna tota what I do in my marriage is not their business. I appreciate the fact that they helped during the process, the patlo and all but ya the kids issue is one that concerns my wife and I unless we were seeking for advice from the elders in that department but we have never complained about that the past years have we?

Ra Joshua:No. I will talk to him.

Joshua:Thank you..

He hung up and looked at his phone. He went through his call log and he dialed his uncle's number.

Uncle:Hello..

Joshua:Malome..

Uncle:We have arrived and we will talk to you and even give out suggestions.

Joshua:Uncle? I appreciate your concern but the fact that my wife and I don't have children is a decision we both agreed on.

Uncle:Is she forcing you? She might be infertile. No

sane man can agree to not have children..

Joshua rubbed his head while in the bedroom  
Marang tossed and turned before she opened her eyes. She had one massive headache as she tried to stand upright. She stretched her body and could feel the intense ache between her legs too. She got out of bed slowly and held onto the wall for stability as she walked out naked. She just wanted him to hold her so that she can fall asleep again. She heard his voice booming in the lounge and she stood by the door listening.

Joshua shook his head. His uncle wasn't listening.

Joshua:You are not listening uncle are you? I don't want anyone's goddamn help. This is my marriage and no, we don't need a surrogate.

Uncle:She can help you have kids. She is healthy and beautiful. She can give you beautiful kids.

Joshua:le ene Nadia wa teng o sematla thata go

dumela go dirisiwa jaana(that Nadia is stupid to agree to be used like this)who the hell agrees to play surrogate to a married man who never even asked her. Uncle I'm not trying to be disrespectful but I will be when it comes to my wife. Tota mo mosading wame ga ke battle. I will disown everyone when it comes to her.

Uncle:She must've fed you something.

Joshua:Wow! Let Nadia be your surrogate wena le aunt Doreen so you can have a son instead of a single child who is a girl..

The uncle paused and went speechless.

Joshua:see that it's not nice. The fact that you failed to have an heir and yet you want to meddle in my marital affairs. Deal with your unmarried daughter and have an heir then you can meddle in my business.

Uncle:Ga o na botho Joshua. I'm disappointed(you do have manners)



Joshua:Have a good day..

He placed the phone down and rubbed his eyes.

Marang:Joshua(small voice)

He turned to see her at the door of their bedroom.  
She must've heard that whole conversation.

Joshua just walked to her and picked her up.

Joshua:Sorry you had to hear that conversation.

He kissed her neck. She was drained, a bath and  
some good sleep would do her some good.

Joshua:How are you feeling?

Marang:I have a headache..

Joshua:I'll get you painkillers and run you a bath  
okay?

She nodded with a heavy heart. She was the cause  
of the rift between Joshua and his family. She  
placed her head on his shoulder and he kissed the

top of her head.

Joshua:I love you okay?

She nodded as he walked back to the bedroom holding her. He opened the bathroom door and placed her on the toilet seat. She watched him run her water and test it before he added bath salts.

He picked her up and gently deposited her in the bathtub.

Joshua:Call me when you are done okay?

She nodded and he walked out leaving her all alone with her traitorous thoughts.

Meanwhile in the bedroom, Joshua changed the sheets and took out her pajamas from the bag. He sat down and rubbed his face. They need to put this behind them so that they can move and be happy once again.

## THE GAME

#90

At the Coltons

Seeletso parked her car and held the steering wheel. She did have a good day though her brother suddenly went AWOL after lunch time. Her phone rang and it was an unknown number, she wanted to hang up but she answered the phone.

Seeletso:Hello?

Him:Hi there pretty lil miss..

She blushed and covered her face with one huge ass smile.

Seeletso:Hi there..

Him:Jaden here..

Seeletso:Jaden(softly)hiii..

He laughed. He could tell she was blushing from the other end of the line. Seeletso wanted to scream. He finally called and his name was Jaden, so that was the J in his initials. He still didn't ask for her name. She badly wanted to tell him and hear how he pronounced the name. This was the shy guy at the hospital? She wanted to scream. This was her hitting puberty too late because she wanted to scream because a guy called her.

Jaden:I guess I will see you tomorrow..

Seeletso:Tomorrow?

Jaden:Yes mam. Enjoy the rest of your evening.

He hung up and she placed the phone down. She wasn't following. She got out of the car with her stuff and locked the door. She made her way to the house and opened the door. She found her grandmother and she sighed. Here they go again.

Seeletso:Hello..

Ma Colton:Hello Letso. How was your day?

Seeletso suspiciously looked at the old lady. That was weird. Her asking about her day was random.

Seeletso:It was actually good.

Ma Colton:Okay..

Seeletso waited. Expecting her to raise the marriage topic again but she didn't. She walked to her bedroom and passed her mother by the passage. Her mother shrugged and Seeletso opened her bedroom door.

At Joshua's house

Marang was comfortable in her pajamas and socks as she walked to the lounge. He had cleaned up everything and he was cooking. She was supposed to be cooking for him not the other way round.

She walked to the kitchen with her hair tied back.

Marang:Can I help?

Joshua:You should be resting sweetness.

Marang:The bath helped and I took the painkillers.

Joshua:I'm not letting you help me Dr Me..

She laughed softly.

Marang:You are so cheesy Dr Colton.

Joshua:If it ensures my little doctor laughs then I will be cheesy everyday..

She smiled and he closed the pots before making his way to her. He picked her up and placed her on the counter.

Joshua:Can we put this behind us? Marang I hate seeing you break like that and blaming yourself for something we have no control over.

Marang just nodded. For his sake.

Joshua:Good. For now we are okay. Just the two of us.

She smiled, knowing deep down that it was fake. She had time to think in the bathroom and it wasn't easy on her part. She had a lot to do his week before she goes back to Canada.

Marang:Baby can you pass me my phone?

Joshua:Sure..

He walked out and she looked at her sock clad feet. He came with her phone and she smiled taking it. He went back to the pots and she dialed Phemelo's number. Phemelo answered immediately.

Phemelo:where have you been?

Marang:I'm in town love. Did you give birth? Is he cute? Send me pictures and can I visit you and the little one? I think I packed the little one's things that I bought in Canada.

Phemelo smiled uneasily at the end of the line.

Phemelo:I gave birth around midnight and we're surprised. I gave birth to twins.

Marang:Wow! Congratulations, aaaw I'm so happy for you.

Phemelo:Thank you godmother.

Marang smiled with an aching heart. Her friend didn't have not only one but two bundles of joy and she was elated for her. Really excited.

Phemelo:Uhm you can't see the twins unfortunately.

Marang maintained the smile as Joshua looked at her.

Phemelo:Apparently gatwe the babies are still young to be getting visitors, they should be strong maybe when they are two or three months but preferably three months. Gatwe batho ba kgona go gatelela bana. You know that akere?



Marang wanted to scream that she didn't know that. How would she know that when she didn't even have a child?

Marang:Mhmm..

Phemelo:You can drop the baby clothes at home, my mother will get them.

Marang:will be on it as soon as tomorrow.  
Congratulations.

Phemelo:Thank you love. I will text you their names, gatwe ke gatise di stitch. Go bothoko gore.

Marang:You will heal. Bye.

She hung up and sucked in a deep breath.

Joshua:What's wrong?

Marang:Phem gave birth to twins in the wee hours of the morning. Anyway what are you making love?

She said changing topic and putting her phone away. She wasn't going to be the jealous friend. She should

just try not to think about it.

Joshua:Some stir fry and pasta.

Marang:Will you make my favorite soup?

Joshua:You want it?

She nodded. He pecked her lips.

Joshua:Okay. Let me get started on it.

Joshua walked to the fridge and Marang looked at her phone. She rubbed her temples. She picked it up and texted Phemelo.

Marang:Can I have your mother's number?

She placed the phone down and smiled as Joshua came out with the veggies and the cheese.

Marang:I should help you.

Joshua:you my lady are not lifting a finger.

Marang:No fair. I'm okay tlherra..

Joshua:You are not..

Marang:I can never win can I?

Her phone beeped and Phemelo had sent the number.

Marang:Thank you love

She placed the phone down and focused all her attention on Joshua.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo lay on her stomach as she ate the soft porridge. Soft food till the stitches heal, why didn't they tell her this hurts like a bitch. Hopefully these are the only children they are going to have. The giving birth process was fine but nursing stitches?

This was hell. Her phone rang and she answered with a smile.

Phemelo:Rraagwe bana..

Theo:I like the sound of that. How are you feeling?

Phemelo:The stitches mr..

Theo:You'll be fine love. They aren't troubling you?

Phemelo:Not at all..they are asleep. Baby children look ugly after birth.

Theo laughed and she wanted to laugh but the stitches. She grinned.

Theo:Leave my children alone mma..

Phemelo:I'm giving them a week to look like proper children and to look like me.

Theo:Mxm!

Phemelo:I love you. Bye.

She hung up and looked at her babies sleeping

peacefully. She was the blessed one here.

At Joshua's house

Marang was sitting between his legs as she looked up at him. She was going to make the most of this week with this special man here who deserved nothing but the world.

Joshua:I love you.

Marang:I love you from your hair to your toes..

He laughed and kissed her. She looked at him. The more she looked at him, the more she realized he looked like August Aslina. He was the sweetest.

Joshua:A movie?

Marang:Sure..let me take the plates to the kitchen and I will make snacks. Dim the lights. No horror films.

Joshua:I'll kiss the fear away.

Marang:Nyaa. Wena o batla go nja.(No you want to

sex me)

He raised his hands in surrender.

Joshua:I won't.

Marang:You won't keep your hands to yourself.

Joshua:I can't but no, ga ke ka ke ka go ja Marang. Ompuisa jang tota?[I won't sex you Marang](laughing)

Marang:Ijoo..

She stood up and got the plates, heading to the kitchen. She put the plates in the sink and her smile faded as she walked to the cupboard to take out the snacks for their movie.

Joshua:No romance films this time love..

Marang:But no horror films.

Joshua:We'll see wifey..

Marang:We'll definitely see Mr Colton.

Joshua:It's Dr Colton mam, put a title to that

surname..

Marang:Mxm(laughing)

Joshua:You have energy babe, twerk for me..

Marang rolled her eyes.

Marang:Motho a bo a re ga a ka ke a nja..(and he says he won't sex me)

Joshua:I won't.

Marang:I'm sitting on the opposite couch.

Joshua:Sweetness!

Marang:And you are not changing my mind.

He laughed in the lounge scrolling through the channels.

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## THE GAME

#91

The following morning

At Joshua's house

Marang woke up first and she switched on the geyser before she headed to the kitchen to make breakfast for her husband. She might even bring lunch to work. Just for him.

Her ring caught the light and she looked at it before she shook her head and started to make breakfast. Thirty minutes later she felt strong arms wrap around her waist.

Joshua: Morning baby.



Marang:Morning big guy.

Joshua:How was your sleep?

Marang:Peaceful in your arms and content.

Joshua:Glad to hear that. Join me in the shower?

Marang:Nope. Still sore. I love you too..

He chuckled and kissed her neck.

Joshua:I won't be long.

Marang:alright.

He walked out and she pulled the curtains back, opening the windows. She rubbed her flat tummy, missing something she never had. She sighed and removed her hands from her tummy and continued with what she was doing.

By the time Joshua was done, she had served breakfast and was sipping on some chamomile tea.

Joshua:I don't know how you survive without caffeine love.

Marang:I survive. I dished up.

Joshua:Thank you.

Marang:I can't wait to finish school yoh!

Joshua:You don't want to join me at work today?

Marang:You are a distraction Josh, you won't attend patients and you'll be attending me.

Joshua:that's not a bad thing is it?

She threw the kitchen cloth at him giggling.

Marang:Addict.

Joshua:With a sexy wife, why wouldn't I be?

Marang:Eat. Wa lapisa tlherra(laughing)

He sat down on one of the kitchen chairs and looked at the meal. She took care of his every need. She smiled watching him take a bite of his toast as she

stirred her oats.

Joshua:I'm going to miss this when you are gone.

Marang:Me too sweetheart. Me too.

They ate chatting up and cracking jokes. The atmosphere was just so comfortable and happy for the both of them.

At the hospital

Seeletso arrived and she frowned seeing flowers. She looked around and the cleaners were the only people there. She was such an early bird that her mother complained.

She smelled the flowers and smiled. She liked daisies and these were daisies. She picked the card that was inside the flowers. They had chocolates too.

Seeletso:oooh!

She opened the card.

“Flowers for a sweet lady. Chew on those little sweet things till lunch

J.P”

She covered her mouth with a huge smile. Jaden did this? He was so sweet. What was happening at lunch time? She looked at her outfit of the day, she was okay.

She did a little happy dance before clearing her throat and maintaining her composure.

At Joshua’s house

Marang saw her husband out with a cute smile before she closed the door and leaned against it. Something got stuck in her throat and she held back

tears that fell on their own free will.

She fell to her knees. Why? Why her? She was so healthy but couldn't even fall pregnant. She wiped her tears with her hands and stood up. She couldn't break down now.

She walked to the bedroom where she took off her pajama tee. It smelled of him, as weird as that was. She got naked and she walked to the bathroom for a quick shower.

When she was done she opened the wardrobe and she took out two of his scrubs. She held them close to her chest and her tears fell on them. It felt like she was holding a part of him. She inhaled the scent on them. His raw scent on them. He had so many, he would notice that she took one or two. She put them in her suitcase and she took out one of his worn tees from the laundry basket. The cologne she bought him was still strong in it.

She put it in the suitcase as well and wiped the lone tear that rolled down her cheeks.

She wore her denim dress and gladiator sandals before tying her hair back. She got the baby clothes she had bought for Phemelo. She had places to be today and she wanted to get everything and done today.

She breathed in and out before she got her bag and phone.

At the prison

Lebo walked out of the hell hole as she was escorted by a warden. This was the first time she got a visitor ever since she ended up here. She always slept with no fear of death especially after she heard of the arrest of Russel and his men. At least he was off the streets. Maybe that fact helped

Marang sleep at night because she barely slept at night.

All she saw was a very smart young lady with her hands on the table. She had a nice ring on her finger. The lady was facing the other way.

Lebo sat down and the lady turned. Marang smiled with a heavy heart. The place made her aunt look so old beyond her age. That was what eight years of prison did to a person neh.

Marang:Hi. I'm Marang.

Lebo's eyes welled looking at Marang. She was grown. She was not that 15 year old anymore.

Marang sucked in a deep breath.

Marang:I came to see you. Not for you but for me. I have been harboring this secret hate. I hated you so much for ruining my life, for deciding I was the perfect candidate to pay your debts. You sat

comfortably while I was sodomized. I was a child. Yes I was slow because I have a disorder that went years without being diagnosed but I didn't deserve that.

She faced the way to hold back her tears. She looked back at her aunt who was looking down.

Marang:Fucking face me the way you used to when you looked down on me or when you didn't want people to know what happened. Fucking face me!(half screaming with tears in her eyes)

Lebo looked at her and saw the pain marred on her face. She hurt this child and she had no valid excuse to give her.

Marang:What did I do? All I've ever been was kind and respectful. What did I do?

Lebo:Nothing.

Her voice was low and Marang shook her head with tears in her eyes.



Marang:I wake up at night sometimes, thinking that they are after me. That they are going to finish me off. I am not okay anymore. I haven't been okay for years because of what you did. What they did. Yes I blame you because if it was not for you those men would have not known of my existence. Every bad thing that is happening in my life is all your fucking fault! I hate you so damn much I wish I could kill you(crying)

She stopped talking and placed her head on the table sobbing. She needed to get this off her chest so badly. She quorted down and looked up. Lebo was helpless. She honestly had nothing to say for herself.

Marang wiped her tears with her hands.

Marang:My innocence was taken away from me. You were supposed to protect me but blood isn't always thicker than water is it? Blood is evil and looks out for it's own(sniffing)Blood is envious of their own and likes to fulfil it's own agenda without giving a damn about what happens to the rest. It's a fuck

them all kind of world.(nodding)

Lebo:I'm sorry..

Marang laughed.

Marang:Sorry never takes away the memories. It will never make me okay. It won't take away the nightmares or the fear I have of men right now. Sorry never cuts it the real world anymore. Not in my books anyway. Sorry is useless. Sorry is a word that is used by people who hurt you willingly with no valid reason and naive fools agree. Sorry is not it. Sorry is not okay. I don't want your sorry..

Lebo closed her eyes as a tear fell. She broke this child. She wasn't the sweet Marang anymore and she broke her.

Marang:I just came here to get this off my chest. I hate you so damn much and I wish for karma to get you on my behalf but(a small laugh)I have to move on from this. I am letting you go. You are a part of my past I badly want to bury.(sucking in a deep breath)I am choosing to let you go and forgive. Not

forget but forgive for my own sanity and peace.

Marang pushed the chair back and took out a wet wipe from her bag as she wiped her face. She breathed in and out and smiled at her aunt.

Marang:That stupid girl from 8 years ago? She is studying to be a doctor right now and she is still going to win. Over and over and over.

Lebo shamefully looked down, her throat was dry and she was swallowing heavy lumps of air that failed to pass through her esophagus.

Marang:You can call me Dr Colton. Have a nice life.

She stood up and she waited for the warden to take her out of this hellhole. She was never going to set foot here. Never ever in her life.

Lebo couldn't even lift her head to watch Marang walk out. Her sins felt heavy on her shoulders and at that exact moment she prayed for the clutches of

death to take her.

As soon as Marang was out of the prison, her hands shook so bad. That was the hardest thing she has ever done. She walked to the cab that she had waiting outside the place. She got inside and she closed her eyes.

Marang:Uhm(shaky voice)oh God!

She put her face in her hands trying to regain her self control again. This was so hard. The cab driver was silent as he let his client have her moment to herself. He was silent as if he wasn't even there.

After ten minutes Marang looked up and laughed tearfully.

Marang:Uhm,take me to the cemetery.

Cab Driver:Okay mam.

He started the car and Marang buckled up. She faced the window as the cab drove off.

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## THE GAME

#92

At the cemetery

Marang kneeled by the tombstone placing fresh flowers on top. At least her aunt had had the decency to have a tombstone placed a day after her grandmother's funeral. She looked at the tombstone as she read her granny's birth year and death year. She wanted to speak but words failed her. She held back tears. She wasn't going to cry. She wasn't going to cry but it hurt.

Marang: Mmaiye hi (shaky voice) it's me Marang

She wiped her nose and the tears fell involuntarily.

Marang: Oh God! I miss you..

She broke down crying on her grave with her face in her hands. She thought that since it was her first time here ever since the burial it wasn't going to hurt this much but she was wrong, pain sliced through her heart. Breaking her apart all over again. It felt like the day she couldn't wake her up, years ago.

She sobbed there all alone in the cemetery, crying while gasping for breath. It hurt so much she wished she was the one who died instead.

She didn't know how she stopped crying but she was silent while sniffing.

Marang:Uhm..So I'm married..

She wiped tears.

Marang:I'm not happy anymore..Mmaiye I'm not happy anymore(crying)I'm not..

She put her head between her knees as the tears rolled down again, she was going to get a headache

from all this crying.

Marang: You remember Joshua? The one who brought me home after a dog bit me? He is my husband. He is perfect. In every literal way but I'm not happy. I can't make him happy.

She sucked in a deep breath.

Marang: I love him so much, so deeply but he has put himself last to please me and it drains him. In turn draining me. I'm infertile. I don't know if it's temporary or permanent but I can't give my husband kids and he says he is alright but it is eating him. I don't want that..

She sighed.

Marang: Enough about my marriage. I hope you are doing well in the afterworld. Did you see my mom there? I hope you are happy and I'm going to heal from what aunt Lebo did. Not completely but I will. Mmaiye I love you so much and you were the only



parent I've ever known besides mom.

Marang looked down.

Marang:My parents in law are the best though. I married into a loving family. They loved me like their own before I started a relationship with their son, if I believed in fate I would've sworn you sent them my way but anyway..I'm sorry it took me so long to come here. I have no excuse just that I was so scared of breaking down again. I love you and I miss you here..

She went quiet.

Marang:I know you see everything but I lost a baby. When I was 18. I don't know if it was a boy or a girl but did you see my baby in the afterlife?(wiping a lone tear)Is he or she beautiful? Do they have Joshua's eyes and ugly ears?(tearful laugh)I-I just want to know-know(quivering lips)

She cried again, breaking down. She was failing dismally. It hurt so bad.

Marang:I'm fa-failing!

She rubbed her chest. She stopped crying and looked at the grave.

Marang:I miss you and I wish you were with me. Guiding me to be the best version of myself and being proud to see me graduate as a doctor. You always wanted me to be serious with school and I'm so close to graduating mmaiye(tearing up)Rest in eternal peace my love.

She got up and tried to remain stable. She closed her eyes feeling the heavy weight she had carried for years start to lift. She opened her eyes and looked at the tombstone once more with a little sad smile and walked away.

She was done but she had two more places to be.

She looked at her watch. She still had to give Phemelo's mother the baby clothes then she will check in her husband at work. He was going to ask about the red eyes but she was going to be honest with him. He deserved that much.

At Phemelo's parents

Ma Phem was in the kitchen cooking for the new mother when she heard the intercom. The maid looked at her and she sighed.

She walked to the speaker and pressed it.

Ma Phem:Who is it?

Marang:Hi, ke Marang.

She smiled.

Ma Phem:What a nice surprise, I didn't know you were in town, let me open.

The gate slid open and Marang stepped inside the yard with a little smile. She had already prepared her heart not to get jealous of the fact that Phemelo had a child. Something she had been yearning for.

She shooed away the dogs as she walked to the door.

Ma Phem opened the door.

Ma Phem:Hello..

Marang:Dumelang! I brought the gifts for the babies. Kana we thought it's one.

Ma Phem:Tell me about it. Come in. When did you arrive?

Marang stepped inside and placed the bags on the couch as she sat down.

Marang:Yesterday actually. I saw Phem's message.

Ma Phem:Two healthy boys.

Marang:Aaaw..congratulations.

Ma Phem:Thank you..

Marang smiled and brought her hands together.

Marang:By the way, there is something I want to talk about.

Ma Phem:I'm listening.

Marang looked at her fingers, specifically the diamond on her finger before she looked up at Ma Phem.

At the Coltons

Uncle:Joshua was rude.

Ma Josh:Obviously you want to ruin his marriage.

Aunt:you are encouraging such behavior?

Ma Josh:uhu, you want your precious Nadia to marry my son let alone carry his child? That will happen

over my dead body.

Ra Josh:I must say I am disappointed brother. Never have I stuck my nose in your affairs.

The old woman was asleep in the bedroom as they talked about this.

Ra Josh:Let my son start his own family at his own time. Can you please leave my house..

Aunt:you are chasing us out?

Ma Josh:yes Doreen akere o moloi wena..

Ra Josh:Sentle!

NA Josh:it's true...witches these ones. Let them get out. No one destroys my son's marriage like that. Le mo tsenya dibati..

The uncle and his wife stood up. They failed and the fact that a little boy like Joshua could insult them and not feel guilty was beyond them. The aunt was angry as they walked to the car. Let them keep their

barren leech. They will always see grandkids from other yards and remember that they had the option of having grandchildren and that Joshua will regret it when Nadia gets married and has a child. They should never even need their help. Ungrateful people.

At Phemelo's parents

Ma Phem: You do understand me right Marang?

Marang: Ee mma.

Ma Phem sighed.

Ma Phem: Are you sure?

Marang: Yes.

As soon as she said that yes, her heart became lead heavy. So heavy she couldn't breathe properly.

Ma Phem: I can gi-

Marang:I don't need time.

Ma Phem rubbed her back.

Ma Phem:Okay.

Marang stood up and smiled.

Marang:I have to go and thank you so much.

Ma Phem>Welcome.

She walked out with the heaviest heart and closed her eyes. She was determined that this was going to be the best week of her life.

She plastered a smile on her face and the gate slid open.

At the hospital

Joshua at on his desk going through their pictures.



The door opened and in walked the woman he was just thinking of. Her eyes were a little puffy.

Joshua:sweetness hey. What's up?

Marang smiled and placed her handbag on the table. She sat on his lap.

Marang:I went to my grandmother's grave..

Joshua:are you okay? How was it? Why didn't you tell me?

Marang:I needed to do it alone and it felt as if a heavy burden was lifted off my shoulders.

She kissed him. She was going to love him goodbye. A little more hurt on her won't kill her.

Joshua broke the kiss and laughed.

Joshua:Hungry now are we?

Marang:Very..

Joshua slipped his hand underneath her dress and

she kissed him. She took off his clothes, pretending that it's fine. She held his cheek, passionately kissing him. This was her storing the memories in her head. It wasn't his fault that she can't be what he needs. He was an angel and he needed one not her.

Joshua's shirt was undone and she placed her hands on his torso while he pushed up her denim dress, exposing her yellow thighs and her lace panties.

Joshua:Fuuuck!

Her hands moved to his fly and she undid the zippers pushing the pants and boxers down to reveal his magnificent length. He held her waist as she allowed him to slowly slide inside of her, releasing soft moans.

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A WEEK LATER

## THE GAME

#93

At Joshua's house

Marang smiled sadly looking at him. He was sleeping so peacefully, she didn't have the courage to face him but she really had to face him.

She got out of bed, leaving him there as she walked to where her handbag was. She took out the brown envelope and bit her lower lip. The heart she was breaking was her own, leaving the warmest bed she has ever known. She closed her eyes and held onto the dresser, lips quivering and tears threatening to roll down her cheeks. She heard the bed move and turned. Joshua was facing the other way and she quickly wiped away all her tears.

Joshua turned and opened his eyes. He touched the other side and he closed his eyes before he opened them again. Why wasn't she in bed?

He sat upright and looked at her.

Joshua:Hey sweetness what's wrong? It's still like(looking at the clock)5 in the morning.

Marang put the envelope away. He frowned and got out of bed.

Joshua:What's that?

Marang:Uhm..nothing.

Joshua just ignored that and walked to her. She still had her hand in the bag.

Joshua:Let me see, it seems like it's important.

Marang:It's nothing..

Joshua:And we don't hide things from each other. Let the bag go Marang.

Marang:Joshua..

Joshua:I was not debating.

Marang let go of the bag and he took the the envelope. He opened it and took out the papers inside. His eyes scanned the document and he shook his head silently reading the front cover. He pages through the document and looked at the tiny human being in front of him. Words failed to form in his mouth as he tried to process the logic behind it all. Why? What was the reason?

He looked at her again and she wasn't going to deceive him with tears.

Joshua:wow!

Marang:Jos-

Joshua:Shut the fuck up Marang!

He has never used that tone on her. Even years ago when she initiated sexual intercourse while she was underage, he has never used that tone on her. Tears blurred her vision and she used her fists to rub her

eyes.

He looked at the papers in his hands.

Joshua: You want to divorce me? Marang nna?

Marang: You deserve better.

Joshua: And who the hell are you to know what I deserve and don't deserve?

Marang: Joshua calm down and hear me out.

Joshua: Marang o ska batla go ntena.. (Marang don't make me angry)

Marang moved away from him. He was scaring her now.

Marang: I'm not..

Joshua: Marang ema pele, tla kwano.. (wait, come here)

She shook her head with tears rolling down. He was

seething and she was scared he might lay his hands on her, she has never seen him reach that level of anger.

Joshua:Marang!!

Marang:Ee rra!

She moved closer to him with a beating heart.

Joshua:Sutlha malele ao tla ga o ntena...(wipe those tears before you annoy me)

She quickly wiped her tears and sniffled.

Joshua:Now like a grown up start talking Marang..

She sniffled with tears near and he shot her a look that had her wiping the tears away again.

Joshua:Marang wee!

Marang:Rra?(shaky voice)

Joshua:Talk ke ise ke go buise ka mpama..

Her hands shook. She looked at the size of his hands and her lips quivered. He wasn't going to slap her. He was bluffing. Joshua would never. This was the love of her life she was talking to. He would never.

Marang:Babe you deserve b-b-better. I can't g-give you ki-kids an-

She stopped talking as he leaned back and shook his head.

Joshua:That sounds stupid Marang. Are you listening to yourself? One cannot merely divorce for that sole reason especially after being assured countless of times not to worry about it. Did I not assure you time and time again that if we are to have kids it's going to happen on it's own time.

Marang:you did.

Joshua:and then?

Marang:You de-deserve better.

Joshua shook his head.



Marang:you want to throw a whole 3 and half years of marriage down the drain? 6 years of our relationship down the drain for that sole reason? When you are looking at me, do you see fool written in capital letters?

She shook her head.

Joshua:Exactly. Start talking woman.

Marang:that is the reason, I swear.

Joshua:And I'm not a fool Marang. I love you but I am not stupid.

She wiped more tears.

Joshua:Who is he?

Marang:there is no one...

He chuckled.

Joshua:Marang?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:I'm going to ask this once and only once.  
Who is the fool you're planning to divorce me for?

He stood up and she backed away.

Marang:N-no on-

Before she could finish her sentence a hot slap landed on her cheek and she bit her lower lip, she tasted the metallic taste of blood as she bit her lip. It stung so bad and he had a big hand.

Joshua:Who is he?

Marang:No-

Then another one on her cheek. He actually slapped her. Not once but twice.

Marang:I swear th-there is no one Joshua. I swear(crying)I swear on my mother and grandmother's grave. I s-swear...

She used her hands to hide her face while crying and

Joshua stepped back. He watched her cry before it dawned on him that he actually laid his hands on his wife. The one thing he swore he would never do. On any woman for that matter.

Joshua:Marang(walking to her)

She moved back still keeping her hands over her face and he stopped in his tracks.

Joshua:Fuuuck! Sweetness I-

She sat down in the floor. He hit her. Joshua, the sweetest man on this planet hit her.

Joshua rubbed his hands over his face. He didn't mean to hit her, his emotions got the best of him. He would never hurt her, as stupid as her thinking was at times.

He kneeled besides her.

Joshua:Baby I'm sorry..

Marang still couldn't believe he slapped her. She moved back and when he got closer she half screamed and he moved back.

Joshua:Marang? Sweetness I-I didn't m-

Marang shook her head. Maybe he showed his true colors this early. Maybe it was a good thing she now knew he hit women.

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## THE GAME

#94

At Joshua's house

He sat by the corner of the bed watching her. God knows he never meant to hurt her. He could've walked away for fresh air like she always does during fights and come back more calmer, with his mind clear. He knew she would never cheat, she just thought with like a child at times but cheating was something she wouldn't do. What possessed him to think that and even slap her.

Joshua:Fuck!(under his breath)

Marang lifted up her head and sighed with swollen eyes. She touched her cheek and it was swollen and

she was sure it was red too. Joshua looked at her and could see the double fingerprints on her cheek. His throat dried up. He did that to her. She had such translucent skin that it wouldn't take much for one to put two and two together to come up with four.

Marang stood up and picked the divorce papers. She tore them apart and walked out of the bedroom, heading to the bathroom. She locked herself up in there and looked at her reflection in the mirror. Tears made their way to her eyes and she held onto the sink. Maybe it was all her fault, she ruined everything. Maybe he didn't hit women and she was the first because she was annoying and all the things he didn't deserve. She just brought out the worst in him. She should pack her bags and go.

The distance might do them good and maybe with a clear mind she will see if she really wants a divorce.

She got out of the bathroom and he stood up.

Joshua: Babe I'm sorry. I don't know what got ov-

Marang: I'm the one who is sorry. I wanted to set you free because you deserve better, you love me yes and I love you but I can't give you what you need. You put me first above everything (holding back tears) you neglect yourself for me and you deserve someone who does the same. Who is willing to give you the world and the planets. I'm sorry I brought you down to your lowest that you had to hit me. It's all on me and it's not your fault that I can't be what you need Joshua. I would never cheat on you and if I gave you the impression that I did that, ke kopa maitshwarelo. It was not my intention. I know you are going to say it's okay about the kids issue but it's not. A week ago you were fighting with your family over a mere orphan. Joshua, your family genuinely wants the best for you and if Nadia the one you talked about over the phone can give you kids to be happy then so be it Joshua. I was not going to be that selfish and say no for you to not have another child. The reason I want to let you go is if we were to consider surrogacy, I was (swallowing) going to be

jealous. Pregnancy is a phase that brings two people together and imagine watching your husband fall in love with a surrogate, someone you both hired to carry your child.

She wiped her tears.

Marang:It was going to break me into tiny pieces and I was going to go crazy. Love drives people insane, you know that? It makes people do the unthinkable and I'm sorry I hurt you. I am so sorry that I failed to talk about it and resorted to divorce papers instead. I was going to be fine knowing that I let you go so you can fall in love with someone new and I would be buried in the past. Forgotten because my love I know that you love fiercely and with your all. I knew that the next woman who was going to be your wife would get the world and you would never look twice up at any woman. And you would be more happier with kids running around and completing your family. I'm still 22 and I ran all the tests but there is nothing wrong with me. I just accepted that I will never carry a child and it's okay I guess.



She wiped her tears and sucked in a deep breath.

Marang:the last few years you have loved me and I know how it feels to be loved and you taught me the definition of love my love. I seem immature and that's okay, I guess. With time I will be okay but with all that has been happening, space would do us a world of good.

She walked to him and hugged him.

Marang:I still love you, so much but I need to think and if it will be about the money to your family, I will send in my monthly student allowance and try to find a job as a waitress or something to repay you back for everything. You can stop sending the monthly allowance. There is no need

Joshua bit his lower lip. She said a mouthful and it was going to take a while to process that.

Marang:I hope we are still on good terms. Just three months to think this through.

He sighed and nodded. It will be December by then.

Marang broke the hug and sighed rubbing her cheek. The guilt washed over Joshua and she saw that.

Marang:It is okay. It's not your fault.

She walked to the wardrobe and took out her suitcase. She wasn't sure if she was going to find a flight that will be leaving Botswana at the moment. She wasn't about to go say bye to her in-laws with a bruised cheek. She would be implicating Joshua and that would put him in trouble with his parents, she didn't want that.

Joshua:I'm basically letting you go?

Marang closed her eyes and nodded.

He sighed and rubbed his face. This was breaking him piece by piece. How was I possible to love

someone that much even when they break your heart, they are all you want? He chuckled as he remembered the time she made him promise to just want her even when she breaks his heart. Wasn't what she doing meant to make the love less strong and make it easy for someone to move on?

He just headed to the bathroom and got under the shower. Marang sat on the floor and rubbed her chest. What she was suggesting was insane. She was actua making it easy for him to move on and be happy without her. She loved him that much to suggest something that crazy.

At the Coltons

Seeletso greeted everyone with a smile as she sat down.

Ma Josh:Someone is in a happy mood.

Seeletso:It is a good day mother.

Ma Josh:Do tell..

Seeletso flipped her hair.

Seeletso:There is nothing to tell mama. The food looks lovely.

Ma Josh:This is not the early 1800s Letso.

Seeletso:oh whatever are you talking about mama? The weather looks perfect, one could take a walk.

She smiled as she poured tea.

Seeletso:but not without an escort.

Her mother laughed hitting her with the serviette and Seeletso laughed.

Seeletso:I mean those days, in present day London. Young maidens had to be of age to be debutantes.

Ma Josh:This is Botswana. You guys went to bogwera and bojale.

Seeletso:mama batho..

Her mother laughed and the two relaxed drinking tea.

At Joshua's house

Marang was done packing and she had already taken a bath. She wore her scarf and a beanie. It didn't show and that was good, she checked her traveling documents and they were okay.

Joshua: You are done?

Marang: Yeah.

He picked her bag and she picked her handbag following him to the car. He put it at the back and she locked the house door before she walked to the car. She sat down and said a short prayer.

He got in the car and started the car. She buckled up and leaned back.

## At Francistown Airport

Joshua parked the car and looked at her. He tilted her chin and examined her cheek. She should've put some ice to reduce the swelling. The way she didn't think annoyed him and to think that she was going to become a doctor but she thought like a headless chicken at times.

Joshua: You should have put some ice.

Marang: It will be okay..

Joshua: You think like a chicken Marang.

Marang: Gee thanks..

Joshua sighed and rubbed her lower lip. She was still the girl he fell in love with in all her childishness, immaturity and brainless self. Her logic only made sense to her alone and maybe that was a bit of the ADHD speaking that was always going to be a part of her.

Joshua: I love you.

Marang: Love you too. I need to go..

Joshua:Marang.

Marang:Joshua..

He sighed and his hand moved to her neck before he rubbed her cheek. She flinched a bit.

Joshua:I'm sorry.

Marang:It's okay, I'm sure it will be okay tomorrow.

They got out of the car and they walked inside the airport with her behind him. There was a flight out of the country. It will land South Africa and she was going to take it from there.

Joshua:Call me when you arrive at the checkpoints.

Marang:Okay. Bye..

She waved and he waved back. He watched the tiny human being, as he stood by the platform watching her go. It was like no other pain he has ever known. Three months it was.

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THREE MONTHS LATER



## THE GAME

#95

At Marang's apartment

Marang took out the unnecessary things that she was going to sell. So far so good with repaying Joshua his money. She swallowed her spit. It always felt like she was close to vomiting but she had to push it back. She was either at her part time waitressing job or doing her rounds at the teaching hospital.

She called Gabby who was acting like a drama queen.

Marang: Gabby I'm done.

Gabby: Congratulations.

Marang: I need to sell these before I go back to

Botswana for Christmas.

Gabby:and here I thought your dark chocolate was visiting.

Marang:Not during Christmas Gabby darling.

Gabby:Let me sell them for you.

Marang:You are a lifesaver...

She rubbed her chest.

Gabby:what's up?

Marang:I think heartburn.

Gabby:Poor thing.

Marang:I will be fine. I think I have Gavascon nearby.

She walked to the kitchen and took out the bottle. She shook it and poured it on the lid before she drunk it. Her phone rang and she answered it immediately

Marang:Hello.

Joshua:Hi.

Marang:Hi. I will be there in two days, just telling you in advance since you hate surprises.

Joshua:You scared me that time.

Marang:I know and I'm sorry.

Joshua:Are you eating?

Marang:I eat, I have a very healthy diet Mr Colton thank you very much.

Joshua:Marang I still hate that you send almost all of your allowance. You need it and don't have to pay me back.

Marang:Let me do things my way.

He sighed.

Joshua:Okay.

Marang:are you okay?

Joshua:Why wouldn't I be?

Marang sighed.

Marang:I have a feeling you are not.

Joshua:I am fine Marang.

She nodded, he was closed off these days but she caused all that.

Marang:okay. Bye.

She hung up and looked around. She checked her watch. She had to see her therapist again and the doctor for her her regular ADHD dosage and checkups. Apparently for the last few months she had been getting the wrong dosage of medication that somehow affected her hormones and things were kind of crazy with her system. She changed doctors since she wasn't treating herself. Her doctor at home was Joshua but she didn't live with him so it was hard to travel continents for a mere checkup. Her new doctor had suggested therapy again. She was now accepting that she was always going to be in therapy in order to deal with things. Her life was just crazy.

At the building site

Joshua looked around. He was happy with the progress of the house. The last time she was here, he didn't have time to tell her that he bought the plot and had started building already. They were just always in bed doing nothing more but sexing like rabbits.

He knows she knows that he was distant even when she told him about her changing doctors and even giving her new doctor's numbers since he was her next of kin on her documents. Marang was annoying sometimes and needed to think like an adult. Well that was what he thought until he talked to her new doctor. Apparently her last doctor had her dosages all wrong and he knew that if the dosages were wrong then it messed up with her head. He just got updates directly from the doctor not Marang. How can she take wrong dosages when she was a doctor

in training? She still thought like a headless chicken.

Joshua: So far so good guys.

They nodded as some mixed the concrete. He walked away and made his way to the car. There was the annual family get together and he wasn't sure if he was going to come if they were going to ask about grandchildren at the function. Marang was coming and imagine talking about that annoying topic again. It was going to take them ten steps back.

At the clinic

Marang went through her usual round of tests. Even though she hated the needles, it was necessary for the doctor to do her job.

Doctor: So you have to wait a few hours for the results to be back but so long, tell me how you've been.

Marang: Lighter and happier. Not happy happy but

better.

Doctor: The therapy sessions okay?

Marang: They are okay. I just hate that I will be doing therapy all my life, it kind of sucks that I'm not normal.

Doctor: You are perfectly normal Mrs Colton.

Marang laughed.

Marang: I'm also a doctor in training.

Doctor: The only doctor in the room at the moment is me and you are the patient.

Marang leaned back on the chair and smiled. She removed her shoes and walked to the couch and sat cross legged talking to her doctor. It was always nice talking to the lady. She was nice and listened to her. She behaved like her therapist sometimes. What she was thinking wasn't always crazy just that she saw things from another perspective that people failed to see in and they end up thinking her ideas or

thoughts were crazy.

She knew Joshua thought she thought like a crazy person but she knew she wasn't. She will work on her marriage once she lands. She was the one who ruined a perfectly good thing with her unique thoughts.

At the hospital

Seeletso read the note off the flowers. It has been a solid three months and Jaden was still sweet like the very first day. This man was one in a million. A whole 11 outta 10. He is the type of nigga Doja Cat was talking about in Streets. The type she would definitely marry and keep him merry. She smiled and smelled the roses with a huge ass smile.

Joshua passed by and he laughed.

Joshua:we should meet mr flowers don't you think



sis?

Seeletso: You want to scare him away?

Joshua: I promise, I'm nice. Ask my wife.

Seeletso: of course that short one would vouch for you,

Joshua: as she should..

Seeletso rolled her eyes as he walked away with his hands in his pockets. She wondered if Joshua and Marang ever fought. They were always all over each other when Marang was in town and it was difficult to separate the two of them. She prayed for a marriage like that.

At Bobonong

The aunt sat in the lounge talking to Nadia.

Aunt: I'm not sure if he is coming for the function.

Nadia: I wouldn't want to intrude.

Aunt:you won't. No one ever acknowledges that barren leech anyway.

Nadia:I think that is rude to call Joshua's wife that.

The aunt shrugged.

Aunt:She is a leech and barren. You make a better bride for Joshua. Plus she is damaged goods. Maybe he is with her because no one would want that.

Nadia pretended to try and not acknowledge what the aunt was saying but the more she thought about being Joshua's wife, the idea sounded more alluring and appealing.

Nadia:I will come just because you asked me to.

Aunt:You are family too Nadia.

Nadia:Mhm..

Aunt:It is next week. Not that far plus you are well mannered and if Joshua was with you, he wouldn't disrespect his elders. Ever since he met that girl he lost all his manners and the fact that his parents

support that is absurd.

Nadia:Yoh!

Aunt:You can say that again.

Nadia stood up and walked to the kitchen where she poured juice in a glass for the aunt. Ma Colton was fast asleep. The poor old woman was so lonely with no great grandchildren to keep her company. It was such a pity to see.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo looked at her boys as she gave one of them her hand to play with. She held the phone with the other one.

Phemelo:Marang you should see them tlhemma..wa re what happened?

Marang:airy I was just stupid but I will talk to mama about it..I saw the pictures. Wena and Theo made

beautiful children.

Phemelo:I'm sure you and Josh will..

Marang sighed as her doctor went through some patient files. She was waiting for her results.

Marang:Phem?

Phemelo:Yes?

Marang:I am infertile. I can't have kids.

Phemelo:Oh God!I 'm sorry, I must sound so insensitive talking about kids and I ha-oh God!

Marang:It is okay, you didn't know. I lost my first child at 18 and I haven't had any kids ever since.

Phemelo:I'm so sorry Marang. I didn't know.

Themma you will forgive me for being so insensitive over the years.

Marang:I think I'm slowly coming to terms with that fact and Joshua says it's okay if we don't have kids, that was where my stupidity came in but yah. I can't have kids. Maybe we might adopt after I finish

school.

Phemelo:Rangz?

Marang:Ma?

Phemelo:You are such a strong person, whatever that happens I'm here for you. Love and light.

Marang smiled.

Marang:thank you but it happens. Sometimes some women are not destined to be mothers and I'm one of those women.

Phemelo:Whichever way in which God decides to bless you even if it's through adoption you will make a great mother.

Marang laughed.

Marang:Not now. There is more to life than having kids, I need to be okay mentally. I don't think they will allow me to adopt when I'm not okay mentally.

Phemelo:I love you Rangz.

She giggled.

Marang:I love you more. I will be landing Francistown and I'm going to spend time with my godbabies. To believe I have never seen them in person. Mxm..aren't they loud?

Phemelo:Kids are exhausting.

Marang:aw man. You should let me babysit too.

Phemelo:Yes so the parents can have alone time.

Marang gagged.

Marang:the kids are still too young to have siblings. Behave guys.

Phemelo:Fotshek!

Marang:Byee!

She hung up with a smile and she went to gallery. She went to the album that only had her husband's pictures. She looked at her ring and smiled.

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## THE GAME

#96

At the clinic

It had been hours and she looked at her doctor.

Marang:Doc...

Doctor:Let me go check on them. Stay put.

Marang:okay.

The doctor walked out and she closed her eyes rubbing her heart. This heartburn was getting out of control and it was so annoying. The doctor walked inside the office minutes later with an envelope.

Doctor:I have your results Mrs Colton.

She stood up from the couch and sat on the chair. It wasn't something she didn't know.

Marang:Okay, hit me with it.

The doctor opened the envelope and went through some of the results with. She understood doctor terminology so there was no need to explain it to her.

Doctor:Wait a minute, the blood works say you have high HCG levels.

Marang:HCG?

Doctor:As in the ho-

Marang:The hormone that only a pregnant woman can have at such a high rate(slowly) that cannot be.

The doctor flipped that paper and silently read the results.

Doctor:Mrs Colton?

Marang:Hmm?



Doctor:The results I have here say you are pregnant.

Marang:Pregnant? Me? That must be wrong. I-I have been failing to fall pregnant. I can't be pregnant and my husband doesn't live with me. I haven't seen him in three months.

She said slowly. There must be some mistake somehow. They mixed her blood work with another person's blood work.

Doctor:You are a doctor yourself, how have you been feeling?

Marang:Uhm..some heart burn and being nauseous but I didn't think much about it.

Doctor:There is only one way to find out.

Marang:which way?

That was the shock talking. The doctor could tell that she couldn't actually believe it herself. Marang touched her little pot belly. So it wasn't just a normal potbelly? She didn't want to believe it.

Doctor:A sonogram.

Marang:Oh, a sonogram.

The doctor stood up and walked to the bed where she switched on the machine. Marang stood up and walked to the bed. The doctor helped her climb the bed and she lay down.

She handed her the jelly and Marang applied it on herself. She was finding this hard to believe. She sighed and waited for the cold wand to be placed over her tummy. The doctor placed the wand over her tummy and she immediately heard one of the strongest heartbeats ever. That wasn't normal at 3 months and her tummy wasn't flat.

Doctor:do you normally have a flat tummy?

Marang:Yes..

Doctor:You can hear that heartbeat right?

Marang:yes..

She looked at the screen, trying to make out the shape. So she was pregnant like she had a baby in her tummy? She found it hard to believe.

Marang:that strong and loud heartbeat isn't normal at..

Doctor:You're 3 months and a few days pregnant. I think five if not four days.

Marang:okay(softly)

She closed her eyes.

Doctor:In the scan I can see two..no wait three...

Marang wasn't even listening. Her mind was not even here.

The doctor frowned. She removed the wand and placed it on her tummy again. She looked at the scan.

Doctor:Wow! Mrs Colton?

She opened her eyes.

Doctor:I see four.

Marang:Four?

Doctor:Yes. Four foetus..

She finally removed the wand and looked at a distant Marang. All Marang oils think about was what if he was not going to believe he made her pregnant? She closed her eyes remembering those two slaps she got in the day she left. It was her fault too, everything was her fault and he found someone better like she hoped he will that was why he was being distant. She was going to soldier it out if that was the case.

Doctor:This changes everything. Your ADHD prescription. And carrying multiple children on it's own is a risk mam, anything can go wrong regardless of the fact that you passed the first trimester.

Marang:I know..

The doctor sat there talking and for the first time in so many years Marang wasn't paying attention.

At Joshua's house

He went through his clothes looking for his favorite t-shirt but he couldn't find it. He looked around the room and sat down. This bedroom had different memories now, ones he wanted so badly to forget.

It still ate him up that he slapped his wife and she said it was okay, that it was all her fault. She didn't even report him and placed the blame all on herself.

She wasn't supposed to do that. He sighed and looked at his phone. He thought of calling her but he changed his mind and resorted to sitting in the silence.

His phone rang and he groaned. He picked it up and it was her doctor.

Joshua:Dr Colton speaking.

Doctor:Hi Mr Colton, I just ran a few tests on your wife.

Joshua nodded. It was standard procedure.

Doctor:After we got the results we found an interesting development.

Joshua:Okay.

The doctor went on to explain what they found out and Joshua's jaw was slackened. It was going to take time to process but his wife was what?

He punched the air in elation.

Joshua:Thank you for notifying me. Thank you,

Doctor:of course sir.

The doctor hung up. Joshua stared at the blank

phone screen for a while. How was she? Fuck was she processing the news with no tears in her eyes? Was she eating right? Fuuuck? He was going to become a dad.

Tears filled his eyes as he fell to his knees. He didn't deserve all of this but he was still blessed.

Joshua:oh God!

More tears filled his eyes, so he had slapped his pregnant wife. He covered his face. He wasn't that man. God he hoped he wasn't that man.

At Bobonong

The aunt gave Nadia Joshua's phone number. Maybe they might get along who knows.

Nadia:I have to go, it's getting late.

Aunt:Okay.

Nadia walked out and she looked at Joshua's number. Was she going to be a home wrecker? Well she wasn't a home wrecker if the people were already having problems in their marriage.

She assured herself she wasn't as she opened the gate. She will call him late at night, most conversations flow nicely at night.

At Marang's apartment

Marang drank her Gaviscon before she sat down on the couch. Gabby had left her alone and she knew her husband was going to be distant if she calls him. She sighed and rubbed her tummy. She didn't want to get excited only to lose the kids but it was slowly sinking in and she screamed.

Marang: So there are four of you in there?

Cooooool(half screaming)



She breathed in and out.

Marang:La re le four?1, 2, 3, 4...I'm so tiny for all of you but we will see how it goes neh. Can you hear me guys?

She got up from the couch and she wanted to jump but held herself. Risks. Multiple pregnancies had risks and she should be careful. She walked to the bedroom and took out all her baby books and she removed her clothes. She was start naked as she walked to the full length mirror to look at herself.

Marang:So I'm going to have a belly and feel kicks?  
(Getting teary)This is wow!

She turned around and looked at her butt. She turned to look at her belly again. She never saw the signs. She moved from the mirror and found one of Josh's favorite t-shirts and wore it. Of course she stole it, he loves this t-shirt. Should she FaceTime him? He

won't get angry at her will he?

She picked her books and walked to the lounge. She wasn't going to pass her ADHD to one them. She just hoped so because she just wanted the kids to live a normal life. Normal in every sense of the word.

She opened the first book on first time pregnancies. She got her glasses from the table and got busy reading.

An hour later, her phone rang and she looked at the caller ID. He was FaceTiming her.

She answered the call immediately.

Marang:Hiiiiii!

He chuckled seeing the gleam on her tiny face. She was the one carrying four human beings? She was

wearing the t-shirt he had been looking for too. She stole it.

Joshua:Hey sweetness.

Marang smiled. When was the last time he called her sweetness? She couldn't remember.

Marang:Hi again.

Joshua:How are you?

Marang sat cross legged and positioned the phone.

Marang:Good(grinning)I'm studying.

She pushed her glasses back and showed him the book she was reading,

Marang:See? I was just reading this book.

Joshua:Did you eat love?

Marang bit her lip and looked towards the kitchen. She completely forgot about food.

Marang:Not yet. I will make something to eat. I

promise.

Joshua:You will fall asleep while reading..

Marang:I won't.

Joshua:I know you..

Marang sucked in a deep breath.

Marang:Josh there is something, I need to tell you. Promise me you won't get angry. I swear I have not been cheating on you. On my mother's grave, you can ask Gabby too and the landlord and the neighbors.

Joshua swallowed something heavy, she thought he was going to get angry and accuse her of cheating on him. He didn't want to be that man that she had to prove loyalty to when they both knew she did nothing wrong.

Joshua:It's okay. You can talk to me..

Marang stood up and walked to the bedroom where she searched her bag for that scan. She came back minutes later holding it and held the scan.

Marang:I'm pregnant. Baby we're expecting babies.

She turned the scan and he could hear the glee in her small voice.

Marang:It says I'm three months and five days pregnant with quads. Mmh..

She looked at the screen.

Marang:You are not happy? I did something wrong?

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## THE GAME

#97

At Marang's apartment

Marang looked at him. He wasn't happy. Did he think she was lying and fell pregnant by another man?

Marang: Joshua I'm not lying, I-I wasn't the one who did the scan. My doctor did and you can call her and ask her. You have her number. Say something.

She finally said with tears gleaming in her eyes and Joshua couldn't look at her. What had he done? Making her have to assure him that she wasn't cheating. She was not the cheating type and that time it was just a moment of madness. He loved her so much and she was scared of his reaction. She was scared that he might react with violence hence her wanting to assure him she wasn't doing anything.

Joshua:Babe?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:I'll book the first flight out of the country okay. I'm excited about this phase in our lives. I really am but we need to iron out a few issues first my love.

Marang:Okay.

Joshua:Don't stress, eat something and sleep. I'll be there before you know it.

Marang:I was supposed to come there, I already bought the plane ticket.

Joshua:They will refund you.

Marang:okay.

Joshua:I love you sweetness okay?

She nodded taking off the glasses.

Joshua:Eat then sleep okay my love?

She nodded again.

Joshua:Bye.

Marang:Bye.

The screen went dark and she rubbed her eyes. She looked at the blank screen before standing up and heading to the kitchen to eat.

At Joshua's house

He rubbed his face. It was his fault and the fact that Marang kept on saying that she wasn't cheating on him was too much for him. She was perfectly fine and he shouldn't have lost it on her 3 months ago.

He had kept it all bottled inside and it was eating him up. He got up from bed and changed into his casual clothes before he grabbed his car keys and phone.

At Nadia's parents



Nadia laid on her bed as she went through Joshua's Facebook profile. He didn't upload much unless his posts were only set to be seen by friends. She looked at his cover photo. He was with his wife with the snow under their feet. She wondered where that was, it seemed as if they traveled. She zoomed into the picture. She was so young, she had seen her once and she looked like she was fresh out of high school.

She sighed and went to her contacts. Should she call now? She bit her lower lip and turned on her side. She will call later. She was nervous and what if he turned her down? She will call later.

At the Coltons

Joshua pressed the intercom for them to open the gate. The gate slid open and he walked back to his

car. He drove inside the yard and the gate closed after he had parked the car.

He got out and walked to the door. He knocked on the door and Seeletso opened the door.

Seeletso:Mama the prodigal son is back.

Joshua:Wa ntlwaela wena!(laughing)

Seeletso moved from the door and Joshua walked in.

Joshua:Sara hey..

Sara:oh hi, I miss Marang, when is she coming?

Joshua:I have no idea..

Ma Josh:Hey..I made food ebile. She isn't coming over for the holidays? The last time I talked to her she said that she is coming..

Joshua:We had a change of plans, I'm the one going to Canada.

Sara:Can I go?

Joshua:Unfortunately not princess.

Sara looked at her parents.

Ra Josh:talk to your mother.

Ma Josh:Canada? Sara dilo tsa bana ba malapa a mangwe..

They laughed and Sara poured as they all walked to the dining room.

Ma Josh:It won't kill you to come eat everyday here.

Joshua:Mother, I'm an adult.

Ma Josh:Grown or not, you are still my child. Same goes for miss there who is always going out on dates.

Seeletso:Mom when the time is right, you will meet him.

Ra Josh:it's been three months.

Seeletso:Yes. I know.

Just that moment, Seeletso's phone rang and she looked at the caller Id.

Seeletso:Let me get this..(answering the phone)babe..

She walked away and Joshua laughed looking at his parents. They might have a wedding very soon.

Ra Joshua looked at his son. He looked like a man who had a lot on his mind. They sat down and his wife went to the kitchen to get the food. Sara stood up and followed her mother while Ra Josh looked at Joshua.

Ra Josh:You look like you have a lot on your mind.

Joshua:That's the primary reason why I'm here.

His father smiled.

Ra Josh:We'll talk about it over drinks.

Joshua:Alright.

The aroma reached the dining room. At that moment, Joshua missed wife's cooking. No offense to his mother but it was so nice, when his wife performed those wifely duties all day and at the end of the day still managed to satisfy him in bed. To think that sometimes after a hot session she would cuddle with him till he slept and would get out of bed to study a chapter or two before going back to bed.

Seeletso came back with a huge grin on her face.

Seeletso:Let me go help mom in the kitchen.

Joshua:She is in love.

Ra Josh:she lives in her own world.

He chuckled. Love was like that, you lived in your own little bubble with the hopes that everything would be that way forever. He smiled remembering his first date with the little Mrs. that was eons ago but she was angelic in that little white dress.

He was her first everything and he wouldn't trade her for anything, she didn't change but he changed. The fact that he put his hands on her was testament enough that he changed. He wanted to sigh. He was sure his father could tell that his mind was miles away.

The ladies walked back to the dining room and started setting the table. A home cooked meal today with his family and a talk with his father was what was on the agenda for the night.

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## THE GAME

#98

At the Coltons

Joshua: Thank you, the food was wonderful.

Ma Josh: You should eat here more often.

Joshua: I will try..

Ma Josh: Sara let's clear the table..

They started clearing the table and Ra Josh stood up heading to the kitchen. He took out a six pack of Savanna beer and walked to the dining room.

Ra Josh: We can talk outside. You might use a drink too..

Joshua grinned as they walked out and Ma Josh stuck her head out. They were spending quality time together, how cute.

Ra Joshua and Joshua sat down on the chairs as the stars and moon illuminated the night. With the street lights adding to the brightness.

Ra Joshua removed the plastic and took the first beer. Joshua took his and opened the bottle. He didn't keep a lot of alcohol around the house considering the fact that his wife doesn't drink and he also doesn't drink to get drunk but maybe this time he will.

He took a sip of the cold beer and sighed.

Joshua:I fcked up! Big time.

Ra Joshua quietly sipped his beer. Josh took another sip then another followed by another before he put the bottle down.

Joshua:Dad, I fcked up and I think I traumatized my baby..

Ra Joshua:I'm listening..



He covered his face.

Joshua: We had a fight on the day she left and I-  
(gulping down his bottle of beer) I overstepped the  
line and the issue is eating me up.

He went quiet as he opened another bottle of beer.  
This didn't taste like the Savanna he knew, it was  
stronger but as long as it was alcohol.

Joshua: Like always it centered around the baby  
issue and..sh-she had divorce papers drawn up.

His father frowned. They almost divorced?

Ra Joshua: If you guys have problems, as your  
parents we are always available to talk anytime to  
advise you guys. Before even entertaining the  
thought of divorce, we are here if you need advice.

Joshua: I don't why she saw di-I think I know why she

saw divorce as a better option. She overheard the conversation I had with uncle and Nadia being mentioned.

Ra Joshua:Your uncle always wants to ruin things, he was wrong for trying to butt into your marriage.

Joshua:So wrong..

He gulped the second bottle down before taking a deep breath.

Joshua:I always assure Marang each day that it's fine if we don't have kids. That it will happen on it's own time and she shouldn't put herself under pressure to conceive.

Ra Joshua:Rightly so, she is still young to be under pressure and she has medical school too.

Joshua:My point exactly(opening another bottle)

His father was on his first bottle and he watched his son drink, he had a lot on his shoulders. He was waiting for him to tell him where he messed up.

Joshua:Uh, where was I? The divorce papers. The issue took another turn and I accused her of cheating because why throw away a 6 year old relationship?

His throat dried up. He shouldn't have hit her.

Joshua:I knew to love would be to lose my mind but never have I thought to that extent. I love that woman with every fiber of my being and right now if she was to leave me, gosh I wouldn't know what to do with myself. It was a moment of madness..I-I hit her.

His father stopped drinking. Joshua what?

Joshua covered his face before he looked up. Regret twinkling in his eyes.

Joshua:I-I hit my ow-

An unexpected punch landed on his jaw and his head went back with the impact of the blow before

another one on his nose.

Ra Josh:I did not raise a woman beater. What the hell Joshua?

Joshua didn't bother rubbing his nose when he felt blood trickling from his nostrils.

Joshua:I deserve that and more, I didn't mean it a-  
Another punch on his other jaw and he almost fell off the chair. His old man threw a mean punch and he swore his jaw will be broken before this night ends.

Ra Joshua:If you want to fight, fight with a man. Never raise your hands on a woman. No matter the circumstances, she should've reported you to the police wa lala mo cell, we wouldn't stop her. Till this day, your mother does not know my hand, I have never even slapped her and never will.

Joshua finally used his arm to wipe his nose and he looked at his arm covered in blood.

Joshua:That's why she left without saying goodbye

3 months ago. She said it's her fault and it's not..fck!  
I hate myself for what I did.

Ra Joshua:as you should..at this very moment you  
disgust me.

Joshua closed his eyes before opening them again.  
His father looked at him shaking his head. He never  
expected that from him, he can do them all but to lay  
his hands on the woman he claims to love, it was so  
so low. Even for him. Too low.

Joshua:She is so scared of me, she is always scared  
I will respond with violence.

He could feel tears burn at the back of his eyes. He  
knew it was just two slaps but abuse always started  
somewhere. It would be two slaps today, a punch  
tomorrow and the next day kicks and he didn't want  
to be that man. He wasn't that man. He didn't want  
to be that man with a temper, that man whom his  
wife will always have to tell the kids not to anger  
because he would hit them or anything.

Joshua:I can't justify what I did. Bathong!

He lowered his head on the table.

Ra Joshua:In my household I will never condone violence Joshua. Even in my angriest moments, I have never raised my hand on your mother. Abuse always begins somewhere and it is a never ending cycle.

Joshua:I know. This has been eat-eating me up for the past 3 months and I want to make things right. I don't know how but I really have to.

Ra Joshua:Marang should have talked to us. I told you before you even proposed that Marang is young and bound to make mistakes but you don't use violence to get your point across. Violence is never an option. If she wanted a divorce, you could've sat her down and asked her why and then came to us. You made things worse and not only is she still in the marriage, she is scared and is always walking on eggshells. That's not a blissful union now is it? Where one partner is always scared and meekly

holds back so as to avoid that backlash from the other partner.

Joshua had nothing to say for himself.

Ra Joshua:Nothing is going to be normal from now onwards and it will take a lot..

Joshua:I can't lose her. I just can't..

He lifted his head and took the half full beer, gulping it down. That was when he could feel the alcohol kick in, numbing some of his senses.

Joshua:Everything was so good till I messed up, I don't know how to get her to forgive me..she blames herself and it's not her fault.

Ra Joshua:I'm disappointed in you...Nxla!

He was every bit disappointed in himself. He was going to Canada knowing he had to fix things with his wife.

He downed that bottle of Savanna and his father could tell he was already getting drunk. He was in no state to drive. They will finish this conversation in the morning. Joshua's phone rang and it was an unknown number. He hung up and opened another bottle. He started taking gulps from that one.

Ra Josh:You know where your room is.

He nodded as his father stood up and left him there. He needed to talk his wife. He used his arm to wipe the blood from his nose. He face timed her and it rang.

At Marang's apartment

Marang turned as her phone rang. She used the pillow to cover her head but it wouldn't stop. She needed some sleep.

Marang:Urg!



She removed the pillow and lit the bedside lamp before picking her phone. Josh was calling her. At this hour. She answered the phone and his face popped out on the screen.

Joshua:Hello my love.

She frowned. Was that a bruise? And blood.

Marang:What happened? Baby are you okay?

She sat upright.

Marang:Ng ng Babe?

He brought the bottle to his lips.

Joshua:I miss you, I can't wait to hold you in my arms.

Marang:I miss you too, why are you bruised? Who did that to you? Do I need to fight someone?

He laughed drinking his beer.

Joshua:No, you can't fight and I won't have you putting my children in danger.

Marang:Are you drunk?

Joshua:Me? Drunk? Never! Have you seen me drunk before?

Marang shook her head. He always drank moderately because he was always driving them to and from places.

Marang:What happened to your face?

He shrugged.

Joshua:I deserved it, you are beautiful by the way.

Marang:You are drunk, drink water and sleep. You'll call in the morning.

Joshua:I still want to tal-talk to you.

Marang sighed. He will eventually sleep.

He stood up and almost lost his balance. He held the

bottle as he walked inside the house. His mother and Seeletso were shocked to see his bruises and bleeding nose. He was on a call on top of that. Ma Josh looked at her husband who was glaring at Joshua.

Ma Josh:I thought you guys were talking.

Ra Josh:We were.

Joshua was too pre-occupied looking at the lady on the screen as she yawned. He closed his childhood bedroom door and sat on the bed.

Joshua:Forgive me.

Marang:For what?

Joshua:I fcking messed up baby and it's not your fault. None of I-it(slurring)is your fault.

Marang:Sleep..

He removed his shoes before he looked at the phone screen.

Joshua:I love you(sniffing)

Marang frowned.

Marang:Are you crying?

Joshua:I have this pain inside of me, my world is crumbling..I h-hurt you. The only person I swore in my life never to hurt..(a lone tear rolled down his cheek)

That brought tears to Marang's eyes and she looked I up biting her lower lip.

Joshua:I'm sorry and I deserve every kind of punishment, I know you'll never forget it and it is f-f-forever in you-your memory..I'm so sorry. On God I will never do it again.

Marang watched him break down on the phone screen and she wanted to hug him right now.

Joshua sniffed.

Joshua:I love you okay? You and my children mean

the world to me. If it was possible other people would have left the earth so only you and my babies remain.

She chuckled as he wiped his own tears.

Joshua:I swear they don't make Savanna the same these days.

Marang:how many bottles did you have?

Joshua:Just two..

Marang shook her head, two bottles cannot make someone this drunk.

Joshua:Baby girl?

Marang:Hhm?(yawning)

Joshua:I love you..

Marang:I love you too..

She stretched her body and her boob escaped the string silk nightdress.

Joshua:I miss your woman on top..

She laughed rubbing her eyes.

Marang:You are annoying tlherra..

Joshua:I miss my little person, how she rides me like a pornstar and takes this dck.

Marang shook her head. He needed to sleep.

Marang:Tlherra wa lapisa..

He laid down on bed and laughed. Now he had a boner and if she was here, he would be having drunk sex with her. No wonder he couldn't be productive when she was around, he always wanted to be buried inside her all the time, her little moans and the way she gyrated her hips. Fuck she was an A\* student in that department too.

Joshua:Baby when I-I-I-I get there fuck me..

Marang:Mxm!

Joshua:We are strengthening the kids.

Marang:Baby sleep. I want to sleep.

Joshua: before you sleep, touch yourself for me, I want to see the pink and the wetness, imagine it's me doing that to you...

She shook her head.

Marang: Sleep, I will do that when your head is clear and it's not the alcohol talking

She squeezed her legs. It was the alcohol talking on his side.

Joshua: Pretty please..

Marang: Joshua sleep or else you are not getting anything when you come here.

Joshua: Okay mam. I love you.

Marang: I love you.. Bye.

She hung up and sighed closing her eyes, a little yawn escaping her lips.

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## THE GAME

#99

The following morning

At the Coltons

Joshua woke up with one massive headache and he still had his clothes on. His face hurt, those punches from yesterday. He touched his jaw and it hurt like a little btch. He yawned and got out of bed. He needed to book his flight, ask for leave and start packing.

First he needed painkillers. Hungover and the pain from being roughed was heavy on him. He walked to the bathroom and looked at himself in the mirror. His father did a fine job of bruising his face, he couldn't even move his jaw.



Meanwhile in the house, Sara was the first to wake up. She walked to the kitchen to make breakfast for everyone. She usually did that on Saturday morning and it was more fun when Marang was around and she would help her around. She very much grew up with her around and she was her other sister that married her brother.

In the bedroom Joshua patted his face with a towel and walked out of the bedroom. He couldn't leave without talking to his father and his baby was sleeping, he disturbed her sleep and she needed all the rest she could get. He could still remember calling her, he wondered what nonsense did he spur out yesterday.

At Marang's apartment

Marang opened her eyes, she was so lazy today. She

didn't even want to get out of bed. She laid on her back and rubbed her tummy. She was really pregnant. A huge smile formed on her face as she looked at it. In a few weeks she will really be showing not this pot like belly. She closed her eyes, she missed her husband. Yesterday he really broke her heart, she has never seen him break down like that.

He was drunk but drunk people were really honest and he thought of her, called and apologized crying. Forget his bruises and the bleeding, he was so sincere. She sighed. Currently she missed his dck though, it would really slap right now.

Her hand went down and she pushed her panties down before lifting her night dress underneath the blankets. She flipped her bean and sighed. It wasn't the same. She stopped and turned to her side. She didn't want to get out of bed.

## At the Coltons

Ma Josh looked at Joshua, he looked worse than he was last night. She looked at her husband who sipped on his coffee. Ra Josh just cut into his pancake, it was so fluffy and moist.

Ra Josh:Sara great job.

Sara:Thanks dad. I saved some for Seeletso and Josh are you okay?

Joshua nodded. He deserved every punch and he wasn't going to cry about him not being okay. It needed more ice to slow down the swelling and he will be all good.

Ma Josh:What exactly happened last night?

Ra Josh:We talked. Right Joshua?

Joshua:Right.

His father shrugged,

Ra Josh:See? He will be okay.

Joshua nodded his head slowly as his mother

looked at both of them suspiciously. Joshua took a sip of the orange juice. His mother was going to add onto his already mounting guilt and he hated himself for what he did to his wife. He hoped that she was going to forgive him when he lands Canada.

After they were done eating, that was when Seeletso walked in.

Seeletso:Hi guys. What was for breakfast?

Sara:Pancakes, yours are in the kitchen.

Seeletso:Thank you.

Ma Joshua helped Sara with the dishes while Seeletso went to the kitchen. That left Joshua and his father alone in the dining room.

Ra Josh:What are you going to do from here on?

Joshua:Apologize first and get counseling, even if it just for a few weeks.

Ra Josh:This should never happen again.

Joshua:I swear, it will never. I hate myself for what I did.

Ra Joshua:I am embarrassed disgusted by what you did. I raised a man and a man does not lay his hands on a woman.

Joshua:Ee rra..

His shook his head.

Ra Joshua:you good?

Joshua:I'll be fine. I have to go and get ready. I booked a flight.

Ra Joshua:Do right by your wife.

Joshua:Ee rra. Thank you so much.

Ra Joshua:always here all the time.

He smiled before it disappeared. It hurt yoh.

Joshua:I'll be fine.

He stood up and said goodbye to his sisters and mother then his father before he left.

At Nadia's parents

Nadia was just finishing the laundry when she looked over at the neighbor's house. They were already getting started with the preparations for the family get together. She hoped Joshua was going to be here because it was just this coming week. She hasn't seen him and he always looked handsome.

He might've rejected her call because it was an unknown number and not everyone answers an unknown especially at night.

She sighed and walked to the house holding her laundry basket.

At Joshua's house

He placed a pack of eyes on his jaw as he grunted. He checked his call log from the night before and he had been too drunk to answer that unknown number but he will check later. It might have been someone important. He clicked on his wife's number and it rang for the first few seconds before she picked up. She was still in bed.

Joshua:Hey..

Marang:(with a little frown)it looks worse. What happened? Did you get into a fight?

Joshua:No love, how are you?

She yawned and placed her hand below her head as she held the phone with the other.

Marang:I'm lazy and don't want to get out of bed.

Joshua:Did you eat?

Marang:Ng ng.

Joshua:Eat sweetheart..

Marang:I'll order in..about yesterday..

Joshua kept the ice on his jaw.

Joshua:I'll be there by tomorrow and we will talk about it.

Marang:okay. Tomorrow what time? You'll come with food?

Joshua:I will try.

Marang:Thank you. Babe?

Joshua:yes..

Marang:I'm horny..

He laughed while wincing.

Joshua:I'm continents away.

Marang:I know(pouting)what time?

Joshua:I'm not sure but before nightfall.

Marang closed her eyes to count the hours.

Marang:Promise?



Joshua:I promise..

Marang:I'll be waiting. Don't forget your keys and don't forget to eat.

Joshua:I ate at your mother's place.

Marang:Good, what did she make out of the bruises? Wa re what happened? It looks so bad kana.

Joshua:I'll be fine babe. Just worry about the babies and I will worry about other things.

Marang smiled. She was pregnant and she kept forgetting that fact because she had given up on the prospect of ever having kids.

Joshua:Look at that little smile.

Marang:I can't wait b-but there are four babies in here, I-I what will happen during graduation? I-we will talk about it when you come here..

Joshua:Yes mam. I love you sweetness.

Marang:I love you and don't forget to eat and make sure your plane arrives on time.

Joshua:I will make sure, bye.

Marang:Bye.

She hung up and put her phone underneath the pillow. She took it out again and called Gabby.

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## THE GAME

#100

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo sat by the corner of the room as Motheo's father played with Motheo and Maano giving the two boys equal attention. It was the holidays already and she had a complete family. This man never missed an opportunity to bond with his children. One would say he was a natural father. He doted on his lookalikes.

Theo: Thank you and they have gained weight.

Phemelo: And I have to lose the baby fat. I look okay akere?

She asked him. Her face has had the most terrible breakout and the hair falling off post pregnancy was

the worst.

Theo:Babe your body has went through a lot to give us these two special human beings. Give yourself a break.

She sat down on the carpet and looked at her babies. School has been going on so well, this online thing wasn't as bad as it seemed and she got her work done whenever her boys were sleeping.

Phemelo:What if you find a better body? My boobs are a bit saggy and the belly fat. Bona.

She removed her bonnet. She didn't know why she wore it. There were patches of hair missing on her scalp and she hadn't gotten the time to completely cut off her hair.

Theo bent down and kissed her forehead.

Theo:It will grow back.

She sighed.

Theo:And I don't want anyone but you Phemelo. I only want you.

Phemelo:Okay.

He still chose her when she has one leg, her hair will grow and she will lose the fat and get her body back.

Phemelo:Give me Motheo..

Theo picked Motheo up and handed him to his mother. He was sucking on his bottle. The kids were healthy and he couldn't wait to have the babies move in with him, he did pay for their magadi. He wasn't expecting her mother to stay home since she was a working woman and his parents didn't leave here, so he can't expect his mother to be away from home for a long period of time.

Theo:Babe?

Phemelo:Yes..

Theo:You still have to complete the last six months of school and you know you can't leave with the kids.

Phemelo:I will miss them.

Theo:I wanted to live with them. Their nursery is ready in my house.

Phemelo:Okay. You work and here they can stay with my mother and we already have a helper here, I'm sure she won't mind looking after the kids with extra pay of course.

Theo:Babe, they are our kids and I want to live with them, not visit them or take them on weekends or any other arrangement.

Phemelo:So a total stranger will be staying with my kids while you are away?

Theo:Not a total stranger, I wanted to hire help. To live with me and the kids. We can start interviews and go with the one you approve of.

Phemelo:Theo they can still stay here. And they are used to being here, babies take a while to adjust to certain environments.

Theo:Phemelo we are not having a fight about me

staying with our children.

Phemelo:I am not fighting, I was just telling it like it is.

Theo sighed.

Theo:We will find a suitable nanny together, to put your mind at ease.

Phemelo:I'll think about but I still think the babies are okay staying with my parents.

Theo:Think about it.

Phemelo played with Motheo who gave her a gummy smile, she beamed. Motherhood wasn't a walk in the park but she was enjoying every single minute of the experience if she was totally honest with herself. She prayed her friend will enjoy motherhood one day even though she said she was infertile. Speaking of her friend, she said she was coming here for the holidays. She was the perfect godmother and knowing Marang's kind heart she was going to love her babies.

At Marang's apartment

Marang yawned as she got out of bed. Gabby said he will knock when he comes with the food. She rubbed her head and slipped out of the nightdress and wore tights and Joshua's t-shirt. He didn't know that when she missed him, she wore his scrubs during her rounds at the teaching hospital. They were big but they smelt of him and that was what was important.

Marang:I'm coming(shouting)don't break my door.

She slipped her feet into comfy sleepers and she walked out. Marang opened the door and the nice aroma of the food hit her.

Marang:You bought what I asked? It smells delicious.

Gabriel:you look horrible. Did you bath?

Marang:Iyoh! Please don't start. I will bath but later.

Gabriel:you don't look like a person who is traveling tomorrow.



He walked in and went to place the plastics in the kitchen. Marang followed her and opened the plastics.

Marang:He said he will come here.

Gabriel:yay! We get to see our husband!(clapping her hands)

Marang:no girlfriend, my husband..

Gabriel:Whatever! Did you eat breakfast?

Marang:I don't want breakfast..oh! Looks yummy.

She took out the food.

Marang:You are a sweetheart. Thank you Gabby!

Gabriel>Welcome and take a bath tuu!

Marang shrugged.

Marang:Let's not talk about that and let me enjoy my food.

She walked back to the couch and sat down to eat.

At Francistown Airport

Joshua winced once again. He will be fine in a week. He hoped and the stares he got from people.

He waited for his luggage to be checked before he pulled it and made his way to where the airplanes were. He took out his phone and sent Marang a message. She will appreciate it knowing he had already left.

At the Coltons

Ra Josh's phone beeped with a message from Joshua. He was just leaving. He must've taken the latest flight available. His phone rang and he looked at the caller Id. He sighed. He was in no mood to

answer his brother's call at the moment.

Ra Josh:Hello.

Uncle:Hello, we are making arrangements for the family reunion. Is everyone coming?

Ra Josh:Joshua and my daughter in law won't be around. I am not sure if Seeletso is coming too.

Uncle:Wow! Now the boy no longer attends family functions?

Ra Josh:He has a family of his own and if he wants to attend he will attend. Is that all? Have a good day.

Ra Josh hung up and the uncle looked at the phone. His little brother just hung up on him.

He looked at his wife.

Aunt:The way they stand for that barren leech, she must've went to witch doctors for them.

Uncle:He is not coming.

Aunt:Iyoh! Let them be. They will wait years and years for a grandchild and that will never happen.

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# THE GAME

#101

At Marang's apartment

Marang threw a pillow at Gabby laughing.

Marang: Thank you so much..

Gabriel: Welcome. You have enough food to last through the night.

Marang: Thank you!

She got up from the couch and went to hug him.

Marang: After my husband, I love you too.

Gabriel: A 'I love you' from our husband would be greatly appreciated.

Marang: Wena Gabby!

Gabriel:I have no idea what that first word means but I love you.

Marang laughed and broke the hug.

Gabriel:Let me go..

Marang:Okay and thank youuuuu!

Gabriel:No, thank you for being you and for your wonderful personality.

Gabby stood up and she got her bag.

Marang waved as Gabby walked out and closed the door. It was time for a shower then she would eat and sleep, wake up and catch up on some novel reading.

She got up and headed to the bedroom. She checked her phone and found a message from her husband. He was on a flight, well he better be here on time. She found a missed call from her best friend. Oh! She didn't tell her that she was no longer coming. Yikes!

She dialed Phemelo's number.

Phemelo:hey Rangz, how are you?

Marang:Tired as hell, I need to binge read novels and sleep.

Phemelo:Becoming a doctor is hectic..

Marang:You have no idea, I rarely rest but I need to rest. Like catch up on some sleep.

And get good dck. A small voice said in her head. Like he was coming, him in all his glory and masculinity. Yah neh!

Phemelo:Rangz are you there?

Marang:Uhm yes.. so there has been a change of plans.

Phemelo:I'm listening.

Marang:So thee husband said he is coming and I shouldn't be traveling. I don't know when I'll be there. I'm so sorry.

Phemelo:It's okay. You are married and you have to

listen to your husband.

Marang:True. Babes I will update you and say hi to my little munchkins.

Phemelo:Speaking about those munchkins, their father wants to live with them when I go to school.

Marang:Aw that's so cute mma. Wait I sense a but.

Phemelo:He works and they will be staying with a nanny, I would prefer that they stay with my parents because they are used to the environment there.

Marang:They will adjust. I don't know much about kids but he is their father and he paid magadi for the kids right?

Phemelo:He did.

Marang:You will see how it goes and if you are not happy, you can talk about it after trying it out. I don't think many men want to live with their little babies. It's a rare occurrence if we are being honest.

Phemelo:I have heard a lot of stories about maids and all that. What if he decides to sleep with the maid? Gape I'm no longer that girl. My hair is in



patches, my stomach is so ugly and my breasts  
mma..

Marang:pregnancy mntase. Rest and maybe once  
you go back to school you will work on it. I'm a  
doctor in training and maybe we can come up with a  
schedule to get your body back. For now don't stress.

Phemelo:Okay(sighing)I hope it's okay that I'm  
talking about the babies and all.

Marang:it is okay love.

Phemelo:It's always nice talking to you babes.

Marang:That is what friends are for. Literally.

Phemelo:Yes mam. Bye.

Marang:Bye love.

She hung up and rubbed her tummy.

Marang:apparently you guys hear me right?  
So(taking off her tights)your dad is coming. Babies,  
you see for you guys to exist right now we had lots  
of sex. Lots and lots of it and your tiny mother is

missing it. If I do have girls you guys will only date when you are done with university. Le ka tlwaela thata..

She laughed and took off the tee.

Marang:As I was saying, I also wanted you guys. Bathong I cried so please don't come having your father's ears. I am not happy with his ears. No offense but you are four and (frowning)when was the last time I drew? I need to draw as a hobby, I won't be moving very soon.

She wore her robe and walked to the bathroom where she opened the water. She extended her hand and waited for the water to be warmer. She got under the water as the warmth hit her skin, she closed her eyes. She will take another shower tomorrow.

At the Coltons

Seeletso answered Jaden's call in her gown.

Seeletso:wait you are outside?

Jaden:Yes mam.

Seeletso held the phone to her chest as she walked out of her room. She checked the coast and looked at her phone.

Seeletso:I should come out?

Jaden:Yes. I just want to see you.

Seeletso:it's late babe..

Jaden:please!

She looked around again and it was so quiet and peaceful.

Seeletso:fine! I'm on my way.

She wore her sleepers and pulled her pink gown

tying it tightly. She tip toed to the door and she slowly and softly turned the key.

She pressed the button and the gate slid open. Shit! The dogs.

She looked around hoping that no one heard her.

She opened the door and walked out of the house. The chilly breeze hit her skin and she walked across the grass.

When she was finally out of the yard she spotted his car and he opened the door. She got inside and closed the door. He kissed her lips softly with his hand on her thigh.

Jaden:Hey sweet thing.

Seeletso:Hey love..bathong it's late kana.

Jaden:I wanted to see you.

Seeletso:I'm beautiful aren't I?(laughing)

Jaden:I can't get enough of your pretty little face miss Colton.

Seeletso:Mxm!(laughing)

The two talked into the night, laughing and cracking jokes. Seeletso was pleasantly surprised that he brought snacks too.

By the time the clock hit 1am Seeletso was still talking and Jaden was looking at her lips.

Seeletso:Baby you are not listening, is there something wrong?

Jaden:Not at all. Keep talking love.

Seeletso shook her head and dipped her hand into the marshmallow packet. She ate one.

Seeletso:As I was saying...

Meanwhile in the house, her mother got out of bed. She walked out of the bedroom feeling the cool air.

They locked the door though, she double checked after Sara locked it.

She walked to the door and it was open, along with the gate. She walked out the door and she stood by the gate. She spotted a car right next to the gate. She looked closely and the person in the car was Seeletso.

She wanted to clap her hands but she was sure they didn't spot her so she walked to the house and closed the door. Locking it in the process before she went back to bed.

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## THE GAME

#102

At the Coltons

Seeletso looked at the time.

Seeletso:I have to go love, it's 2am in the morning.

Jaden:Okay.

He kissed her lips softly and she broke the kiss.

Seeletso:I love you and bye.

She blew kisses his way as she got out of the car. Jaden smiled and waited for her to get inside the yard. Seeletso pushed the gate to close it and he drove off. She pulled her gown close and looked to the door. She frowned. It was open when she left,

she didn't remember even closing the door. She walked to the door and held the lock to open it. It was locked. What the hell?

She moved away from the door and sighed pushing her hair backwards. She tried to open it again but it was still locked. She sucked in a deep breath and knocked on the door. Everyone was asleep and she did not want to wake up the whole house. Was Sara sleeping?

She took her phone out of her gown pocket and dialed Sara's number. It rang unanswered for a minute and she hung up. She called again and this time she answered.

Sara:Hello?(sleepily)

Seeletso:Hey sis, can you unlock the door for me?

Sara:okay(yawning)I'm coming.

Seeletso heard the sheets rustle and she breathed in



a sigh of relief. Who locked the door? Or worse did they see her? She was in deep trouble. Maybe her grandmother and father were right. She needed to move out of their house. Just like how Joshua did when he started working so he could do whatever he wanted in his house.

Sara walked to the door and unlocked it. She rubbed her eyes, why was Seeletso locked outside. It was 2am in the morning.

Seeletso:I owe you one.

Sara:I will call up on that favour(good morning)

She walked away and Seeletso walked inside. She locked the door and she quickly walked to her bedroom. She closed the door and sighed.

She needed to sleep now.

The following morning

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo held Motheo as she breast fed him while talking to the phone.

Phemelo:I thought about it and it's okay. I will talk to my parents.

Theo:The kids get to live with me?

Phemelo:Yes and yes. I will have to be there when you are interviewing the nannies to make sure they are good for the kids.

Theo:Thank you.

Phemelo:I will also talk to my parents about it.

Theo:Thank you baby, will you come over with the kids today?

Phemelo:I will. Maybe in the afternoon.

Theo:I love you.

Phemelo:I love you more.

She hung up and looked at Motheo who had his small hand on her breast looking at her.

Phemelo:Hey boy boy. Your twin is sleeping so when he wakes up, I'm feeding him.

Motheo just continued sucking and Phemelo smiled. These two were blessings.

At the Coltons

That morning everyone made their own breakfast.

Ma Josh:Where is Seeletso?

Sara:I don't know.

Ma Josh:Don't forget to eat.

Sara:I won't.

Ra Josh kissed his wife's cheek and Sara grabbed her school bag.

Sara:Okay bye.

She walked out with her father and Ma Josh clapped her hands. She couldn't wait for Seeletso to walk out. Whatever time she found it suitable to walk out.

At Marang's apartment

Marang looked at the watch as she took out a drawing sheet and crayons.

Marang:So my babies, we are drawing. Let's see if I got this.

She sat cross legged on the floor in her tights and the tee. She took the pencil and looked at the plain paper.

Marang:Uhm what should I draw? The scan and I will write the date that I drew you guys while you were in my belly. Your father would like that and your godmother will laugh. She used to say 'hewehewe, read Rangz you will fail. Wara wara what not..Look at

me now.' Anyways Iona we will run tests to see if you inherited my ADHD. Akere both your parents are doctors..(laughing)

She looked at the scan and started to sketch it out with a clean heart.

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My apologies I had a hectic day. I couldn't find a dress for my 19th birthday tomorrow and I-I just want to look good Anyway...I will post the last insert of the day and the explicit.

# THE GAME

#103

## At the Coltons

That afternoon Seeletso finally walked out of her bedroom. The house was quiet as she made her way to the lounge. She was hoping no one was home at this exact moment and that was the perfect chance to get out of her room. She swiftly passed the lounge and jumped when she heard a voice.

Ma Josh:hello...

Seeletso:mom you startled me..

Ma Josh:you just woke up?

Seeletso:Kind of..

Ma Josh:ljoo!(clapping her hands)

Seeletso looked at her mother.

Ma Josh:You arrived at what time in the morning?

Seeletso:ma?

Ma Josh:it's okay. You can go.

She slowly made her way to the kitchen and she looked around. She walked back to the lounge.

Seeletso:wait! How did you know I was out in the morning?

Ma Josh:instincts I guess(shrugging)

Seeletso:Mama!

Ma Josh laughed and patted the empty seat next to her.

Ma Josh:Sit down, o njele dikgang!

Seeletso:You locked the door didn't you?

Ma Josh:What door?

Seeletso:Iyoh!

She sat down and her mother laughed again.

Ma Josh: You see? This is my house nana, you don't disappear and leave the door open at night.

Seeletso blushed with a smile.

Seeletso: I was going to lock it.

Ma Josh: Njele dikgang, we'll be back to talk about my house rules and all that.

Seeletso shook her head. That was her nosy mother and there was absolutely nothing she could do about that.

At Toronto, Canada

Joshua checked his watch. He was there just in time. Only two hours left till the clock strikes 7pm this side so he had time to see baby girl.

He pulled his luggage and he checked out some cab services. He had to be there at her apartment.



He was excited, imagine living with his pregnant wife. He couldn't wait to see her all hormonal and to rub her tummy. Since it was a multiple pregnancy, she was going to show really fast. It's not easy carrying four babies in such a tiny body and he couldn't tell her now but there was a part of him that was scared. She was tiny and four kids were too much for such a tiny body.

He found a cab service and he called the number.

At Marang's apartment

Marang looked at her half drawing. She yawned with a smile and rubbed her tummy.

Marang: We did it my babies. Tomorrow I'm doing the other half of the drawing, I'm sure daddy will be her...

She paused, Joshua was supposed to be here. She

checked the time on the wall clock and she remembered that she said he should be here before night time. She was being unreasonable, the man had no control over his flight and he wasn't even a pilot. She stood up and walked to the bedroom. She removed her clothes and walked stark naked to the bathroom for her first shower of the day. The door had been locked since last night so she was safe.

Meanwhile the cab stopped outside the apartment buildings and Joshua got out. He opened the boot and got his suitcase before he walked to the driver's door and paid him.

Joshua:thank you.

The man nodded and drove off. Joshua walked inside the four storey apartment and made his way to the elevator. He pressed the buttons and the elevator doors opened. He stepped inside with the bags. He sucked in a deep breath. He had a lot of fixing to do with his wife and he had to mend his

marriage.

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## THE GAME

#104

At Marang's apartment

The elevator pinged and the doors slid open. He stepped out and checked his keys in his pockets. He unlocked the door and pushed it open.

In the bedroom, Marang frowned when the door was opened. She pulled the towel close and picked up the scissors.

Marang:who is there?(walking out slowly)

Joshua heard her voice and walked in that direction.

Joshua:babe...

She paused. That was Josh right? He was here?

Tears welled in her eyes and she dropped the scissors. They met each other halfway and she rubbed her eyes.

Marang:Hiiii(soft voice)

Joshua:Sweetness..

He opened his arms for her and she gladly walked into his arms. Joshua rubbed her bare back and she sniffed.

Joshua:Hey love..

Marang:Hi. I missed you.

Joshua:I know.(kissing her head)

He held her like that, he did her wrong and she missed him? He didn't deserve it, he knows he didn't deserve such treatment. Marang finally broke the hug and shrewdly observed him. Her small delicate hands found his face, he was bruised and his nose too. Her fingers traced his jawline and he looked at her while she did that on her tip toes. She turned

his face, what the hell happened to his handsome face, it was going to take a week to heal and make sure he is okay.

Marang:What happened? Don't lie to me Joshua.

Joshua:It's nothing.

Marang:it doesn't look like nothing(touching his nose)

He winced and she let him go.

Marang:what happened?

Joshua:My father..

Marang:he did this? Why did you guys fight?

Joshua looked at her, she was here concerned about him and he still had his guilt eating him away.

Marang walked past him heading to the kitchen.

Marang:Sit down,I'll see what to do.

Joshua:It will heal, you don't have to d-

Marang:sit down Mr, I'm not repeating myself.

He walked to the couch and sat down while Marang bent down opened the freezer. She took out a bag of frozen peas before she shook her head and walked to the bedroom where she headed to the bathroom for a washcloth and a bucket. She filled the bucket with hot water from the tap and she walked out with that. Joshua was just staring at her as she came back with a bucket and she headed to the kitchen. She poured salt in the water before walking to the couch.

Marang:Kile wa gatisa?

He shook his head. She rolled her eyes and sat on top of him with the bucket on top of the table. She used her hand to stir the water and removed the wash cloth.

Marang:I'm not going to be long.

She placed the warm wash cloth on his jaw and looked at his nose.

Marang:Did you check if your nose broke?

Joshua:it's fine.

Marang:O ntse maswe kwa. Turn your head.

He did as she said and she dipped the wash cloth in the water once again and placed it on the other side. She let it sit for more than a minute before she dipped the wash cloth in water.

Marang:Why did you guys fight?

She folded it and placed it on his nose bridge.

Joshua:Over you..

She paused and looked at him.

Marang:Me?

He nodded. She held the wash cloth in place for a few seconds before removing and repeating the same process.

Marang:I'm not sure why you guys were fighting.



Joshua:We were not and I deserved every punch.

Marang:hmm..

Joshua:Don't worry about it, I deserved every punch and more that were to come.

Marang kept quiet as she attended his bruises. She stopped once the water was cold and got off him.

Marang:I'll be back..

She walked away with the bucket and disappeared into the room. Joshua watched her and he didn't know what he did to deserve that pretty young thing. She came back minutes later with a small bottle in her hands, she had changed into one of his t-shirts. She was the one stealing most of them. He always bought new tees after her visits or after he visits because he can't exactly say no to her or demand back the tees she took.

She sat on top of him and opened the bottle.

Marang:I think me massaging the area is going to

hurt, man it out.

He chuckled.

Joshua:You enjoy being bossy don't you?

Marang:Who is going to take care of you? I have to get you to eat healthy everyday kana and tell you not to kill yourself with the consecutive night shifts. We still want you alive so sir..

She rubbed his jaw and he gritted his teeth.

Marang:man it out and don't be a big baby.

She continued to massage him and when she was done she inspected his face once again. That was better.

Marang:I think if I do this everyday, you will be fine in three days if not four. Better now.

She brought her hands together and looked at him.

Marang:he really did a number on you.

Joshua:Mhmm..(small sigh)I wanted us to talk.

Marang:I'm listening..

He looked at her before glancing down.

Marang:what is it?(concerned)

Joshua:You remember the day you left?

She nodded.

Joshua:I was so out of line and it is not your fault, you didn't make me slap you. I-It's my fault.

Marang:But you've nev-

Joshua:Still. It is my fault. I wasn't supposed to slap you not once but twice. No matter how angry I am I am not supposed to lay my hands on you in that way. And I hate the way I have made you insecure. You are scared that I might lose my temper on you right?

She couldn't lie and say she wasn't. Ever since that

incident, she didn't want to anger him in any way that might make him beat her or anything. Joshua could see it in her eyes, he did that and he hated himself for that.

Joshua: I hate the way you have to explain yourself, I know you will never cheat and what I had said was uncalled for.

She got off him and stood up. Water will do.

Marang walked to the kitchen and Joshua watched her drink the water she poured in a glass. He needed to address everything and come up with solutions. He stood up and followed her. Marang sighed.

Joshua: I know my apology is not enough to make it all go away but I am sorry.

He fell to his knees in front of her.

Joshua: Marang I sincerely apologize and I ask for your forgiveness.

Tears welled in Marang's eyes as she looked at her

husband on his knees in front of her.

Joshua:I promise that I will do better, I'll do therapy and take anger management classes before it gets out of hand. Marang I am so sorry and my being distant the past three months is not your fault. I know it will forever be in your me-memory but I am so so sorry.

His voice broke and she didn't know what to say. She just rubbed his head as he hugged her lower body still on his knees.

Joshua:I can do better that was not me. I swear I will do better my love(shaky voice)Intshwarele mogatsaka..

She closed her eyes and the tears rolled down her cheeks. She opened her eyes and looked at the man on the floor. He was on his knees begging for her forgiveness and he was still going to be okay if she didn't forgive him but it was going to eat him up that he caused everything.

Joshua:Marang?

Marang:Rra?(soft voice)

Joshua:Say something. Please.

She looked down at him. At this very moment, he was bared out and it hurt seeing him break apart in front of her.

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## THE GAME

#105

At Marang's apartment

Marang rubbed his head looking at him.

Marang:Josh, it's okay.

Joshua:it's not okay..

Marang:Babe..I forgive you, we will move past this okay love? (Softly)

He nodded and she sighed.

Marang:It's okay baby. It's okay, we are stronger than this right?

She felt the wetness of his tears against her and she covered her mouth. This was really haunting him.

This man loved her so much and he wasn't afraid to break down in front of her or to show his emotions

in her presence. She didn't know what to say at this point, all she could do was to comfort him.

Minutes went by and she finally looked at him. He was sniffing and she couldn't hold back her tears. In all the seven years she has known him, he has never broke down like this over her. In all their six years together he has never done this and it hurt her to even know that he was hurting.

Marang:Baby? Babe?

She bent down to his level and held his face in her small hands.

Marang:Babe we are going to be okay okay? I still love you and I will never stop loving you. No matter what happens.

He sucked in a deep breath and nodded. He really prayed this was the last time he apologizes for something like this. He will never hit his wife again.

Marang:We will move past this.

She used her fingers to wipe his tears and she



smiled sadly.

Marang:I love you.

Joshua:I love you too.

She pecked his lips softly and sat on the floor before she placed her head on his chest. He wrapped his arms around her and she smiled. She remembered that touch and intimacy was his love language, he loved touching her and her being in his arms. She took his hand in hers and pushed up the tee. She placed his hand on top of her stomach and sighed.

Joshua:There is already a bump?

Marang:Mhmm..

She kept his hand there, it was warm and it felt just right. She looked at his hand on her tummy. In her heart of hearts she was busy telling her babies that it was their dad who had his hand on her tummy. That daddy was finally here. Home was wherever he was.

Joshua basked in the silence. She had forgiven him

but from here in it wasn't going to be easy because she could remember vividly what happened and at times she might find herself apologizing for something which was not her fault. Therapy would do them both good and he will take up anger management classes so that he doesn't lose his temper like that again.

The sun went down, leaving hues of pink and orange in its wake and it reflected through their kitchen window. The two were still on the floor, together and close. Marang was already sleepy as she yawned and snuggled up against him. Joshua rubbed her tummy and she placed her hands on top of his.

Marang:I'm finally going to be a mom, isn't that exciting?(yawning)

Joshua:well young mommy you need to sleep.

Marang:Will you hold me in my sleep?

Joshua:Do you want me to?

She nodded.

Joshua:Okay sweetness.

He held her tightly as he stood up with her in his arms. She wrapped her arms around his neck and he kissed her forehead as he walked to the bedroom. He laid her on the bed and she looked at him as he got rid of his t-shirt and bent down to remove his shoes. He got rid of his pants and through hooded eyelids saw a glimpse of his masculine body and that tattoo on his back that she always scratched with her short nails in the throes of passion. He joined her on the bed and in his boxers.

She could feel his body heat radiate as he spooned her small body. She could finally close her eyes. Joshua pulled the blankets over them before he kissed her neck.

Joshua:Did you eat?

Marang:Mhmm..

Joshua:Okay.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo sat her parents down as her little brother played with the twins in their bedroom.

Phemelo:Mom, dad I was talking to Theo and he suggested staying with the kids.

Ma Phem:Really?

Ra Phem:he is a responsible young man, he wants to take care of his kids. Not many men do that and it is commendable.

Phemelo's jaw dropped. She was hoping that they would say no. Knowing how her parents were and she didn't want to hire help for their kids but she had to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Ma Phem:He laid magadi for the kids and they are legally and traditionally his children too, we are

lawyers and it would be wrong to refuse, he can sue but that is really nice. Some men shy away from responsibility especially the responsibility of young kids. We deal with cases of men denying their blood or all of a sudden stop supporting their children and the fact that he wants to live with his kids and get to know them is really good.

Phemelo nodded with a fake smile.

Ra Phem:It is okay. He can live with them, we will visit the kids too and the kids can visit here too.

Phemelo:Ee rra.

Ma Phem:And sorry for judging him too soon. He is a good guy my child. I just want the best for you and I tend to overreact at times.

Phemelo:It is water under the bridge mom.

Her mother nodded as one of the twins started crying.

Ma Phem:We can bet that your brother is responsible.

Phemelo laughed as her mother stood up and she

smiled. Her parents doted over Motheo and Maano. Even if they weren't happy at first, they really did this grand parenting thing like pros.

At the Coltons

Seeletso sat on the bed as she talked to Jaden.

Seeletso:Yoh I got one long lecture about house rules, you see? It was a bad idea to check on me at night.

Jaden just laughed.

Jaden:Your mother sounds like a great woman.

Seeletso:She likes people's things and before I forget she said I should invite you to our house for dinner. She said it's either you come or I move out.

She shook her head, she had a crazy woman for a mother. She needed a hobby at this point in their lives. She should talk to her sister in law. She missed

that one, she always had something to say and it was always fun talking to her, to think she met Marang when she was 15 and still a developing teen and now she is married to her older brother and they are so in love seven years and a few months later. It was so beautiful.

Jaden:Babe are there?

Seeletso:Yes sir. I am a tenant who doesn't pay rent so show up for dinner on Saturday. Dad likes whiskey, I'll find the brand and mom ena mo re ta dah with flowers and chocolate. Add wine too.

Jaden:Yes mam. I will show up.

Seeletso:8 o'clock on the dot and my little sis is a gamer so I don't know what you will do. Soften their hearts a bit plus they have always wanted to meet you baby.

Jaden:Okay love. I have to wrap up a few things at the office okay and I'll be all hours in an hour.

Seeletso:Alright. Bye.

Jaden:Bye cupcake.

Seeletso rolled her eyes before she said bye with a smile.

At Marang's apartment

Joshua woke up first and it was dark. He didn't want to fall asleep that soon. He turned to look at her features in the dark. Her soft snores alerted him that she was still very much asleep.

He gently let go of her and he waited for a few seconds to see if she will notice. When she was still in that state of slumber he got out of bed and headed to the bathroom for a piss. When he walked out, she was sprawled on the bed. He chuckled before planting a soft kiss on her forehead and covering her with the blankets.

He walked out and headed to the lounge where he started to switch on the lights. He closed the kitchen



window as the cool air filled the space. It was going to start to snow soon around her and he knew how much she loved the snow. The very first time she saw snow she was fascinated and like the little child she was she played in the snow. He chuckled remembering that time, he had to nurse her cold two days later but she had said it was all worth it.

He opened her fridge to see what he can cook up for her. He took out his ingredients and he got busy.

Meanwhile in the bedroom, Marang turned in the big bed and her hand touched her bed all over. She opened her eyes and yawned stretching her body. Joshua was here wasn't he? Or was it a figment of her imagination and she needed to get more sleep?

She yawned again and pulled the blankets up to her neck and she could still smell him on the blankets. He was here.

She yawned once again and closed her eyes.

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## THE GAME

#106

At Phemelo's parents

Later that night, a cold wind blew across the neighborhood. No one had taken the weather predictions that seriously and they thought it was just going to rain but there was a storm that was brewing over the second capital city of the country.

In that cold weather, a lady who had a tattered black coat stood in front of the yard and placed the newborn baby in front of the yard. She was sure her baby would be well taken care off. After all, she didn't have the resources nor the money to take care of a second baby with no father in sight. The one child she had was already struggling and she wasn't going to make this one struggle too.

Her:I love you Angel okay? Your name is Angelica and I think they will find the piece of paper on your chest.

The baby sneezed and she covered the baby with the blanket. She was pink, too pink. Maybe she was coming up with a fever but she didn't have time and she needed to be gone before they open the gate. There were dogs inside so she couldn't throw the baby and throwing her across the yard would kill her.

Her:I love you and you will meet your brother one day okay?

She kissed the baby's cheek and the baby looked at her with bright eyes. She pinched the baby and she scrunched her face before she started to cry. At the sound of her cry the lady disappeared into the night and waited by the bushes,

Meanwhile in the house, the family was all snuggled

up in the lounge enjoying movies with Phemelo when they heard a child cry.

Phemelo's little brother stood up and went to the babies' room to see if they were crying but the babies were peacefully sleeping.

Ma Phem: The babies are asleep?

He nodded walking back as a child's cry continued. Ma Phem and her husband stood up and they walked out of the house. The cries got louder and seemed near.

Ma Phem: Did someone just dump their baby here?

Ra Phem: let's find out..

Ra Phem pushed open the gate and his wife stepped out to find a baby in front of the yard. She looked around and couldn't see anyone.

Ma Phem: It's an infant.

She picked up the baby and looked around once more. The storm was brewing and she couldn't leave a little baby outside the yard just like that.

Ra Phem closed the gate and looked at the child in his wife's arms.

Ma Phem:They left a child, we will see what to do in the morning. She must be cold and she is all pink.

They walked inside the house and Phemelo frowned.

Ma Phem:We found her at the gate.

Phemelo:Bathong! Why would they abandon a baby? There are many families that would kill for children.

Ma Phem:Exactly.

Her parents walked to their bedroom with the child and Phemelo got her phone. She dialed Marang's number and it rang unanswered for a minute before she answered.

Marang:Hello(sleepy)

Phemelo:Hi. Did I wake you up?

Marang:(yawning)yes..

Phemelo:Remember that time you told me that you are infertile?

Marang sat up right. Yikes!

Marang:Uhm yeah..

Phemelo:We don't know who left a new born in front of our house and I just thought of you when I saw the baby girl.

Marang guiltily listened. She didn't tell her friend as of yet because what if she loses this pregnancy after announcing her pregnancy?

Marang:Can I take it up with Josh?

Phemelo:Sure and my parents are lawyers. I'm sure they will help you if you want the child, I mean we have to locate the mother first and maybe you can start the adoption process.

Marang:yeah. Thank you.

Forty on Marang's side, Joshua's phone started ringing and she used that as an excuse to say bye to her friend.

She placed her phone down and picked his up. It was an unknown number but she answered it regardless.

Marang: Joshua's phone hello?

Her: Hello, can I speak to Joshua?

Marang: okay, who am I speaking to?

Her: Nadia.

Marang's throat dried up as she got out of bed. He really started to speak to her?

Marang: Ee mma, I'm giving him the phone.

Nadia: Who am I speaking to?

Marang: His wife. Please hold..



She walked out of the bedroom and headed out looking for him. She found him in the kitchen in his boxers and it smelled nice too. Joshua turned and Marang handed him the phone. He held it against his chest.

Joshua:Who is it?(whispering)

Marang:Your side hoe..

She wanted to walk away but he pulled her to him and kept his arm around her neck. Joshua bent down and whispered in her ear.

Joshua:I don't have any sides, you are the only meal I need in my life.

Marang wanted to be angry but she ended up blushing. She tried to push him away but he had her on lockdown. He kissed her neck and she giggled.

Marang:Stop it tlherra..

Joshua:We are not done..

He answered the phone.

Joshua:Hello.

Nadia:Hi..

Joshua frowned.

Joshua:Who am I speaking to?

Nadia:Nadia, I got your number from your aunt..

Joshua looked at Marang who pretended not to be listening. He placed the phone on his chest.

Joshua:I know you are listening..

Marang:Bua rra..

He placed the phone on his ear.

Joshua:What for?

Nadia:She-I..

Joshua:Just never call my phone again. We don't know each other that much to talk and I am a married man.

He hung up and handed Marang the phone.

Joshua:I swear my uncle's wife wants to ruin my life.

Marang:What did she do now?

Joshua:she gave Nadia my number, I don't know what for when I have all I need here.

Marang faked a smile and looked at his phone.

Joshua:You can snoop if you want..

Marang:I do not snoop.

Joshua:Ehe mma.

He nuzzled her neck before he let her go and attended to the pots. Marang went through his call log, this village aunty was annoying. She wasn't disrespectful but now she saw why Joshua was fighting with them. Why send another woman to destroy another woman's marriage. She placed his phone down and looked at him.

Marang:Aren't you cold? Did you come with your robe?

Joshua:It's in the suitcase.

Marang:I'll be back with it.

She walked away and he stirred the soup. Her favorite. Marang pulled the suitcase from the lounge and headed to the bedroom. She opened it and took out his robe and she removed her tee. She got her own robe from the wardrobe and walked back to the kitchen.

Marang:Baby tshwara.

He took it from her and wore it.

Joshua:I'm almost done.

Marang:Okay. Thank you.

She walked to the couch and sat down. Her hand slipped under her gown and she rubbed her tummy. She turned to look at him.

Marang:Baby what are we going to name them?

Joshua:We will go through names baby girl and

when is your next scan?

She frowned.

Marang:I think I zoned out after the doctor told me I'm pregnant with quads so I am not sure, I will try to remember though.

Joshua:okay love. I am almost done.

Marang:So tomorrow I am going to show you the drawing I did..

Joshua:you started drawing again?

Marang:yes sir. I still got it in me baby.

Joshua started serving up the food and Marang sniffed the air. She couldn't wait. He didn't cook much but what he made for her she always appreciated it. He came with a tray with their food and she sat cross legged on the couch waiting for him.

Marang:So we are watching a movie?

Joshua:You can't watch a movie without me?

Marang:No I cannot. It's weird. Come sit, wait come with a fleece blanket and then you can come sit.

He chuckled and made his way to the bedroom. When he came back he threw the fleece over her and he joined her on the couch.

Marang:I am choosing the movie akere my love..

Joshua:Yes mam..

She laid her head on his shoulder as she switched on the tv. He breathed into her neck and she sucked in a deep breath. The movie first. The movie first. She said over and over again.

Marang:So..

She scrolled through the channels, there was nothing to watch.

Joshua:Do you see one that you like?

Marang:I can't find anything.

Joshua:Okay.

Marang:Let me find a series then..

He slipped his hand underneath her gown and touched her tummy.

Marang sighed as she left the music channel there.

Marang:Babe?

Joshua:Yes?

Marang:go lower.

Joshua:hmm? I can't hear you.

Marang:Go lower. Please!

His hand slid down to her panties and she let out a sigh as he kissed her neck softly

Joshua:Here?

Marang:Yes.

He pushed the panties down and she moved closer to him. She missed him but his dck more.

Joshua:You do know you can ask for it like you

normally do..

Marang:You make me sound too horny babe..

Joshua:I know you are my little sex addict, it isn't weird at all..

Marang laughed into his chest as his whole hand covered her s\*x.

Marang:Sex yaago e nale dipuo mr.

Joshua:Wa batla kana jang mma?

Marang:Ntire ee..

He laughed kissing her softly.

Joshua:I love you too.

Marang:I know...

He laid her on the sofa and she giggled. Finally!

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A MONTH LATER



## THE GAME

#107

At Francistown Airport

Joshua held the bags as Marang pulled the beanie over her head. At least it was chilly here and she wasn't going to be all hot and bothered.

Marang: You parked our car here?

Joshua: When I came to the airport, I think it is still here.

Marang: Okay, I want to sit down.

Joshua: I'm sorry for making you stand.

She stretched and looked at her tummy. It had grown the past month and one would swear she was already six months. It was that big and it couldn't be

hidden forever. It was a joint decision to tell immediate family and her closest friend about the pregnancy.

Marang:It's okay, I'm patient.

They walked to the car with Joshua pulling the two suitcases to the parking lot. When he got to the car, he handed the car keys and she unlocked the car. She got inside and sat comfortably on the passenger seat before rubbing her round stomach. This round tummy was the reason why they had sex in the most awkward positions but she wouldn't trade it for anything. Joshua put the bags in the back before closing off the boot and jogged to his side. He opened the door and Marang gave him the car keys.

Joshua:Rest first at home and we will talk to my parents at dinner time?

Marang:Okay. Before I sleep can you like...(biting her tongue)you know.

Joshua:I don't know sweetness.

Joshua started the car. The whole month he was in Canada he had been taking some anger management classes. He was actually serious about that and they both agreed to do couple therapy before the babies get here.

Marang:Ijoo!okay..

She rubbed her face and yawned. Joshua reversed out of the parking spot before he joined the road that led straight out of the airport.

At Phemelo's parents

The parents looked at Angelica playing with Timothy. Timothy was already protective of the little girl and they also couldn't find the mother.

Ma Phem:Should we stay with her?

Ra Phem:We went to social workers and they said it was difficult to locate the mother.

Ma Phem sighed as Angelica started crying and she picked the little girl up. She was such a cutie and the thought of giving her away too didn't sit well with her.

Ma Phem:Hey baby(in a soft baby like voice)look at you..

Angelica touched her face and gave her the cutest gummy smile she has ever seen.

Ma Phem:Ncoah!

She placed the baby down and Timothy continued to play with the child. To him, he already had another sister.

At Theo's house

Theo led the older woman out of the house after the interview while Phemelo fed Maano.

Theo:Are you happy with that one?

Phemelo:Very. She has experience and she has a driver's license to. I like the fact that she is older, not older than our parents but the older type of helpers that know exactly what they are hired to do.

Theo:Finally you agree.

Phemelo:I am not going to have a slay queen take care of my kids. I don't want my child to cry his poor lungs out motho a dira dinala. Never!

Theo:I get your point but that other one was also good.

Phemelo:Which other one?

Theo:the unemployed graduate was early childhood education.

Phemelo shrugged. She didn't want that one, she was too beautiful and she didn't want to feel threatened by a mere child sitter. She was out of the equation.

Theo:I will call the lady who just left in the morning.

Phemelo:Okay. I will miss my babies, the fact that I

will be away for more than six months does not sit well with me.

Theo:You will come back with the degree.

Phemelo:Yes sir. So tomorrow before I leave, call her. You guys are asking me to the airport akere?

Theo:Right boys?

Phemelo laughed and shook her head. Her phone rang and she answered immediately.

Phemelo:Hello?

Marang:Hi, you said you are leaving tomorrow right?

Phemelo:yes my love.

Marang:I am home.

Phemelo:About time. Can I see you?

Marang:Of course. I can't travel around much..

Phemelo:I will come over,

Marang:Alright. Bye and love you.

She hung up and Phemelo grinned.

Phemelo:Rangz is in town.

Theo:That's why you are excited.

Phemelo:I have not seen my friend in over a year...I will be back baby.

She gave Theo Maano before she wore her prosthetic leg. She kissed her boyfriend and borrowed his car too. He was the one who helped her get over her fear of cars. He was patient and even taught her everything she needed to know about driving.

At Joshua's house

Marang had already changed and was in tights and t-shirt. Those were comfortable for her.

Marang:Baby?

Joshua:Mam?

Marang:I miss you..

He laughed. She was going to be home for the next few months of her pregnancy. He managed to talk to the dean and explain. She would do online learning of tests and quizzes and if she needed to be supervised, then she would do rounds at the hospital with the manager and head doctor assessing her. He needed her home to give birth and to properly manage her pregnancy, they needed it to be smooth.

Joshua:I'm right here.

Marang rolled her eyes.

Marang:Not that way..

Joshua:after you eat then we will see what to do okay?

Marang:Okay.

She walked to the kitchen and the fridge was empty.

Marang:Grocery shopping later today. Not debating that with you Josh. In the meantime you can order in something. Like takeout.



Joshua:Your wish is my command.

She grinned as he wrapped his arms around her stomach.

Marang:I look weird. I'm chubby and I look shorter than before.

Joshua:So we have four healthy heartbeats in there.

Marang:Mhm.. .they are the reason I'm always tired babe. After visiting the parents I want a massage a bo o nhavisa.

He looked at her and she wasn't even laughing. He laughed and she gave him a serious look.

Marang:It's not a joke. You said your body is mine and mine is yours. Besides imagine all these years of us not living together. It is only right that wa nhavisa,akere I'm your wife kana jang mr?

Joshua:O bua dilo Marang. Kante o itlhela o bua eng?

Marang:O gana go tla o nhavisa? Nna Joshua?

Joshua:I can never say no to you. Tell your hormones to relax.

Marang:Hormones Dr Colton says you must relax.

He laughed and the fact that she was very serious cracked him up. A door knock disturbed their conversation and Marang removed his hands. She walked to the door and opened it.

Marang:Phemelo hi!

Phemelo looked at Marang. She was glowing and she had chubby cheeks. She looked down and saw her belly. She gasped. Marang was pregnant?

Marang:Phem come in, drink water and breath friend.

Phemelo stepped in and greeted Joshua who said hi.

Joshua:I will give you two ladies space.

He walked out and Marang walked to the kitchen where she rinsed a glass and poured water for Phemelo. Phemelo gulped the water and placed the glass down before taking a good look at Marang.

Marang:Yes yes I am pregnant. It wasn't something I could say over the phone. Surprise you are going to be a godmother.

Phemelo:Wow! Congratulations! Wow!

Marang smiled.

Marang:You can scream if you want?

Phemelo:Ah no. Give me a hug.

Marang hugged her and it was awkward, she knew she was shorter than Phem. From childhood and now into adulthood. The pain never ends.

Phemelo:I am so happy for you babyy! Now my babies will have a playmate.

Marang decided to keep that intsy bitsy piece of information about the quadruplets to herself.

Marang:Finally!

Phemelo broke the hug.

Phemelo:Pity I'm leaving tomorrow.

Marang:School.

Phemelo:tell me about it.

They walked to the lounge where they sat down and started talking.

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## THE GAME

#108

At Joshua's place

Marang said bye to Phemelo before she closed the door. She rubbed her tummy and walked to the bedroom. She found Joshua on his back holding his phone.

Joshua:Next week, I'll be going back to work. If anything happens call me okay?

Marang:Okay. I think I will be fine.

Joshua:I mean anything and I booked us into therapy, sessions start next week Wednesday.

Marang nodded as she sat on the bed and looked at her toes.

Joshua:Just relax and call if you need anything. Literally anything.

Marang:Even if I need sex?

Joshua laughed.

Joshua:You do know I never starve you.

Marang:I know but go monate akere babe? You get?

Joshua:I know..

Marang:So I can call just for that on a random day?(pouting)

Joshua grinned and pulled her to him.

Joshua:If I'm not that busy, I'll come. Deal?

Marang:Okay.

Joshua:I'll assume it's the hormones making you this horny.

Marang:Yes. Let's blame the hormones my love.

Joshua:o hemile Marang!(laughing)

Marang:We are leaving what time? I need a bath. Like just a bath, I hate standing. It's heavy and I have to keep my back straight.

Joshua:Should I run water for you?

Marang:Mhmm. We can eat at the parent's place, it slipped my mind that you were tasked with ordering takeout. Tomorrow we are growing grocery shopping.

Joshua:Ee mma.

Marang sighed. So far so good with the pregnancy, she wasn't even complaining. She was healthy and had four humans inside of her. What more could she ask for really? The fact that her husband respected her opinion and that he listens when she says something. One might say she fed him a love potion or went to doctors for him but love is blind and theirs has been blind for years. Simp? She was definitely choosing him over and over. He pecked her lips before he got out of bed and headed to the bathroom.

Joshua kept forgetting to update baby girl about the progress regarding the land and the house. He will show her tomorrow when they go out for grocery shopping. He needed to run her water and take a

shower too.

At the Coltons

Seeletso ate her food as she talked to her mother.

Seeletso:Extra food?

Ma Josh:Your brother and his wife are coming over.

Seeletso:It feels like years ever since I've seen Josh yoh!

Ma Josh:Marang wena.

Seeletso:it's been more than a month, school is busy but she has to do it, just for the graduation gown.

Ma Josh:My children are so educated. Josh is a doctor, Marang is studying to become one and my daughter is a pharmacist..your bogadi should be expensive.

Seeletso:mama!

Ma Josh:Jaden is a good boy and he is really



respectful.

Seeletso:He is. Mama I'll be down once they are here, let me go.

She got off the counter and walked to her bedroom, she wanted to talk to her man. He was doing everything right and maybe just maybe she might finally be intimate with him. That was a bit scary but on the brighter side, she was sure she wanted him to be her virgin breaker.

At Joshua's place

Marang looked like a very healthy pregnant woman, her ring in place and in that long dress she decided to wear for dinner. She had let her braids loose and she was breathtaking. Joshua was sure that he was never going to get over his wife's beauty nor her kind soul. Marang found him staring and she snapped her fingers.

Marang:It isn't okay? Should I tie my hair up?

Joshua:You are beautiful.

Her cheeks went pink and she played with her ring. Years later, he could still make her blush by just saying that she was beautiful.

Marang:Thank you.

He moved from the wardrobe and walked to the mirror, he placed his hands on her shoulders and she leaned back.

Joshua:I love you and I want you to know that.

Marang:I love that you taught me how to love. I love the fact that regardless of my flaws and my past, you make perfect. I love you for the man you keep striving to be,I love how humble you are. I love the fact that you never use my background against me nor my insecurities against me. These words aren't enough to fully tell you how much you mean to me but I hope I tried. I love you, I love each and every part of you babe and I will never stop loving you.

He held her tightly and she smiled. She was going to

relish these few months here because he was the best and she was excited to go through this pregnancy journey with him. Their prayers were answered and she hoped nothing could ruin their happiness. He was the best and he was going to have kids of his own even if it is three years later.

Marang:I love how you listen to my useless rants with no complaints. Joshua you are the best man a woman could ask for. I never want to lose you ever even if this love drives me insane. I would never Joshua! On God! I was touched by the fact that you apologized and you were willing to take anger management classes just for that incident.

Tears made their way to her eyes and she chuckled to try to stop the tears.

Marang:I hope we live long enough to see our grandchildren and show them what love is and to settle where love reigns. Love, communication, trust and peace reigns. I always say you are my safe haven and you still are.

He was awed and just kissed her neck. Marang understood. She always needed reassurance and to be told things while his love language was touch. What he couldn't explain in words he always showed physically so she didn't expect him to say something. He just held her close and she inhaled his cologne, with a soft beating heart. A part of her wished they wouldn't go for the dinner because they were in their own little bubble and moment. Minutes passed and he didn't let her go.

She hummed softly and he kissed her cheek. She smiled as they started to sway to her humming.

Marang:I'm a mess but I'm a mess that you wanted.

Joshua:I love you okay? I love you in spite of, deep fears that the world would divide us so baby now that we keep growing strong. I believe we are meant to be.

Marang chuckled.

Marang:Soulmates motho wame.

Joshua:Who knew that I would meet my soulmate because a dog bit her.

Marang:Speaking of dogs, I want a cat.

Joshua:Those things are creepy and they are used for witchcraft.

Marang:I don't care.

Joshua:We will see baby. Should we go?

Marang:Yes sir.

He grabbed their phones, his wallet and the car keys. He held her bulging waist as he guided them out of the house. She locked the house and walked to the car holding her waist. He opened the car door for her and she got inside. He walked to his side and got inside. She got his phone and like years before, she connected his phone to the car Bluetooth system.

She played Justin Bieber's Anyone and leaned back

placing her hand on his thigh. She hummed the song before she started to sing along.

If you ever move on without me, I need to make sure you know

That you are the only one I'll ever love

Yeah you, if it's not you it's not anyone.

Looking back at my life, you are the only good I've ever done.

Yeah you, if it's not you it's not anyone.

Forever is not enough time to, love you the way that I want.

Cause every morning I find you, I fear the that day I don't.

You say that I won't lose you but you can't predict

the future cause certain things are out of our control.

She took her phone and took a video of him driving them.

Marang:Look at the camera and smile..

Joshua:I have to focus on the road baby..(smiling)

Marang:I love you.

Joshua looked at her hand on his thigh and smiled before facing the road. Marang sang along to the song looking at him with a huge ass smile.

At the Coltons

Ma Josh placed the food on the dining table. They should be here any minute from now. Right that instant, they heard a car hooter.

Ma Josh:They are here.

Sara went to press the buttons and the gate slid open while the ladies fixed the table. They were finally having dinner together as a family after so long.

Meanwhile outside the couple stepped out of the car and Joshua held her waist.

Marang: Bathong, it's been so long.

Joshua: Nervous?

Marang: No. not that much I think.

Joshua: I'll hold your hand.

Marang: Don't forget. After the dinner it's a massage and then wa nhavisa Joshua. I didn't forget. Don't forget because I didn't. The list goes in this order. Dinner. A full body massage. Sex. Got it?

He laughed kissing her cheek as they walked to the house. Joshua was about to open the door when his



father opened it.

Joshua:Dad hi.

Marang:Hello..

Marang watched her father in law's gaze scan her face before he looked at her and he tried so hard to hide the shock and smiled. Ra Joshua ignored Joshua as he hugged his daughter in law.

Ra Josh:How are you?

Marang:I am good. Hello again father.

Over the years she got so comfortable with calling his parents her parents because they also indirectly raised her too plus they were her in laws. Ignoring Josh he broke the hug and looked at Marang.

Ra Josh:Wow! Did you eat?

Marang:Not yet.

Ra Josh:He is starving you guys?

Marang:Thata..

Just like that they both walked inside the house ignoring Joshua and he sighed walking behind them.

Ra Joshua led Marang to the dining room and Ma Josh nearly dropped the plates seeing Marang.

Marang:Hiiii.

Ma Josh:Finally you came home. You are chubby, healthy an-

She paused as she fully assessed Marang. Was that a baby bump she was seeing? Or her eyes were deceiving her?

Ma Josh:You are pregnant?

She grinned nodding her head.

Marang:We wanted to tell you guys that we are

expecting very soon.

Seeletso:This is big.

Sara:I'm going to be an aunty right?

Marang nodded and Ma Josh held back tears.

Marang looked happy and content.

Ma Josh:and you managed to keep it from us for this long?

Marang:It wouldn't be right to say it over the phone would it?

Seeletso:Congratulations sis.

She hugged Marang and Marang hugged her back.

Seeletso:Take care of my nephew or niece or else I will kill you.

Joshua:No threatening my wife please.

They laughed and Seeletso broke the hug.

Ma Josh:Are you okay? How far?

Marang:Four months and a week right babe?

Joshua nodded. They forgot he even existed at the moment. Their attention had diverted to his wife.

Ma Josh:Four months? It's too big for four months, you look six.

Marang looked at Joshua who looked at her and she looked at him again. He cleared his throat and they looked at him.

Joshua:We are expecting quadruplets.

Everyone's jaw dropped.

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Another insert will follow later today.

## THE GAME

#109

At the Coltons

Ma Josh:Four?

Marang grinned nodding.

Seeletso:1, 2, 3, 4?

Joshua:yes.

Ra Josh:Wow!

It took a few minutes for everyone to fully process the information they have just been told. Marang held Joshua's arm and looked up at him.

Marang:They will be okay?

Joshua:let it sink in, they are still shocked. More shocked than us the parents.

Marang:Nna ke tshwerwe ke tlala mme(but I'm hungry)

Joshua:Sit down, let them take it in and eat something. Sorry okay love..

Marang let go of his arm and sat down looking at the food. They will sit down once they feel like they are okay. Everyone started to sit down one by one and they looked at Joshua who was sitting next to Marang.

Ra Josh:Le serious?

Marang was already adding the meat to her plate. She took a bite and nodded. Ma Josh looked at her daughter in law who was casual about it. The fact that she was carrying quads and it has never happened ever in this family. This was by God's grace. Nothing more. Marang was busy serving herself ignoring them. She was hungry and needed food.

Seeletso:Okay. Marang so you are carrying four fetuses?

Marang:Ee mma. I'm in my second trimester and don't worry Dr Bae here is monitoring the pregnancy because multiple pregnancies a-

Ra Josh:are dangerous.

Marang:Exactly. Anything can go wrong any moment so that's why I'll be home the next few months where I'm surrounded by people I know and an environment that makes it easier for things to go on smoothly.

Ma Josh:Smart.

Marang:Very. Babe pass the juice.

He passed the juice and she filled her glass before placing the glass jug down. She took her fork and started eating.

Joshua:So far so good.

Sara:So Marang?

Marang:Ma?(mouth full)

She swallowed her food and looked at Sara.

Sara:Can I babysit the babies?

Marang:Why not? Besides you'll be saving us costs.

Everyone at the table laughed and Marang chuckled as she stuffed her face with the food. From there on conversation started to flow around the table and. A rang chirped in when she wasn't swallowing or eating. By the end of the dinner she was one happy lady. She was full and waiting for her massage from her dear husband and the sex that was to follow.

She sat there content as she nibbled on the dessert.

Marang:Is there custard around?

Ma Josh:I think it's there. I am not sure.

Marang:The box is full?

Ma Josh:Sara go check.



Sara stood up and headed to the kitchen while Marang ate her dessert. She didn't have morning sickness, maybe that's why she didn't know she was pregnant. She just had a healthy bump that grew everyday and this weird obsession to eat what she could find then sleep peacefully after a very intimate workout with her husband. It was a very comfortable routine and one she wasn't planning to change anytime soon.

Sara: There are two full boxes.

Marang: Can I have one? Thank you (with a cute smile)

She placed her hands on her stomach. This was her family. Sara came back with a box full of custard and Marang took it. She would indulge in it later at night as a snack.

Joshua: I think we should get going.

Marang: I enjoyed the dinner so much and thank you.

Ma Josh: you are welcome here any day.

Marang:thank you mom.

Seeletso:and I am on leave this week so I am free sis.

Marang looked at Seeletso. She had an idea.

Marang:I might take you up on that.

Seeletso raised an eyebrow.

Marang:I love you too Letso.

Seeletso:I don't like your thinking already.

Marang:Baby a reye (baby let's go)

He chuckled as he helped her stand and she hugged everyone one last time.

Marang:I really enjoyed the dinner. And I missed your cooking mom and the atmosphere around the dinner table. Bye guys.

Them:Bye.

Joshua waved as he held her waist and they walked out.

Marang:You didn't forget akere?

Joshua:Woman!

Marang:Okay. You didn't forget baby?(softly)

Joshua:I didn't.

Marang:I love you.

Joshua:No you don't. You love dck.

Marang:I don't. Okay I do but I love you.

They walked to the car and he opened the car door for her.

Marang:Babe can you take me to the cemetery tomorrow?

Joshua:Sure. Before or after the grocery shopping?

Marang:After? Yeah after.

He got inside the car and helped her buckle up before he started the car.

At Phemelo's parents

Phemelo looked at Angelica. She was so cute and light skinned too. Her eyes looked familiar though and she couldn't quite remember where she saw the same set of eyes as Angelica's or was she just grasping at straws? Timothy liked her and the twins always played with the little baby.

She picked her bottle and gave it to her. She sucked on it for dear life and Phemelo chuckled. Her mother had grown attached to the little cute bundle of joy and her father was starting to get used to her. She just loved how cute she was and imagine when she will be two years and will be looking all cute in mini puffs.

Phemelo:you are cute Angel.(in a baby voice)

At Joshua's house

Joshua's hands moved across her back and she

released a soft moan. He was doing such a good job and she could stay like this forever.

Marang:My lower back.

He moved his hands to her lower back and he started to massage that area. Marang was enjoying how he lessened the tension from her body.

She turned on her back and faced him with a little smile. He laughed and pecked her lips. She wrapped her arms around his neck instead.

Marang:I loved the massage.

Joshua:of course you do.

She giggled.

Marang:Good doctor please make love to me.

Joshua:It would be my pleasure.

She was content.

The following day

Marang got ready for their shopping trip. Well they were going to the grocery store, just the grocery store.

Marang:I'm done.

He opened the wardrobe and made her wear a light jacket.

Joshua:it's chilly outside.

Marang looked at her outfit. She was seriously going out wearing a long knit dress, pantyhose and boots?

Marang:But I'm warm, this dress is made out of wool.

Joshua:it's chilly and I am not debating with you sweetness.

Marang:yes sir(bored)

Joshua:Even if you pout.

Marang:I am not pouting.

Joshua:Let's go.

Marang held his arm as they walked out of the house.

Marang:The next scan we will be able to know the genders. I'm so excited my love.

Joshua:All four them can be boys.

Marang:Joshua no! I want a girl. At least one you see? So I can do her hair, plan her cute outfits and have a lookalike.

Joshua:We will see who's genes will dominate.

Marang:Can we bet on it?

Joshua:How much?

Marang:Uhm we are having two girls and two boys.

Joshua:One girl and threee boys. How much are we betting?

Marang:The loser gets to pay a thousand.

Joshua:Extra thousand? Deal baby girl.

Marang:I'm always right.

Joshua:Sure you are.

They locked the house and made their way to the car.  
The grocery store then the cemetery.

At the grocery store

Marang walked ahead of Joshua as she put food in the trolley.

Marang:Month end we should start buying baby food too.

Joshua:Yes mam.

Marang:For now let's buy groceries and we will cook once we get home.

He followed her as he pushed the trolley. Marang paused and walked back to check the food in the trolley.

Marang:I think I forgot something, I'll be back.



She walked to the other aisle where she picked the canned stuff. A strange old woman passed by her and paused. She looked at Marang.

Her:Hi..

Marang turned and smiled.

Marang:Hello.

Her:Don't hug just anyone and don't let anyone touch your stomach. Pray too, not everyone wants to see you with a child.

Marang frowned.

Her:Pregnancy suits you by the way child.

The lady walked away and Marang wanted to ask her about what she said but her hands were full. She walked back hoping to see the old lady but she didn't. She found Joshua and put the stuff inside the trolley.

They joined the queue and she still had a frown on her face.

Joshua:What's wrong?

Marang:n-nothing..

She folded her hands and sighed.

Marang:Can I wait in the car?

Joshua handed her the keys and she stood on her tip toes to kiss his cheek before she walked out of the store with hopes to see that old woman. She really disappeared like that? She walked to their car and she got inside. She touched her tummy and said a short prayer.

Ten minutes later, Joshua was placing the grocery at the back. She really wanted to go to her granny's grave.

Joshua joined her in the car and he started the car.

Joshua:are you sure you are fine sweetness?

Marang:Yes love.

He reversed out of the parking spot and he joined the road that led out of the shopping complex.

At the Airport

Phemelo kissed her babies' cheeks before she hugged her parents. Theo was the last person she hugged.

Phemelo:I love you okay and take care of our boys. If you need anything, my parents and your parents are available if you need anything.

Theo:I love you too and don't worry. Just ace your tests and exams and make us proud beautiful.

Phemelo:Okay.

She broke the hug and waved as she made her way to the aircraft. They waved back and she walked holding back tears. She didn't want to be separated from her children but she had to.

At the new plot

Marang:This is not the cemetery..

Joshua:Relax, we will go there after this.

Marang:Where are we? And it looks like a new building..

Joshua parked his car from a distance and he helped his wife out of the car. Marang held onto his arm as they approached the building. She frowned looking at the house. She recognized this, from the plan they had initially of the house they wanted to build.

Joshua:It always slipped my mind. I did buy the land and our house is underway.

Marang looked around and at the builders. They were at window level.

Marang:The double storey?

Joshua:Yes babe..I think in a few months it will be complete. We have been saving for this and we will have to furnish it. Include the children's rooms like our initial plan.

Marang laughed tearfully.

Marang:We always said we will have three children now we have four..

Joshua:Even if we can have ten.

Marang:No sir. No sir. No! I am not pushing ten heads out of my vagina. No doc. Never. It can never be me.

Joshua:We will see.

Marang:I will kill you.

She let go of his arm and walked around, she greeted the builders who greeted her with

excitement. Their dreams were finally coming true. She couldn't wait to start working and contribute more money at least money enough to furnish the house with everything they need.

Marang:Great job guys.

She looked at the building. Joshua stood next to her.

Marang:You forgot to tell me this? They will be done building in two months and will start painting and all that.

Joshua:Yes babe.

Marang:Thank you.

Joshua:You don't have to thank me.

Marang:My dreams came true because of you. I love you baby.

Joshua:I love you too. We can go now.

Marang:Okay.

They said bye and walked to their car.

Marang:Baby since we are having four kids, a family car would be okay. For their hospital visits and all.

Joshua:In three months okay?

Marang:Okay.

Joshua:We can sell this one and buy a family car.

Marang:It's still fine, the kids first. Maybe after their first birthday we will buy the cars we desire.

Joshua:True.

He kissed her cheek and buckled her up. She pulled the jacket close as he reversed.

At the Coltons

Ma Joshua was looking at baby clothes on an online catalog. Her grandkids would look cute in that. She made the purchases with a white heart. She couldn't

wait to babysit them and wondered who they would like. Marang or Joshua? Or have a mix of both their genes? This was an exciting time and it was just happiness in their family.

## At the Cemetery

Marang dusted the tombstone with her hands and smiled.

Marang:Mmaiye hi. I am back and I have great news. Joshua and I are expecting four babies very soon. Your great great grandchild ma. I wish you were here to see and hold them but you had to go. The last time I was here I wasn't happy but now I am ma. I am very happy and excited too. I didn't bring flowers but this week I will be here, taking my time to clean and then give you white flowers. Just continue resting in peace my love. I love you always.

Marang smiled as she kissed her hand and placed it



on the tombstone. Her heart was always at peace here and maybe while she was here she should visit every two weeks. What that old lady said was buried at the back of her mind for now.

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## THE GAME

#110

A few days later

At Bobonong

Nadia got on the first bus to Francistown. She sat comfortably on the chair. She was going to drop off applications for work maybe she will find something that side. Even a job as a nanny would suffice at this point. Being unemployed was hurting her and she couldn't rely on her parents when she was this old. She would be dropping off her CV at shops and day care centers.

She sighed and leaned back as the bus conductor told people where the bus was going and she

pressed her phone to keep herself company. She scrolled through Facebook and she saw that Joshua had updated his profile picture with a selfie of his wife. She read the caption, 'this is what she gets up to when she is holding my phone'

She looked different somehow. Maybe it was because of the chubby cheeks and she was smiling. She was beautiful and which man would leave his wife for an unemployed graduate? Looking at that mere fact though she didn't know what she did or if she was in school. There was a lot she didn't know about his wife because they never spend a lot of time at the village.

The bus started moving twenty minutes later once it was fully occupied and Nadia got comfortable. She would arrive in two hours and that means she would be there around half eight or nine.

At Joshua's house

Marang moaned as her husband made slow love to her. What did she do to deserve this morning glory? Or he was just horny? He slid out of her leaving a trail of semen behind and he kissed her lips.

Joshua:I love you sweetness.

Marang:Mhmm..

He looked at her bare full breasts. He was careful to stay away from them because they were sensitive and she didn't like her breasts to be touched these days though they looked good for sucking. She looked at him through hooded eyelids, she was satiated and wanted to sleep now.

Joshua:I'll wake you up when I leave for work okay?

She nodded and turned to her side closing her eyes. He pushed her hair back and kissed her salty neck. She was beautiful. He got up from bed and covered her up with the blankets before he headed to the bathroom for a shower.

An hour later Marang was fast asleep. She had her hands around her tummy and she snored softly.

Joshua:Sweetness?

He bent down by her side. He shouldn't wake her up but she also had an online test today she needed to get ready for.

Joshua:baby?

Marang:hmm?

Joshua:Wake up, you have an online test in two hours baby girl.

She yawned and kept her eyes closed. It had slipped her mind.

Joshua:On family medicine..

Marang:Mmh..

Joshua:I'm not leaving until you are fully awake. I just remembered that when I was in the shower.

Marang finally opened her eyes and yawned again.

Marang:Did I study?(yawning)

He laughed kissing her.

Joshua:Yeah. You're still sleepy..

He waited till she sat upright and rubbed her eyes.  
He sat next to her on the bed and held her.

Joshua:Awake?

Marang:Ee rra. Thanks.

He nodded and let her go.

Marang:Maybe I should go to work with you. It will help with my rounds too and I can be supervised.You'll write the test with me? Skolo se boima (school is tough)(yawning)

Joshua:You want to go with me?

She nodded.

Marang:I won't just be home, ke pusha syllabus gape.

Joshua:Take a bath and get ready. I'll make you something to eat.

Marang:You are writing with me akere? I swear I don't remember shit. Tlherra wena ka go kopa.(please, I'm begging you)

Joshua:Okay. Go take a bath, being thirty minutes late is nothing.

Marang:Thank you. Ka go rata rraagwe di quads autwe?(I love you okay?)

She kissed his cheek and he laughed.

Joshua:Ya go tlhapa tlhemma.(go bath please)

Marang:Ee rra.

She slowly got out of bed and walked to the bathroom. Joshua looked at the sheets and he removed the sheets. He heard the water running. Finally. He got fresh sheets and made the bed. He walked out of the bedroom while she was bathing. He needed to make something for her, something healthy. He wanted her to stop eating greasy food.

Regardless of her cravings, that wasn't healthy for her and she knew it.

He opted for fruits, juice, toast and yoghurt. By the time she came down in another long dress and her white coat she looked at the food.

Marang:Baby di heletse?(is that all?)

Joshua:Babe what more do you want?

Marang:Fish fingers, Russian and eggs. Don't forget that burger you made for me yesterday.

Joshua:I would rather make the burger right now, you are consuming too much oils.

Marang:Okay. I'll eat that but make the burger ee.

She sat on the chair and started eating while he made the burger. She moved her legs up and down. She could still touch her toes for now. She smiled. He was busy making food for her while in his scrubs with his cologne on him.



Marang:Doctor Colton?

Joshua:Yes?

Marang:I love you.

He smiled placing the burger in front of her. He kissed her and she deepened the kiss wrapping her small arms around his neck.

Marang:Work. I have to focus.

He laughed.

Joshua:I'm the one who has to focus, I can't focus when you are around me.

Marang:Focus. We write my test mme. Joshua I have to get a hundred because you are writing with me and you graduated ka GPA e robust.

Joshua:I'm not promising anything.

Marang:Don't do that to me, don't!

She let him go and she got her burger. She touched

her neck, she didn't take her stethoscope.

Marang:wait for me..

She walked to the bedroom biting into the burger.

At the hospital

Marang closed her mini laptop as she got up from his lap. The test was over and she hoped she got everything correct since he was helping her.

Marang:Thank you. I have to get back to work.

Joshua:Bye baby.

Marang walked out of his office and pulled her hair back. She will see how long she lasts now. Without her complaining about hunger and besides this walking up and down is enough exercise for her. She slipped her phone in her coat pocket. She turned back and walked to where Seeletso was.

Marang:We are going out at lunch time.

Seeletso:Okay doc, you are disturbing me now.

Marang rolled her eyes and walked away. She checked the time. Lunch time wasn't that far and she didn't know why she was thinking of food only. She should go on with her day.

In town

Nadia dropped off her documents at different shops and at day care centers hoping that they will consider her once they start hiring. She sat at a bench nearby and used her handkerchief to wipe the sweat on her face. She needs to buy something to eat but she knew it must be full because most workers are on a lunch break. She stood up and walked to Pick n Pay. She joined the line for fast food and she heard a familiar voice. She turned and saw Seeletso who was walking with Joshua's wife. Marang if she was not mistaken. She took a good look at the both of them and frowned. Marang

looked pregnant and was about six if not seven months because her tummy was big and visible. She faced the other way. No wonder she looked chubby on Joshua's profile picture. She was expecting their child.

She looked down embarrassed. She came onto a married man because his aunt thought his wife wasn't suitable and couldn't carry kids but here she was. Glowing, pregnant and happy.

Meanwhile Marang looked at Seeletso.

Marang:Join the line and buy the chicken, the one with fresh chips. Box the two. Another one is for Josh, I'm sure my poor husband is hungry and what are you buying?

Seeletso:Just fresh chips.

Marang:I'll buy drinks and some custard. I'll wait for you to pay or can I pay first and go to the car. Wait for you there?

Seeletso:You shouldn't be on your feet for too long.

Seeletso gave Marang her car keys.

Seeletso:Tshwara. You can wait for me in the car.

Marang:I also want us to pass by this shop too but I'll wait(taking the car keys)

She walked away with her little basket and went to buy the stuff she mentioned. Seeletso joined the line and looked ahead. Nadia watched Marang walk away. She was beautiful in all her shortness and she was light skinned too.

By the time Marang was done paying, Seeletso was on the queue waiting to pay. She walked out of the shop with the plastic and she covered her head with her hand. It was too sunny for her. She walked to the car and unlocked it. She made herself comfortable. Joshua wasn't going to let her drive herself anywhere and she was going to leave it at that. She

got her phone and texted him.

Marang:Hello baby(accompanied by a selfie)

Dr Bae:Hey sweetness.

Marang:So after dropping your lunch I'm heading straight home.

Dr Bae:is something wrong?

Marang:I want to rest, I'm tired.

Dr Bae:Okay love. Rest and I'll find you there. Don't cook. I'll cook when I knock off.

Marang:Thank you and I love you.

Dr Bae:I love you more sweet thing.

She smiled and placed her phone down. Letso should be here any minute from now. She opened the door and stuck her head out to check if she was on her way. She saw her from a distance. She was on her way.

She leaned back and waited for her to reach the car. Seeletso opened the door and she got inside.

Marang:Sister in law we are going to a lingerie shop.

Seeletso:Marang don't corrupt me please. I am a virgin.

Marang's jaw dropped.

Marang:Nyaa mma. We are going to a lingerie shop.

Seeletso:oh God!

Marang:You are missing it out. I won't say much because I'm talking about your brother and I might traumatize you..

Seeletso:Don't go on.(covering her ears)

Marang:sex e monate mma!(laughing) don't starve poor Jaden tlhe. Kana once a man knows how to move his waist and h-oh fuck! No let me shut up, ke bua thata ka monna wame.

Seeletso looked at Marang and she clapped her hands.

Marang:What? E monate akere dck. Ke reng? I

wouldn't be pregnant right now if I was scared of  
dck(shrugging)

Seeletso:o bua dilo Marang..

Marang grinned.

Marang:Start the car, we are going to a lingerie shop  
sis and I'm not debating it.

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## THE GAME

#111

At the lingerie shop

Marang poured. Her tummy was too big so she would settle for a bra and panties with a silk gown. Seeletso looked at Marang who had no worries and she was honestly speechless.

Marang walked to where Seeletso was and she sat next to her.

Marang: You do know you are old enough to buy lingerie even if it not for your man or anything?

Seeletso: Marang yoh!

She laughed.

Marang: Sis it's cool though. Just a single piece ee,

for me then. Please.

Seeletso:Fine but I am shooketh Marang.

Marang:Let's go to that aisle. It has nice pieces that do not fit me.

Seeletso:what do you look for when you buy lingerie.

Marang walked alongside Letso as she brushed her tummy.

Marang:It should be comfortable. Like don't buy something you won't feel comfortable in, you should love it too. That's all.

Seeletso looked at the pieces as the shop ladies watched the two ladies shop. The pregnant lady looked beautiful and she was glowing too. If only everyone could look that good while pregnant.

By the end of their short shopping spree, Seeletso had two sets and Marang was purchasing five. Including other she will wear post pregnancy. The pieces might not be there in a few months so it was

better she bought them now.

After paying the two ladies walked out of the shop and Marang talked all the way to the car. Seeletso had to admit that Marang was grown and she was a married woman. Why did Marang and her brother make love look so easy and effortless?

Marang:Can you drop me home? I need to rest. Josh said it's fine.

Seeletso:you are lucky I love you.

Marang:I love you too(smiling)

They got inside the car and she buckled up.

At the bus rank

Nadia got inside the bus that would take her home. She would be there probably before 5pm. She was crossing fingers that she might get a job in the next

few days and she was done. She would no longer chase after Joshua. He never really showed interest in her before and why would he when he had a wife like that?

She leaned back and waited for the bus to fill up.

At Joshua's house

Marang sat down on the couch after she had tried those pregnancy workouts. Those workouts will miss her. She cannot deal. She felt too heavy for that besides she had better ideas for a much more satisfying workout.

She took her phone and dialed a number.

Marang:Hello...I would like to place an order...can it be delivered?....what's on the menu?

She stood up and walked to the bedroom where she looked at the blankets. Everything was always clean in their house and she couldn't wait till their new house was finished. Imagine how it would look with a backyard garden and a swimming pool.

She really wanted to surprise her husband with the food and in turn he will get a massage. Then they would talk about yesterday's first therapy session. She had discovered that she didn't know a lot about her husband yet he knew her like the back of his hand. Okay she knew him but not his childhood. He had a tendency of keeping a lot of things to himself and a part of her was happy that she brought out the best in him at all times.

She would wait for the order she placed and then she would take a bath.

Later that day

Joshua's car parked in its regular spot and he got out of the car. First he would do is change his clothes and then get started on dinner. He was such a stellar husband if he would say so himself. He knocked on the door before opening it. He frowned then smiled seeing the small set up. She lit candles and had put the pillows on the mat. There was also food on the table. That's why she said she wanted to rest. Marang walked out of the bedroom tying her silk robe while John Legend and Jhenè Aiko's U move, I move played softly in the background.

Marang:Hey baby. Let me get your bag.

Joshua:You did this for me?

Marang:Yes. You can change and you will find me here.

She kissed his cheek and got his bag heading to the bedroom. He silently followed his wife there and wrapped his arms around her.

Joshua:I love you.

Marang:Same. Change love, you are still in your scrubs.

He did so with a smile.

At Bobonong

Nadia sat down as she talked to her mother.

Nadia:I sent out my documents and I am crossing fingers that they hire me.

Ma Nadia:I hope so too.

Nadia:and mama can you talk to Joshua's aunt? She should stop pushing me towards Joshua, he has a pregnant wife to take care of.

Ma Nadia gasped.

Ma Nadia:apparently it was said she is barren.

Nadia:she is not. I saw her in Francistown. She was glowing and so pretty. I just need to focus on myself right now and not try to get in married people's issues.

Ma Nadia:You are right.

Nadia:Mhmm. And I will stop going there. We are neighbors but that doesn't mean I should do stuff for them.

Ma Nadia:okay my child.

Nadia yawned and said goodnight heading to her room.

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I'll try to post three inserts each day till the book ends. And I would like to tell you that the page WhatsApp number will be unavailable for some time. My phone doesn't work and the one I have right



now I don't even want to talk about it because it's not even mine So my apologies to those who sent messages to the page WhatsApp number and I didn't respond. I never ignore your messages even though I reply late.

Oh and prepare your hearts. The road ahead is...sad. In not so many words. Have a blessed night family

## THE GAME

#112

At Joshua's house

Marang sat on his lap as they talked about their therapy session.

Marang: You should learn to talk to me about anything and everything. I keep saying that I am not a delicate flower Josh. Babe I am 23 now.

He chuckled.

Joshua: You grew up fast.

Marang: Ga ke batle (laughing)

Joshua: I'm so used to being the protector, provider and nurturer in the relationship I don't know anything else.

Marang:I know that but we are in this together Josh. I can never judge you, never. You see here(touching her chest to show her heart)that's where I keep all your love and everything about you. Babe even if it's 2am in the morning, don't hesitate to talk to me. I take care of you and you take care of me.

She wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek.

Marang:are you full?

Joshua:I know you didn't cook the food. I know your cooking.

Marang shrugged.

Marang:As long as you ate and are full I'm good baby.

Joshua:thank you.

His hand settled around her butt and she bit her lower lip. Joshua removed the silk gown and smiled kissing her cleavage.

Joshua:this is new.

Marang:just for you(touching the back of his head)

Joshua:You look sexy mama bear.

She laughed as he licked the top of her breasts.

Marang:I know you are lying.

He picked her up and walked to the bedroom with her in his arms. He gently placed her on the bed. He didn't know how he got so lucky. Marang watched him remove his sweatpants. Even in his 30s he looked good. He joined her on the bed and she giggled. Joshua held her face and kissed her pink lips while his other hand slipped into her panties. She moaned into the kiss feeling his big hand down there. The night was going to be long.

Around midnight

Marang opened her eyes feeling pangs of pain around her abdomen and looked at her husband who was fast asleep. She looked around the dark room and rubbed her tummy. That was when the words of that old woman came to mind. She rubbed her tummy and thought of waking her husband but he looked so peaceful.

It was probably nothing and she was worrying over nothing. She closed her eyes but the pain got worse. She remembered the time she thought nothing of the pain five years ago and she lost her firstborn child. She breathed in and out and shook Joshua.

Marang:Baby? Babe?

He faced the other way and she sighed. She shook him again.

Marang:Babe tsoga tlherra go botlhoko(wake up please, it's painful)

He opened his eyes and yawned sitting up right. Marang used her fists to wipe her tears.

Joshua:Hey angel what's wrong?

Marang:It hurts like the last time I lost our baby.

Joshua:Shit!

He jumped of bed to wear his boxers and he picked his sweatpants from the floor. He found a tee and wore that. He got her long gown from the wardrobe and helped her wear it. He got the car keys before picking her up.

Joshua:When did the pains start? Talk to me..

Marang:a few minutes ago when I woke up.

Joshua:Okay, we are going to the hospital right now baby okay?

She nodded sniffing.

Marang:maybe it's my fault...

Joshua:Don't say that.

He used one hand to unlock the door and opened it. He unlocked the car and opened the door to place her inside. He rushed to the house to lock it before rushing back to the car.

Joshua:Baby breathe for me and massage your tummy.

She did as he said as tears streamed down her face.

Marang:It hu-hurts. If I took what that old lady said into consideration an-

Joshua started the car and looked behind as he reversed.

Joshua:Baby breath. What old lady? Breath angel, we'll be at the hospital in no time.

Marang:Wh-when we were at the grocery store an old lady said I shouldn't let anyone touch my tummy or anyone hug m-me. She said not everyone wants to see me with a child(crying)

Joshua:Sweetness breath and massage where it

hurts okay? Don't panic, you are raising your blood pressure and we don't want hypertension at this stage of pregnancy. The quads are okay..

He said as he drove to the hospital. He kept on reassuring her all the way to the hospital. He was sure he was fast enough to crash the car but did it even matter when he had to rush his wife to the hospital in the middle of the night. He got out of the car and picked her up.

Joshua: Hey try to breath okay.

She nodded and kept her hands on her tummy.

Joshua walked inside the hospital with her and the staff that was on the night shift looked at him.

Marang was doing rounds earlier today and she was perfectly fine.

Joshua: Someone prepare a room for her.

He used his thumb to wipe her tears.

Joshua: Sweetness we are here, does it still hurt?



She nodded and he kissed the top of her head. A nurse led him to the room and he placed her on the bed.

Joshua:Can I have clean scrubs?

Their hospital obstetrician walked inside.

Her:Joshua I'm afraid that I won't let you handle this one. You can't treat her when you are her husband.

Joshua:I've been doing that for the past years. I n-

Her:I'm afraid you won't be a doctor for this one.

He sighed as he sat on the chair next to the bed and held her hand. He kissed her hand.

Joshua:Babe, I'm here and it's going to be okay okay?

She nodded as they took her other hand connecting it to the IV drip.

Her:We will run a scan in a few minutes and find the

problem.

Joshua looked at his colleague. He didn't want to sit here, he wanted to find out what was happening and help his wife. They both knew she was far from giving birth. She was only four months pregnant but then with a multiple pregnancy anything was possible.

He sighed and pushed her hair back kissing her forehead whilst reassuring her while the doctor and nurse did their thing.

The following morning

At Bobonong

Ma Nadia called the aunt over by the fence.

Ma Nadia: Good morning.

Aunt: Morning. I heard Nadia was in town looking for

a job.

Ma Nadia:Yes. About that, Nadia says she doesn't want to be forced onto Joshua.

Aunt:We weren't forcing her, it was just a suggestion and she didn't have to do anything.

Ma Nadia:Well she wants to focus on herself and it's of no use since his wife is pregnant.

The aunt laughed and clapped her hands. Who? That Marang? Pregnant? It would take a miracle for her to fall pregnant. Nadia was probably saying it just so she humbly recovers from Joshua's rejection.

Ma Nadia:Did I say anything funny?

Aunt:(snorting)no. I'm just surprised that she is pregnant. If she was we would've known don't you think?

Ma Nadia shrugged.

Ma Nadia:well Nadia says she is pregnant and she doesn't want to ruin a marriage so let's pretend this surrogacy talk never happened.

Aunt:Nadia is serious?

Ma Nadia:You can call and ask her...

Aunt:Call her.

Ma Nadia called her daughter who walked out of the house, she was still polishing the floor and now they called her.

Ma Nadia:Nadia akere you saw Marang?

Nadia:She was in the shop with Seeletso. I didn't say hi though.

Aunt:She is pregnant?

Nadia:Ee mma. Can I finish cleaning?

Her mother nodded and Nadia walked away. The aunt was shocked. Pregnant? How? When?

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## THE GAME

#113

At the hospital

The obstetrician examined Marang again that morning. Joshua was holding her hands through it all.

Her:Hey doc.

Marang smiled softly as she tried to sit up right.

Her:You guys were worrying over nothing, the babies were shifting and it was painful on her side because the mother is just so tiny.

Joshua breathed a sigh of relief kissing her hands.

Her:So I will keep you here an extra day but she is fine. There is nothing wrong and we have a healthy

pregnancy right here.

Joshua:Thank you.

Her:I told you not to worry. Excuse me.

She walked out and Marang rubbed her tummy. Thank God all was well, she was so scared this morning that there might be something wrong and she didn't want to lose even one. Silence enveloped the room and he rubbed her hands.

Joshua:Marang?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:You mentioned something about an old woman. You said she told you not everyone wants to see you pregnant.

Marang:She did. At the grocery store.

Joshua:And why didn't you tell me?

Marang:It was very random and weird. She looked like a kind lady though but she didn't know me.

Joshua:regardless(sighing)I'll talk to my mom about

it. It may be a sign of some sort okay. With this delicate pregnancy we are not letting anything slide okay sweetie?

She nodded and he kissed her forehead.

Joshua:I love you.

At Bobonong

The aunt served tea the old woman and she sat down to take a bite from the scone.

Aunt:I just heard from Nadia..

Ma Colton:What?

Aunt sipped her tea before she spilled the tea.

Aunt:apparently Josh and Marang are expecting?

The granny jumped out of her seat and ululated. Grandkids finally.

Ma Colton:the Lord is good. Yoh!(ululating)our

ancestors heard our plea.

The aunt faked a smile.

Aunt:Finally. It was about time.

Ma Colton:God is good. Badimo ba re gopotse (our ancestors remembered us)

The old woman stood up and walked to her bedroom while the aunt scrunched her face. How did this happen? She stood up and got her phone walking outside.

She looked around and dialed the number. It rang three times before it was answered.

Aunt:Hello?

Voice:What do you want?

Aunt:She is pregnant..

The line cut and she tried it again. It didn't go



through this time. She sighed and walked back to the house. She will see what to do.

Meanwhile inside the house the old woman called her son.

Ma Colton:Hello.

Ra Josh:Hello ma..

Ma Colton:And you guys didn't tell me the good news?

Ra Josh:What good news ma?

Ma Colton:That I will finally hold my great grand kids before I die, I had to hear from the grapevine.

Ra Josh:We wanted Joshua to tell you.

Ma Colton:It's okay, I am too happy to even scold him for not sharing the news.

She started ululating and Ra Josh laughed. His mother's excitement was too much and they can talk to Joshua and Marang to see if they will allow the

old lady to help once the kids were here. They could use an elder who knew about these things since his wife has never ever looked after any grandkids and old people knew these things really well.

Ma Colton:I'll call Joshua. Bye my son. I'm so happy. The ancestors have remembered us.

She hung up and Ra Josh laughed.

At the hospital

Joshua fed his wife as she rubbed her tummy.

Marang:Have you thought of names?

Joshua:After the scan we will know who won the bet then we have name suggestions.

Marang:akere month end you and I are going baby shopping?

Joshua:Yes.

His phone rang in his pocket and he took it out. Marang peeked and saw the caller Id. Joshua answered and put the phone on loudspeaker.

Joshua:Hello..

She started by ululating and Marang laughed softly. What was the reason?

Ma Colton:Congratulations my children.

Joshua:Mmaiye?

Ma Colton:Our ancestors heard our plea. We are having a grandchild.

Joshua:Thank you.

Ma Colton:I'll be there. There is a lot to be done to protect the mother to be, I am coming.

Joshua:Okay ma.

Marang:Hello..

She ululated some more and she laughed.

Ma Colton:You just made me happy.

Marang:Glad you are happy ma.

The old lady went on to blab about where she heard the news and how they didn't tell her first. Once she hung up Marang frowned.

Marang:Have I seen Nadia before?

Joshua:I don't think you pay careful attention.

Marang:Yaanong now we are the talk of the village?

Joshua:I don't think we should go there..

Marang:I think so too but your granny is cool. She might help too.

Joshua:Besides old women know a lot.

Marang:A whole lot. Bathong people gossip yoh. I wanted a peaceful pregnancy kana. Something low key.

Joshua:I know baby girl.

He kissed her cheek.

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## THE GAME

#114

Later that day

At Joshua's house

The doctor had cleared his wife of anything and she was healthy so there was nothing keeping them in hospital. At this moment Marang was peacefully asleep and he let her be, she was going to wake up hungry and demand for food. He will get started on that but he needed to ask his mother about what Marang said.

He called his mother.

Ma Josh:Hello..

Joshua:Hey mom, I have a question.

Ma Josh:I am listening.

Joshua:So Marang said when we were at the grocery store she saw an old lady who told her to be very careful about her pregnancy. She said the old lady said nobody must touch her stomach or hug her because not everyone wants to see her with a child..

Ma Joshua sat down and thought about it.

Ma Josh:If what we were told growing up was true, then that old lady must have been a guardian angel or something along those lines deep on what you believe in. She should really take that warning.

Pregnancy is a delicate stage because that's when enemies decide to pounce and now that I think about it maybe that's why it took so long for you guys to fall pregnant when there was absolutely nothing wrong. Maybe there are people who do not want to see her happy with a child and just hate her.

Joshua closed his eyes. The way his mother put it made so much sense because medically there was nothing wrong with them and that's why it had frustrated his little wife so much. That they were healthy and fertile but still couldn't fall pregnant.

Ma Josh:It must mean her guides are strong if she got such a warning. She should pray and your grandmother knows a lot about these traditional things. I mean when I was pregnant she was the one who came and did the things. I have no idea what she did but look at you guys all healthy. I'll call her to come over. Just her.

Joshua:She called earlier.

Ma Joshua frowned.

Ma Josh:Okay.

Joshua:She knows. Apparently a Nadia saw my wife and decided to tell the whole village that she is expecting.

Ma Josh:uhu! That one who your uncle's wife said



must be your surrogate? Metlholo!(clapping her hands) when will people learn to mind their own business bathong?

Joshua:I have no idea.

Ma Josh:Regardless, your grandmother will come. She knows what to do and these old people know a lot of things.

Joshua:Thank you.

Ma Josh:Tell Marang to pray too. That might help. We want all those four children and the mother alive and healthy.

Joshua:Will do. Bye.

Ma Josh:Bye.

He hung up and stared at his phone for a while before he stood up. He couldn't stop thinking of the what ifs. What if someone was planning to harm his wife and kids? Losing a single child from those four would kill his wife. She was so excited to be a mother and after so long, she was going to be one to

four children.

At Bobonong

The aunt sat on her bed and sighed. How? That was the question that pondered in her head. How was Marang pregnant? Of course she didn't like the little girl. Everyone liked her and talked about her mannerism and her beauty. She was too perfect for her liking even at family gatherings the stubborn people liked her.

The person didn't even know her parents, she didn't even know her ancestors and was never sure of where she came from. She also looked familiar. Too familiar every time she looked at her. There was something she couldn't put her finger on in regards to Marang's identity because she said her mother died when she was young and her grandmother died when she was a teenager.

But right now that was not important. She wasn't supposed to fall pregnant in the first place. She needed to see the person who helped her. She did a very wacky job if Marang managed to fall pregnant.

She stood up and slid her feet into the shoes, she got her bag and phone too,

Aunt: I need to go.

She said to herself as she walked out of the bedroom.

At Jaden's place

Seeletso sat next to him as they talked about their future plans and life goals.

Seeletso: A big house would suffice right?

Jaden:one with a backyard and a swimming pool.

She sighed placing her head on his chest.

Seeletso:I should also move out of my parents' house.

Jaden:housemates are hard to handle?

Seeletso:You see that I'm here with you? I have to be home by ten or else they are locking the gate and in the morning I will have to explain where I am from because in their house, everyone should be there by ten.

Jaden:I will help you look for a bachelor pad.

Seeletso:Thank you.(kissing him)

Jaden:Then you should start buying stuff for your house.

Seeletso:That means I have to use my savings to furnish the house. Yoh!

Jaden:I'll call someone and see if a house to rent will be available.

Seeletso:I think by the end of the month I should move out.

Jaden:Talk to the housemates.

Seeletso:I sure will babe. Cuddle me.

He kissed her forehead,

Jaden:Okay, long day at work?

Seeletso:You have no idea. It was stressful and tiring.

Jaden:Do you ever rest?

Seeletso:I was off last week but it's hectic an(yawning)ke tired.

Jaden:I'll drive you home okay?

Seeletso:Thank you babe. I love you too..

She closed her eyes and cuddled into him. Minutes later he got up from the couch with her in his arms and his phone along the way. He walked to the bedroom and placed her on the bed. He yawned as

he removed his shirt and was left in his vest. He removed his shoes and joined her on the bed. He set the alarm to nine. They will wake up and he will drive her home.

He placed the phone by the night stand and pulled her body into his before he covered them with the blanket and closed his eyes. He was unaware that he had set the time to nine in the morning as he slept cuddling his girlfriend.

At Bobonong

The aunt looked around before she entered the hut. She removed her shoes and sat on the mat.

She looked at the lady. Their enchantments were supposed to work but they didn't.

Aunt:How?

Her:She finally appeased her guides.

Aunt:How? Why? She was supposed to be blind to that and we performed that small enchantment to tie her womb.

Her:Some things are out of our control.

Aunt:What must be done now? If it's something, that child should not survive.

Her:You are playing with fire.

Aunt:I know fire and I have never been burnt by the flames. What's next?

The lady started talking and the aunt smiled. This was going to be subtle and very easy.

At Joshua's house

Joshua rubbed her tummy, massaging it as she ate her fruits.

Joshua:While you were asleep I talked to my mother.

Marang:Okay.

Joshua:She says we should pray about the issue and grandma is coming soon.

Marang nodded.

Marang:I have never gone to church before, akere it's just prayer? We are still God's children even if we do not go to church?

Joshua:we still are. You want to start going to church?

Marang:I don't know where to start so we will just pray. Thank you for the massage.

Joshua:I'm bonding with my kids, it's not for you.

Marang:Mxm! Tswa ha(laughing)

Joshua:Hey there guys. I hope you are all fine in mommy's tummy.

Marang:they are fine.

Joshua:Baby I'm not talking to you..



She shook her head laughing as her husband talked to her tummy. It was kind of cute though.

Marang:So we pray before we sleep right?

Joshua:Right?

Marang:Uhm do we have to read the Bible?

Joshua:We can read the Bible and pray about it all. Don't fret okay love? The kids are going to be fine. We are fine and everything will be well.

Marang:trust in God...

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3 months later

## THE GAME

#115

At Joshua's house

Marang sat on the huge ball Joshua bought for her for exercises. This pregnancy wasn't supposed to exceed 8 months or it would put her at risk. The obstetrician told her that she is tiny and by the looks of it her babies were very healthy and heavy. Her body won't be able to carry it long term so they might come anytime from here on. She looked at the watch. He said he will be home by six and it was almost seven in the evening. Maybe he got delayed by something at work and today she managed to cook and clean so it was something.

She did those exercises she saw on YouTube and hoped they were working. After a few minutes she

got off the ball and rubbed her tummy. She was heavy and it was so big. She walked to the bedroom and picked her phone up. She read the message he had sent.

Dr Bae:Hey sweetness, there was an emergency at the hospital. I will be there before nine. Forgive me and I'm sorry okay? Don't pout, I know you are pouting. I love you baby

She smiled. She was going to throw a fit when he came back if he didn't send a message. She placed the phone down and laid on the bed. At this point of her pregnancy they stopped having sex, she didn't feel like it and she was too big. She remembered the day she told him she doesn't feel like sex anymore. He laughed at her, he even had tears in his eyes from the laughing. He was like she was the sex addict and she just refused sex served on a silver platter like that. She shook her head. People didn't know he was always clowning around when he was with her.

She turned to her side and touched her belly. She was wearing a wristband she got from Joshua's grandmother. She said it will also protect her, she also had one around her ankle not forgetting morning and evening prayers. She and Josh prayed everyday.

Her phone rang and she groaned. She wanted to sleep, she was tired from doing all that work today.

Marang:Hello?

Seeletso:Hi. You are sure that you don't want a baby shower?

Marang:Really sure. Don't plan anything, Mmaiye said batho ba lowa and some might apply stuff to the baby clothes or the presents they bring so no baby showers. I've long wanted this pregnancy and I just want all my four kids.

Seeletso:Okay. I understand love.

Marang:But sending money never hurt anyone.

Seeletso:Money will do then. I wasn't disturbing was

I?

Marang:Not at all. I was just about to sleep.(softly)

Seeletso:I will check on you tomorrow then. Bye love.

Marang:Bye.

She put the phone away and yawned. Her best friend was continents away and by the time she gets here, the babies would have been born and she will get the chance to meet the babies. She was going to get the surprise of her life. Meeting four children instead of one.

At the Coltons

That evening the uncle dropped the grandmother at Ra Joshua's place.

Aunt:Will we see the mother to be?

Ma Colton:Not now. Let the poor child breath and enjoy her pregnancy.

Aunt:Just to see and congratulate her.

Ma Colton:You can talk to her about that.

Was all the old woman said before she got out of the car and the uncle got her bags from the back of the car.

Aunt:You can give her this...

The aunt handed the old woman a gif bag full of baby clothes.

Ma Colton looked at the bag suspiciously. Doreen as of late has been pushing to meet Marang and she wasn't settled about her seeing Marang. Looking at the fact that pregnancy was very delicate.

Ma Colton:I will give it to her.

The aunt smiled as uncle walked with granny to the house with the baby clothes and the luggage. Very soon there won't be a pregnancy to speak of or a

child. As soon as she touched the clothes or even made the child wear them if the child makes it out of her womb alive. Things were going easier than expected although the stubborn little thing didn't come to the village. She rolled her eyes.

The uncle came back to the car and he started the car before driving off.

Meanwhile in the house, the granny looked at the clothes and shook her head. Her soul wasn't settled. She didn't trust these clothes. For someone who was willing to break the marriage and introduce a surrogate and now she gave Marang clothes?

Ma Colton:Hello.

Ma Josh:Dumelang. The room is ready.

Ma Colton:alright. Can I have matches?

Ma Josh:Sure..

She walked to the kitchen and came back with a box of matches. She gave the old woman who walked out with a gift bag. She frowned and followed her.

Ma Josh:What's wrong?

Ma Colton:These are clothes from Doreen. I don't trust her.

Ma Josh:Okho! Yoo? Le boloi ka tswa a bo dira(that one? She might even be practicing witchcraft)

Ma Colton found a spot and placed the gift bag there. She lit a match and threw it on the clothes. They started burning.

Ma Colton:Marang is carrying my great grandchildren and I don't want anything to happen to her and the kids.

They watched the clothes burn to ashes before returning to the house.



## At Bobonong

The aunt's accomplice shook her head. This was a dead end, if the unit kept pushing she was going to be exposed and it won't look good.

This young girl they were trying to block, had her ancestors on her side and her ancestors were pleased with her even though she didn't know it. They couldn't even see when she was going to give birth. Yah neh, she was protected and they couldn't touch her unless the aunt went directly to her and touched her tummy. That had proved to be nearly impossible so she should rest and let it be. That way no one will know anything. And it will be all swept up under the rug.

## At the hospital

Joshua walked out of the theater. He was going to

get rid of the temporary scrubs he was wearing. The surgery was a success though and he wanted to go home to his wife and kids. He couldn't get over the fact that each and everyday they were nearing the birth of their kids. It was scary and exciting at the same time. Imagine meeting four new faces for the first time and watching them take their first breaths. He couldn't wait to hold them in his arms and help his wife with the kids, those sleepless nights and the turns they would take to put them to sleep.

By the time he was done cleaning up, he looked at the mirror. Maybe he should take a paternal leave if it existed. To spend time at home and help his wife with the kids. It wasn't only one child they were expecting. They were expecting four kids who were going to change the course of their life.

He smiled and walked out. He was passing by his office to get his stuff then he was going to go home.

At Theo's place

Theo finally walked inside the house after a long day at work. The lady who was their helper had said she was going to be at a funeral the whole of this week and had sent her niece to help.

The house was quiet and that meant the twins were asleep. He was met by Clara at the door who was smiling at him. He frowned. It was her first day here and he thought her aunt had briefed her. She was in shorts and a sports bra.

Theo:Hi Clara, are the twins asleep?

Clara:Yes sir. I even made dinner.

He sighed.

Theo:And can we talk about your dressing? It is inappropriate.

Clara:I didn't realize.

Theo: Now you realize. Taking care of kids does not require you to wear shorts and a bra. My in laws might pass by at any moment Ben my parents. What will that say about me?

Clara: I understand.

Theo: Thank you.

He passed her and headed to the bedroom.

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## THE GAME

#116

At Joshua's place

Marang tossed and turned alone in bed. She opened her eyes and rubbed her tummy. There was slight pain below her abdomen. She got out of bed and switched on the lights. She looked at the sheets and sighed. She rubbed her abdomen and walked out of the room. She got to the lounge and the lights were on. He was on his computer and writing.

Marang:Hey.

Joshua:Hey baby. Sit down and thank you for the lunch, you know you didn't have to.

Marang:I wanted to.

She sat down and hid the frown as she rubbed her

tummy.

Marang:What are you doing?

Joshua:Making short notes for you so you don't have to stare at your laptop screen for long or your textbooks. If I left something out, you'll tell me.

Marang:Do people know you are the best husband in the world?

Joshua:No they don't.

Marang:Well they need to know..

She looked at her notebook and it had his smart handwriting. He even takes time to make short notes for her? This was it. This man was it.

Joshua rubbed his eyes and rubbed her tummy before kissing it.

Joshua:Guys I'm doing this because you guys are too heavy for mummy and she gets tired.

Marang:Do I really have to pay the thousand?

Joshua:We agreed. That was a bet sweetness. We are going to have our hands full and I cannot wait.

Marang:Look I'm your aaah!(touching her tummy)

Joshua:What's wrong?

Marang:It aah! Oh God!

Joshua:Talk to me sweetness..

Marang:I think the babies are coming. Baby get the baby bag. Ah ah! Sir ng ng!

He got up from the couch as she rubbed her tummy with her biting her cheeks. He quickly rushed to the spare bedroom in their house and got the bag. He looked at the four cots set up in the room and he passed by their room for the car keys, his phone, her bag and to wear a t-shirt.

He walked back to the lounge and she was breathing in and out.

Marang:Ng ng, this is getting worse. The contractions seem far apart or are they Braxton Hicks?

Joshua:We will find out at the hospital and you are doing good.

Marang:I take back my words. Never touch me Joshua!

Joshua:I'm Joshua now?

Marang:A reye yoh!

He helped her stand and held her waist as they walked to the door. She had a huge tummy and add her short height to that. He chuckled. He didn't expect that slap on his arm from her.

Marang:Don't laugh. I'm in pain.

Joshua:I was not laughing.

Marang:Don't laugh..

Joshua:I am not tlhe..

He opened the door and she stepped out first. He locked it and unlocked the car before he caught up with her.



Marang:So it's serious I'm pushing out four heads?  
God I always see what you yoh, so for other kids in  
the labor ward. Don't make this painful tthe God. You  
made me tiny and everything about me is tiny.

Joshua couldn't help himself. He burst into laughter  
and two slaps landed on his arm. He was still going  
to be slapped here.

Joshua:Breath babe, let's breath. The amniotic sac is  
still intact.

Marang:It hurts mme.

Joshua:When we get there just calm down and  
breath and keep your small hands to yourself. Those  
little slaps hurt.

Marang ignored that last statement as he opened  
the car door for her and she got inside. He buckled  
her up.

Joshua:Comfortable?

Marang:No, I wish you can feel this waitse..

Joshua:That will be the day pigs fly sweetness.

Marang:is this a joke to you? You don't care if I'm in

pain?(getting teary)

Joshua:I care baby, I was just joking. I'm sorry and it will be all over soon okay?

Her tears rolled down her cheeks and he used his thumb to wipe them before he kissed her nose.

Joshua:I'm here okay baby? Every step of the way I'm here sweetness.

He walked to his side and got inside the car. He started it and held her hand.

Joshua:Sweetness, I'm sorry okay my love? I love you.

He started the car and drove off.

At Theo's house

Theo was in the kid's room video calling Phemelo.

Theo:They are asleep babe.

Phemelo:You had to prove me wrong, show me their faces.

He walked to their cots and showed her their peaceful faces as she cooed on the phone screen.

Phemelo:I miss them, my breasts are still leaking milk. Ne gotwe ke ba kgwisa ba le bo six months(I was supposed to wean them when they reached 6 months)

Theo:You had school akere my love.

Phemelo:And I need to get that degree right?

She removed the beanie that was on her head and showed him her head.

Phemelo:Look my hair is growing.

He chuckled. She was precious alright, to think she was worried about her hair and her imperfections. First it was her leg and he was glad that she was confident enough to remove the prosthetic around him and use her crutches. He had accepted that it

was difficult for her to use the shower and a part of him still had regrets about that accident. He has kids but she will never get her leg back. Never ever.

Phemelo:Baby are you there? I look ugly?

She put in her beanie and looked at the phone screen.

Theo:Sorry I zoned out.

Phemelo:What's wrong?

He rubbed his face.

Theo:I'm so sorry baby okay?

Phemelo>About what? What happened?

Theo:Ab-

At that very moment the babies started to cry and he left the phone on the table. The door opened and Clara walked in still in the clothes she was wearing when Theo came back from work.

Phemelo frowned. Was that a young lady? She looked older than her but she was in shorts and looked comfortable. She got one of the children.

Clara: I'll help you, you can try to get Motheo to sleep, it's Motheo right?

He nodded as he looked at Motheo. He had his mother's eyes and he always felt like he was looking into Phemelo's eyes every time he looked at him. Phemelo closed her eyes. They had agreed on a maid and he decided to hire someone younger. She looked pretty and her body was fit. She was trying her best to lose the baby fat with the fitness plan Marang had sent but it was hard, it was going to take some time to do some exercise with her fake leg. She still felt and looked ugly. He didn't even comment on her new hair growth, that was progress on her part right? Tears filled her eyes and she wiped them with her hands.

She didn't hang up and watched as Theo put Motheo

to sleep. The girl walked in and she had hair, it was long and silky. Her throat dried up and she cleared her throat. That was when Theo remembered he was on a video call with her. Clara placed Maano in his cot and walked out. Theo sat on the chair and Phemelo and tears in her eyes.

Phemelo:They are asleep?

Theo:Yeah.

She sniffed and sighed.

Phemelo:What were you sorry about?

Theo:The accident.

Phemelo:it happened years ago. Goodnight.

Her tone had changed and she looked down now. She hung up and he called again but she didn't answer her phone. He tried once again and it was off.

At the hospital

Marang sat on the hospital bed doing her breathing exercise. She was a doctor to be, she knew these things.

Joshua sat on the chair and watched her do her exercises. She didn't want him near her at this moment.

Marang:These are contractions but the water..

Joshua:It happens sweetness. Calm down...

She glared at him and he raised his hands in surrender. He didn't want those arm slaps from her again. She couldn't keep her small hands to herself.

Marang:You? (Shaking her head)

She got off the bed and walked around the room doing breathing exercises.

Joshua:Should I massage you?

Marang:Don't touch me, the last time you touched me we had sex and now I'm pain. O bona go rata morobalano ga bo Marang re le bana, go tla re bolaya (You see liking sex Marang when you are still

a child, it will kill me)

He laughed and kept his head low. To think that she never talks around people and always says such stuff when she was around him. Everyone always said Marang was quiet and sweet. She was sweet though, she has always been like that but around him she wasn't quiet. Hardly.

Joshua:Baby you said you are 23 akere?

Marang:I am 23 but I am a child yoh! Go botlhoko, the waters need to break ah. I can't handle these contractions. Come massage me ee.

Joshua:You said I shouldn't to-

Marang:Massage me tlherra, you had one job. To put one baby in me but no, your sperm chose to be special and multiply into four. Jesu!

Joshua:Baby o bua dilo.

Marang:Come massage me, maybe the water will break. We are sure these are contractions so I don't know how long they will last.



She sat on the bed and laid on her back waiting for him to lift the hospital gown and massage her tummy. Joshua lifted the gown and started to massage her tummy.

Marang:That side tlhe..

Joshua:Ee mma..

Marang:Apply more pressure..

Joshua:Ee mma.

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Next one might follow around 1am. This is the bonus.

## THE GAME

#117

At the hospital

Joshua stopped massaging her tummy on her order as the short madam proceeded to stand up on her feet and walk around the room. He watched her walk around talking about God knows what.

Marang:Are you listening?

Joshua:Not at the moment.

She rolled her eyes and kept walking around the room. She didn't want to eat anything till the babies came but what if she has a 24 hour labor? Will she starve herself to death?

Marang:Baby I'm hungry.

He looked at her. He was now baby? After these four he is definitely putting her on contraceptives, he

won't stand for round two of this.

Joshua:What do you want to eat?

Marang:Yoghurt or anything soft.

Joshua:Okay. Just that?

She nodded and he stood up. He walked to her and kissed her cheek.

Joshua:I love you and I won't be long.

Marang nodded as he rubbed her tummy.

Joshua:Buddy please break the water, mommy and daddy are waiting for you guys this side.

He rubbed her cheek and kissed her lips.

Joshua:After you give birth and you are thinking straight, we will talk about all that you uttered in the last two hours.

Marang:Go tlherra.

He laughed and walked out. Marang sat on the bed and started breathing in and out,

Marang:Guys? It's not funny now. Don't play jokes

with your mother, I'm older than you. Don't do that.

She rubbed her tummy and closed her eyes, feeling the pain. In her silence she prayed from the depth of her heart. All her kids must be fine too and she wanted to still be alive by the end of it all. She worked in a hospital and knew mother's lost their lives during child birth. She didn't want to be a statistic, she wanted to live and see her children grow into responsible adults, she knew that they already had family that loves them but she knew how it was like to grow up with no parents and she wanted her parents to feel a mother's love and touch. To be able to say that is my mother or that is my father. She didn't even know who her father was and she didn't want to dig around to find out. She had a painful past as it is and if her mother raised her alone with her granny that meant her father didn't want her so it would be opening old wounds.

She opened her eyes after her silent amen. Just to

live long enough to see her babies and her future children grow. She rubbed her tummy and stood up, she started her walk again but the pain intensified and she screamed softly. He said he won't be long and it was painful. She sat on the bed and closed her eyes. She didn't even have the energy to talk, it got worse and out of nowhere she felt the wetness on her gown and on her legs. Her water broke. Finally.

The real pain was just about to start and she wasn't ready for that. The door opened and Joshua walked in with the yoghurt, water and couldn't identify. He looked at her and the bed.

Joshua: The water broke?

She nodded and he walked to her side. He held her hand and pressed the button. At this present moment he wasn't the doctor but an anxious father to be and a supportive husband.

Joshua:How are you feeling?

Marang:It seems like the pain is ten times worse..

She wanted to cry but there were no tears. Her eyes were dry and she squeezed his hand. He just kissed it.

The obstetrician and a midwife nurse walked inside the room.

Obstetrician:Finally. We will check how far are you..

She nodded and just squeezed her husband's hand.

Midwife:We are still far, doc you know you need to dilate to 10 cm.

Marang nodded and the two walked out leaving the couple.

Marang:I don't have the energy to argue with you.

Joshua:Why argue?

Marang:Help me off the bed.

He did as the little madam asked and he held her hand as she walked around. Marang looked at his head and down at her feet as she walked.

Marang:It hurts but I have to do something, bend down.

He stopped and did as she said. He didn't want to be at the receiving end of whatever her hormones will make her do.

She touched his head trying to estimate how big his head was and the fact that she was pushing four on top of that.

Joshua:If I may ask, what are you doing?

Marang:Did you have a big head as a kid? Never mind I saw your baby pictures.

She let go of his head and continued to walk around before she sat on the cold floor.

Joshua:It's cold.

Marang:I feel hot but I don't want to remove the gown.

She breathed in and out. It hurt. This was painful and they were going to stitch up her vagina. She wanted to cry. God why? Why did women have to have labor pains? They weren't Eve and they weren't serpent language translators. Eve did womankind dirty she swore.

Joshua:Baby? O sharpo?

Marang:I'm in pain Joshua aah!

Joshua:Sorry baby.

He crouched next to her. She wanted to cry but dololo tears.



Joshua:I'm here okay baby? You can scream or even slap me all you want okay? Anything as long as it makes you feel better.

Marang:I want the kids out of me and I can't cry, it's like my tears have dried out.

He held her and rubbed her back. She breathed in and out holding onto him.

Joshua:That's my baby, we are doing this okay sweetness?

She nodded.

Joshua:Do you want to walk around more or should I just remove the hospital gown? You said you are hot.

Marang:Ke tlo sala ke le maponapona(I'm going to be stark naked though)(small voice)

Joshua:it's okay, you said you are feeling hot.

He helped her stand up and removed the hospital gown.

Joshua:How are you feeling?

Marang:It's better.

Joshua:Do you want to drink water? Or should I take you to the loo first?

Marang:For wh-oh!

Joshua:There is a small bathroom in this room, you are safe with me..

He pushed her hair back and tied it. She was already sweating, so she was really hot.

Marang:Thank you.

Joshua:Anything for you..

He walked with her to the small bathroom. Twenty minutes later she was done and her bowels were emptied. She was scared that she might push the child's head.

Joshua:How are you feeling?

Marang:Still hot..

Joshua:I don't know now baby...

He helped her sit on the back laid on her back with her legs apart. She wanted to breath and feel the fresh air.

Joshua:Breath in and out. You don't feel like pushing?

She shook her head. She must be far from pushing. The kids needed to get here soon. These pains weren't a joke and she couldn't bare it. Not at all.

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## THE GAME

#118

At the hospital

Two hours had passed and Marang was laying on the floor. She was in pain and there was nothing she could do. The obstetrician and nurse walked into the room. Joshua helped her sit on the bed and they checked her. She shook her head. She had a feeling something like this would happen. She looked at both of them, they had no choice right now.

Obstetrician:Uhm guys we have a problem. Marang is dilating slowly and now that the water broke, the kids need to get out. I foresaw something like this and I don't think her body is ready to push out four children.

Marang squeezed her husband's hand tightly as he looked at the doctor. They both knew what that

meant. She closed her eyes but still no tears.

Obstetrician: We have the theater ready for her. We can give you the forms to sign.

The nurse walked out and Joshua just held her hand.

Joshua: We are going to be fine okay?

She nodded.

Joshua: Every step of the way sweetness, you are so strong my love. We'll be fine I promise.

Marang wanted to burst into tears, what if she doesn't come back alive from the theater room? She closed her eyes as she grunted in pain.

Obstetrician: We should take her there now.

The nurse walked in with the papers and he looked at them. He was her next of kin and a part of him didn't want to sign the papers. It meant that the hospital won't be held accountable in case his wife loses her life in theatre.

Marang:I know you don't want to sign the papers but just do it.

He sighed and held her hand.

Joshua:I'll talk to them to let me in. Are you sure?

She nodded and he closed his eyes for a few seconds before he kissed her sweaty forehead.

The nurse started to fix the wheels on the bed, preparing to wheel Marang to theater.

Joshua:Let me sign and I will be there in a few okay?  
Hang in there sweetness.

She nodded.

The nurse wheeled the bed out of the room and the obstetrician followed her. Joshua rubbed his face, was he stupid to hope that his wife would have a natural birth instead of a c-section?

Joshua:Fuuuck!

He walked out of the room and passed by reception for a pen to start filling in the forms. When he was done he walked to the theater. Of course he knew this hospital like the back of his hand, it was his father's and he worked here too.

When he got to the door, the nurse opened and got the forms.

Joshua:Can I come in?

Nurse:Doc you know that's not allowed..

Joshua:I won't say anything, sh-she shouldn't be there all alone. Ka kopa.

The nurse stepped back inside. He was desperate and they looked at Marang. She had a tiny body with four humans inside and they had to be fast to save the babies. The obstetrician was doing a scan and so far so good with the babies.

Funny thing is that she had said that she might have

a c-section and the theater was prepared when she was rushed here to the hospital and while she was dealing with the contractions.

Marang tried to breath but it was difficult and the pain was too much for her. She badly wanted to cry and for Josh to tell her that it will be okay over and over again.

Meanwhile outside Joshua called his parents. Just to let them know that they were in hospital. His mother answered the phone.

Ma Josh:Hello?

Joshua:Hey, Uhm we are at the hospital. Marang is in labor.

Ma Josh:Okay. We are coming. Which hospital?

Joshua:Dad's.

Ma Josh:We are on the way. She will be fine. You sound worried.

Joshua:She is going to have a c-section.



Ma Josh: Oh God! We are on the way.

She hung up and he rubbed his face. The nurse stepped out and looked at Joshua.

Nurse: You can come in. Scrub up first.

Joshua: Thank you.

He went to where they usually did the scrubbing and he splashed water on his face. He wanted her to be okay.

In the theater room Marang was put on oxygen machines as her doctor saw that she was gasping for breath.

Obstetrician: Is it better?

She nodded. She wanted Joshua here and she knew that if she makes it out alive, she was going to live with the side effects of the c-section. Joshua

stepped in minutes later and she smiled a bit.

At Theo's house

Theo lay awake wondering why Phemelo was sad earlier. He tried to crack his head but nothing. He took his phone and dialed her number, it finally went through and it was ringing. She answered.

Phemelo:hello?

Theo:What's wrong? Talk to me, you were upset by the end of the video call and switched off your phone.

Phemelo:I'm fine..

Theo:You are not. Talk to me.

She sighed and rubbed her eyes.

Phemelo:You hired a new nanny? A younger one...

That's when it clicked that Clara had walked in, in shorts and a bra.

Theo:The nanny brought a replacement for a week, she said she had a funeral to attend and she brought Clara.

Phemelo:Okay.

Theo:I know that 'okay' Phemelo. Baby I love you and only you okay?

Phemelo:Okay.

Theo:Phemelo tlhemma. If it makes you happy then she will leave first thing in the morning and the twins will stay with their grandparents till the nanny comes back. Baby I don't want you to feel insecure or anything like that. At this point you should know that I love you and only you Phemelo. We may have our differences but I would never cheat on you, not even in my wildest dreams.

She kept quiet and he sighed.

Theo:I love you and she is leaving in the morning. Goodnight my love.

He hung up before she could respond and he placed the phone down.

At the hospital

Joshua's parents had long arrived at the hospital and were waiting by the chairs. Ma Josh was silently praying for everything to go well and for the kids and the mother to survive.

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## THE GAME

#119

At the hospital

Hours passed and it was almost sunrise when Joshua walked out of the room with his scrubs on. The parents quickly stood up and walked to him.

Ma Josh:How is she? What happened?

Joshua smiled.

Joshua:We have four healthy but premature babies and Marang is fine. She is tired and wants to rest.

Ma Josh:We thank God.

The doctor called Joshua back in.

Joshua:One second.

He walked back and Marang looked at him. It was a success, they had four children. Four human being to take care of. She couldn't say anything because she was exhausted and she was waiting for the drugs to wear off, she would be in pain and would be nursing her c-section stitches.

Obstetrician:Doc you didn't name your children.(laughing)

Joshua smiled as he walked to the bed and kissed her cheek.

Joshua:I'm so proud of you okay sweetness? Thank you so much.

She nodded through the oxygen mask, one couldn't miss the glee on his face or the sparkle in his eyes. He was so happy that they had four children. All of them alive and happy and the mother was tired. She was never doing this giving birth thing again. No. She wasn't trying this, not in the next five years at the very least.

Nurse: Congratulations. They will be in hospital for a week just to check if they are fine and their organs are well developed.

Marang nodded as Joshua picked one of the children. She slowly removed her mask and spoke slowly and softly.

Marang: Can I hold her?

She just wanted to hold her daughter first, her only daughter. Joshua looked at the baby and smiled. He walked to the bed and placed the baby in her mother's arms. Tears filled Marang's eyes as she held the pink child. She had her eyes closed and she looked at the little fist, they had to clean them up real good but they were grateful for this gift.

Marang removed her oxygen mask, her breathing wasn't bad and she was giving the baby warmth too.

Marang: H-hey sweetie (softly)

She moved her little arm and Marang's tears fell on the baby's cheek. She smiled and wiped the tear.

Marang:Sorry abo-about that(catching her breath)I'm just happy y-yo-you and your brothers are here.

Joshua smiled. She should rest but they didn't name their children.

Joshua:Sweetness can we name them?

Marang looked at the baby girl and smiled.

Marang:Rethabile Harmony Colton..

Joshua:That's beautiful.

She nodded and looked at her baby girl. The nurse took the baby from her hands.

Joshua:We have Orefile and Maatla.

Marang:One more name left..can I hold Maatla?

Joshua smiled as he placed Orefile down. He did take note who was born first in case the kids argue



about it in the near future. He picked one of the boys whom would be called Maatla and the nurse just noted everything down.

He gave her to Marang who held his little hand.

Marang:Hey my love.

She was content and happy. She looked at Joshua who looked at her.

Marang:Kgotso..

Joshua:Orefile Maatla Kgotso Rethabile...

She nodded with a little smile and she gave Joshua the child. She was exhausted. Joshua kissed her forehead.

Joshua:Rest my love, they will be here when you wake up.

She nodded as she wore her oxygen mask and closed her eyes. Joshua looked at all his four children, all tiny and he knew the doctors had to run

tests and maybe in a year or so they will see if any of them inherited their mother's ADHD.

Nurse:Doc congratulations are in order once again.

He smiled as he stepped out of the room.

Joshua:Thank you guys for coming.

Ma Josh:Share the good news.

Joshua:We have Orefile, Maatla, Kgotso and Rethabile.

Ma Josh:Those are beautiful names.

Joshua:Thank you.

Ra Josh:Congratulations on starting your new family.

Joshua:Thank you. Let me quickly change out of this.

Ma Josh hugged her husband.

Ma Josh:It happened. We are finally grandparents and they are all okay including the mother. God is good.

Ra Josh:He is.

Ma Josh:I will tell your mother to prepare the room for the new mother and all. God is good.

Ra Josh smiled as his wife got all emotional. This was an addition to their family and it was also exciting too.

At Theo's house

Theo had already packed the children's stuff in the car. He knocked on Clara's door. It took her more than ten minutes to open but he was prepared to wait and leave the house only once she was gone.

Theo:Morning. It would be best if you left before the day ends.

She rubbed her eyes. Why? What was happening?

Theo:The kids will stay with their grandparents till your aunt comes back. If you don't have transport

money I can give it to you but you have to leave this house before the day ends.

Clara:What did I do?

Theo:Clara make it fast. Thank you.

He walked away and she watched him walk. She was confused now. What did she do and what happened?

At Seeletso's place

She stretched her back and touched the other side of the bed, it was empty. She yawned and fell back into bed. She had to agree with Marang. Sex was nice and she had been denying herself good things in this life.

The bedroom door opened and in walked Jaden.

Jaden:Morning baby.

Seeletso:Morning.

Jaden:Breakfast is in the kitchen, I though I would find you still asleep.

He joined her in bed and she moved closer to him as he rubbed her bare leg.

Seeletso:I'm awake.

He kissed her lips and she placed her hands on his chest. Her phone ringing disturbed the moment. She tried to ignore it but the caller was persistent. She broke the kiss.

Seeletso:Pass me the phone, it must be important.

He handed her the phone and she saw the caller id. It was her mother.

Seeletso:Good morning mom.

Ma Josh:Good morning my other baby..

Seeletso frowned. Her mother was in a good mood.

Seeletso:You are too happy mother, share the good news,

Ma Josh:Your sister gave birth this morning.

Seeletso:Mom don't joke like that.

Ma Josh:I would never joke like that.

Seeletso screamed first and Jaden moved away.

Seeletso:Aaaw, bathong! I'm so happy for them. Oh my God! Four little Marang and Joshua lookalikes.. Bathong!

Ma Josh:That is what makes today a special day.

Seeletso:I guess I should wait till she is out of the hospital but I will call her later. This is thee moment, mom see you later. Bye.

She hung up and looked at Jaden.

Seeletso:I'm so happy. My sister in law gave birth this morning.

Jaden: Congratulations are in order for them.

Seeletso: Bathong. Cannot wait to meet my nieces and nephews.

She laid on his chest and sighed with a smile.

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## THE GAME

#120

At the hospital

Later that day Marang woke up and looked around, they had moved her to the maternity ward. She was all alone in the room and the drugs were wearing off. Pain. Nothing but pain but she wanted to see her babies.

She removed the oxygen mask and she could breathe fine on her own. She looked around the room. She knew that they were all premature but she was sure her babies were fine.

The door opened and her husband walked in with a basket.



Marang:Hi.

Joshua:Hey sweetness. How are we feeling?

Marang:In pain but it will pass.

Joshua:I brought you flowers and fruits. I checked the babies and they are fine, I'm sure the nurse will bring them in an hour so you can breastfeed them.

Marang:Will it be enough for all four of them?

Joshua:We will see baby. Don't stress about that.

He placed the basket down and helped her sit up without hurting her. Marang looked at the flowers. This was cute.

Marang:So we made four babies?

Joshua:We did sweetness.

Marang:I can't wait till they are like a month old and we will see who looks like who, I just pray that they all don't have your ears.

Joshua:what's wrong with my ears?

Marang:You don't have nice ears babe, no offense but no. Don't make my children ugly with your ears.

Joshua:I'm ugly?

Marang:No you're not. You can pass off as August's brother or even him but your ears don't cut it.

Joshua:You are body shaming me?

Marang:I am not. Are they fine though? They are healthy? No complications or heart problems?

Joshua:Nothing. Just born early two months early. They are healthy sweetheart.

Marang:We thank God. Can I see them now please? Ka kopa.

Joshua:Let me come with them..are you sure you are fine?

Marang:Yes sir(with a small smile)

At Phemelo's parents

Theo dropped off the kids finally after Clara had left. All he had to do was call Phemelo. Her parents were so excited to spend the week with their grandkids and he knew they were going to spoil them. Along with little Angel who was sleeping when he dropped off the boys.

Phemelo did explain how Angel ended up living with them and he had to admit that it was the nicest gesture. To take in a baby. They didn't know her parents or her background but she was innocent even though what her mother did was not good.

He said by to the parents and his kids and made his way to the car. He dialed her number and she answered.

Phemelo:Hello...

Theo:Hey. Now can you talk to me? Are you calm?

Phemelo:Yeah..

Theo:what's up?

She sighed.

Phemelo:I-I was just insecure because you hired someone younger and beautiful. I already feel flawed because I don't have a leg and now after the pregnancy it's difficult to lose weight and my hair just started growing though it's nothing much a-and that sparked my insecurities.

Theo:Babe?

Phemelo:Rra?

Theo:I don't know what it's going to take to prove to you that I love you regardless of those flaws you just listed. Phemelo I know why you had the accident, I know why your hair fell off and why you gained weight. I know that and understand that and you are a brave lady my love. You gave me kids, you survived a fatal car crash and you are out there still trying to get the degree. Sweetheart I am proud of you and I'm your biggest cheerleader. Don't stress about minor details. In a year or so everything will fall into place and you shouldn't rush yourself.

Phemelo:Okay. Did you tell her to go just as you said?

Theo:I did and honestly babe there is nothing to feel insecure about. I got my eyes on you and only you.

Phemelo:Thank you and I love you. I got to go. I have class in ten minutes.

Theo:Okay my love. Bye.

She said bye and hung up and he drove off.

At the hospital

An hour later everyone was at the hospital to see the new mother and their four bundles of joy. The old woman looked at the kids. Four grandchildren at once? They were blessed.

Marang:Mmaiye you are holding Maatla.

Ma Colton:I can't differentiate them.

Marang:Look at his ears(looking at Joshua)He has

Joshua's ears..

The old lady laughed as the grandparents, aunts and great grandparent fussed over the quads.

Sara:So I can babysit?

Marang:when they are older yes..

Sara:They look small.

Marang:Not for long.

Seeletso:Aw guys now I want to have a baby, look at you(baby voice)

Everyone looked at Seeletso as she cooed looking at Rethabile. Imagine having her photocopy running around. That would be cute. So cute. She lifted her head and everyone was looking at her.

Seeletso:I'm old enough akere?(looking at them)Bathong look at my niece and nephews, ke simolla bo rich aunt. They should call me Aunt Letso.

They burst into laughter.

Ma Josh:These four are going to be spoilt rotten.

Joshua:They are not even a day old and they are already spoilt.

Ra Josh:Rethabile has Marang's nose.

Marang looked at Joshua.

Marang:Good genes my love but I will never forgive you for Maatla's ears. Never.

Ma Josh:Marang leave my child alone(laughing)

Marang:Mom!

They couldn't get enough of the babies but Marang yawned and Joshua had to chase everyone out just so his big baby could sleep.

Marang:Thanks.

Joshua:Rest my love.

Marang:I love you and we made beautiful babies.

Joshua:You brought them in this world.

Marang:You put them inside of me.

They both laughed and he fixed her pillow.

Joshua:Did you take the pills?

Marang:Not yet. So let's agree, no more kids till after five years or so?

Joshua:Deal. Wena o bua dilo kana.

Marang:I was in pain. I'm sorry for the slaps.

Joshua:It's okay.

Marang:I swear I hate sex..

Joshua laughed shaking his head before he kissed her lips.

Joshua:Do you?

Marang:I do but don't tempt me.

Joshua bit her lower lip and looked into her eyes.

Joshua:Or what?

Marang:We might find ourselves here again in a year from now.

He moved his head and laughed.



Marang:I'm serious.

Joshua:Can't wait(laughing)

Marang:Babe Ng ng...

One of the kids cried and Marang tried to sit up right.

Joshua:I got it. Rest my little one.

Marang:Thank you.

She closed her eyes as Joshua picked his son and shushed him. Their parenting journey had just begun.

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TWO YEARS LATER

# THE GAME

#121

At Joshua and Marang's new home

Joshua kissed his wife goodbye as she stretched her body.

Marang:Bye doc. Go save lives. We all love you.

Joshua:I love you guys too(smiling)

He got the bag and his coat as she waved. On his way out he passed by the room where the quads slept and all four of them were awake.

Joshua:hey guys.

Rethabile:Dada..

Joshua:Morning princess..

He picked her up and she held his cheeks with her small baby hands. She was the mini version of his wife. He had a feeling she was going to be tiny like his wife.

Joshua: Since all of you are awake let me take you to you mama.

She giggled and pinched his cheeks revealing her baby teeth. He placed his bag and coat down and he picked Maatla. The other two looked at him through their cots and he smiled. He will be back for them, he was just going to leave them with their mother since they were all awake.

He walked back into the bedroom and Marang was asleep. He placed the two kids on the bed and walked back to get the other two.

Marang felt small hands on her face and wet lips on her cheeks. There is only person who does that

when she wants her to wake up. She opened her eyes and found Rethabile holding her face.

Rethabile:Mama..

Maatla crawled and kissed his mother's cheeks before he smiled.

Marang:Hey babies.

The door opened as Joshua came with Orefile and Kgotso. The whole entourage, so much for an extra hour of sleep.

Joshua:I came to drop off your precious cargo.

She laughed as he waved and walked away before one of them starts crying for him.

Marang:So guys, we are sleeping. Mommy is tired yoh. Come closer...(motioning with her hands)

They all gathered around her.

Marang:Nna ka robala bo nnana(I'm sleeping kids)Your father keeps me up at night a bo a

kgorotlha. So don't disturb my sleep. I love you guys too. Retha baby keep your tiny hands and lips to yourself, Maatla don't fight with Fifi tuu. Kgotso be the peaceful little man I know you are..

She placed Retha next to Fifi and Kgotso next to Maatla.

Marang:Better, let's sleep my munchkins.

They all looked at her and she chuckled.

Marang:Don't look at me like that, I'm your mother and older than you guys ae.

She laughed and laid on her back. She wasn't going to sleep and she had to take them to the hospital for their monthly checkups. Fifi crawled to her and sat on her stomach.

Marang:you guys are getting heavy too.

At Theo's house

Phemelo sat on the counter as she talked to her mom.

Phemelo:At this point I am not looking for marriage. It has sunk in that I might not get married and I'm okay with it.

Ma Phem:It's still okay.

Phemelo:Ee mma. I just want to develop the plot of land I already have and start creating my children's legacy. You can't trust family.

Ma Phem:I'm happy that you are thinking of the future.

Phemelo:Ee mma. I have to go mom, I have a meeting in an hour and I haven't left home.

Ma Phem:Okay my child.

Phemelo hung up and walked to the kids room. The twins were already awake and their father had to leave early for work.

Phemelo:hello babies..

They giggled and clapped their hands. It was always so satisfying to see her kids especially in the morning when their energy levels were so high. The past two years she had been waiting for Theo to pop the question but now she was coming to terms that they are together but he had no intention of marrying her. She sighed.

The helper knocked on the door.

Phemelo:Good morning.

Her:Morning mam.

Phemelo:Don't forget to call me so I can take them to the hospital.

Her:Yes mam. I should bath them first.

Phemelo:Bye bye babies.

She kissed their cheeks and waved walking out. She was glad they didn't cry whenever they left because

that would have been a problem. She got her car keys and handbag on her way to the front door.

She checked her watch and sighed. She hoped the morning traffic was better or else she was going to be late.

At the hospital

Seeletso sat on the bathroom seat as she looked at the pregnancy test. Two months pregnant. Jaden was going to be so excited about this one. She laughed as she looked at the pregnancy test. To imagine she met him when he was getting pills for his low sperm count and now they were expecting. She rubbed her flat tummy and threw that pregnancy test in her handbag. Now she had to act normal the whole of today and surprise the daddy to be.

She stood up and fixed her skirt and shirt. She



walked out and washed her hands. She looked at her face in the mirror. She hoped she wasn't going to gain too much weight. She shook her head and walked out of the restroom.

She passed her brother.

Seeletso:Josh.

Joshua:Hi and bye sis.

She smiled and shook her head. He was a busy man and most of the times he is on the day shift with his wife. This time around you would be seeing Marang walking about making rounds before she walking into her husband's office and being there for over thirty minutes. She honestly didn't want to know what they did in there.

At Joshua's place

Marang curled the weave as she sat on the vanity. When she was done, she applied some minimal make up before she stood up and wore her heels. The kids were downstairs all dressed up and on the carpet. She hoped they didn't break anything. She got her handbag and car keys and made her way down the stairs.

Marang:Bo my love, we are eating first then we leave. Each had their own toy and they were too preoccupied to pay attention to her.

Marang:Right, you love your toys than me. I understand di photocopy tsa Joshua. You will need me one day.

She placed her bag on the couch and walked to the kitchen, her heels clacking on the tile.

She opened the fridge and started to plan their meal. She preferred healthy foods and well her husband always let them eat sweets once in a while. She

didn't want them high on sweets, too much energy and she couldn't keep up especially after a long shift at the hospital.

Marang:Guys Uhm Nestum? Or soft porridge?

She opted to make the soft porridge. So she was going to be here for an hour and she was used to this.

After an hour when they were fed and full she smiled.

Marang:Look at how happy all of you are, we are going to the hospital. I'm sure we will meet daddy there too neh?

Marang:You guys can walk so I'm not carrying any toddler nna.

She made them hold hands as she opened the door.

Marang:The car, the vrr vrr my babies. Go.

They started walking to the car and their mother got her bag and car keys. She locked the door. Their medical cards were in the car along with what they used to weigh them. Joshua gave her beautiful babies shem.

Her phone rang in her bag and she frowned as she unlocked the car.

Marang:Hello?

Ma Colton:Hello Marang. There is something I want to talk to you about.

Marang:I am listening ma..

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# THE GAME

#121

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Marang:I am listening ma..

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## THE GAME

#122

At Joshua and Marang's new house

The granny sucked in a deep breath. It was most probably better if Marang heard it from the horse's mouth and not from her.

Ma Colton:Doreen wants to tell you something.

Marang:Okay. She doesn't have my number ma? She can call me..

Marang checked her watch. She had to go to the hospital.

Marang:I have to go ma..

Ma Colton:Okay. Bye.

Marang:Bye.



She hung up and shook her head. Most probably she was going to talk about these useless family events they rarely attended because they were too busy or just wanted their alone time as a family. Her babies were wondering why she was taking to long and she needed to take them to the hospital.

She walked to the car and checked on them before she picked them on by one and secured them in their baby seats.

Marang:Sorry munchkins. Le comfortable? Harmony?

Rethabile just nodded and the boys weren't even paying attention to her. Their belts were tight and they were safe.

She got inside the car and started the car. She pressed the gate remote that was part of her car keys. The gate slid open and she reversed the car.

They did it and were very happy with their lives.

The gate closed after the car was out and she secured her seat belt before driving off.

At Theo's workplace

Theo looked at the plot he just purchased. It took him so long to even think of proposing to Phemelo. He had to save money and the twins then arrived and they were added to the budget but the money he had was enough. He didn't want to take out a loan for their wedding and he wanted Phemelo to have the wedding of her dreams without worrying about the costs.

He opened the top drawer and he saw the red box. He was glad she wasn't as nosy as she claimed to be and she rarely came to his work place so she wasn't going to see it any time soon.

He went through his bank statements as he subtracted the money for her bogadi. She was going to be such a beautiful bride, he mused.

At the bus station

Raine sat there as she sold airtime. She coughed into her elbow as her son sat next to her. At this point she didn't find the willpower to live but she was glad one of her children was well taken of. Little Angelica. She didn't know how big she was right now but she must be so beautiful.

She sighed and waited for customers. Maybe she should live just for her son and find a way to do something even though nothing had popped up in the last two years. She looked at her son in his hand me downs and wished she had more to provide for him. He deserved more than what she was giving

him.

At the hospital

Seeletso was smiling when Marang walked in the hospital followed by her little entourage.

Marang:You look happy.

Seeletso:Is it a crime?

Marang:With you, you never know.

Kgotso saw his aunt and alerted the other three and soon they were walking towards Letso.

Marang:Usually Fifi walks up to you and the others ignore your existence till you walk to them.(raising an eyebrow) Letso? Wait...ah!

Seeletso:what?

She bent down to their level as they spoke in single syllables. These four were adorable and everyone

doted over them.

Marang:Ah..we'll talk I think I'm late. Is Josh in his office?

Seeletso:I think so.

Marang:Okay. Bo nana a reye(babies let's go)To daddy.

They all held hands again as Fifi waved before he followed his mother and held his siblings' hands. Marang walked to Joshua's office and knocked on the door.

Joshua:Come in.

She opened the door and let the kids walk in first. She closed the door and immediately Rethabile ran to her father and he picked her up laughing.

Joshua>Hello baby.

Rethabile:Papa..

Joshua:Yes sweetness...

Marang:That's my name?

She rolled her eyes and sat down as Maatla attempted to climb his father's lap. The other two were walking around the office.

Marang:So we are both going to the pediatrician akere?

Joshua:Yes mam.

He looked at the kids. He didn't know such happiness existed and they were very content with these four little souls in their lives.

Joshua:Babe?

Marang:Rra?

Joshua:I love you.

Marang:I love you more..

Joshua:I miss you.

She raised an eyebrow and he smirked. If it was any normal day and they were on the same shift she would be on that office table. Naked for just a quickie.

Marang:Now you see who is the addict between us?

Joshua:Are you coming back?

Marang:I'm off Dr Colton so no.

Joshua:Drop them off at my mother's place.

Marang:No, I'm not a bad parent.(laughing)

Joshua:Please! Just for your husband sweet mama and I notice you're wearing heels too.

Marang:If it's about my height, please don't start sir.

Joshua:It's not baby..

Marang:Okay. I'll see you at home hubs..bo baby let's go see your doctor.

Joshua put the kids down and Rethabile lifted her hands.

Marang:Josh go with us then, they won't go because they saw you.

Joshua checked his watch.

Joshua:I have an hour to spare so..

He picked Rethabile up and Maatla followed his father.

Marang took Fifi and Kgotso's hands.

Marang:Mmaiye called. Gatwe Doreen wants to talk to me.

Joshua:About?

Marang:I have no idea waitse. Life has been peaceful.

Joshua:Did she tell you what she wanted to talk about?

Marang:No...

Joshua:Iyoh.



Marang:Yah neh..

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## THE GAME

#123

At the hospital

Marang and Josh put their kids in their seats and he closed the door before pinning his wife against the car.

Joshua: Babe please...

Marang heled his cheek and laughed kissing it.

Marang: Wa lapisa babe autwe?

Joshua: Dr Joshua Colton wee?

Marang: Rra?

Joshua: Please tlhemma. Youknow I love you right?

Marang: I know.

Joshua: Please? Drop them off and come back here.

Marang:I'll see.

He groaned and held her hair.

Joshua:Okay love.

He locked his lips and kissed her lips softly. She was the first one to break the kiss and she wiped his lips.

Marang:Bonang lipstick..

Joshua:I love you sweetness.

Marang:I love you too..

He moved from the car and she opened the car door getting inside. He waved at the kids who smiled with their baby teeth out. Marang rolled down the window.

Marang:I'll be back ee..

He smiled.

Joshua:Thank you my love.

Marang:Don't thank me yet. Bye sweetheart.

He waved as she reversed the car out of the parking spot and drove off. He watched her drive off before he slipped his hands in his pockets and walked back inside the hospital.

Meanwhile Seeletso couldn't contain her excitement as she packed her stuff. She was leaving early now and she just wanted to scream and jump for joy. At this point Jaden must've thought the pills didn't work even though the doctor had cleared him and said he was improving.

She sat down and changed shoes, she wore her heels and put her flat shoes in her handbag. She stood up and breathed in and out. She got her bag and walked away. She was going to sign herself out, just this once. She frowned. No wine and champagne from here onwards. Jaden will drink on her behalf. She smiled and walked to the reception to sign herself out.

She was going to surprise him and all that. What should she do now? Buy lunch or he should buy lunch for her. She thought about it as she walked out of the hospital. She waved at Joshua as she walked to her car.

She walked for 30 seconds before she got to her car and she unlocked it. She got inside and screamed into her hands. She was going to have a baby, a cute little bundle of joy. This was all there was. Even if he didn't marry her but she was going to have a baby. That was the important thing here.

At Bobonong

The aunt held Marang's number in her hands. Nothing was going her way anymore and everything had come back to haunt her now. Her daughter was sick and the doctors couldn't even find anything wrong with her but her health was deteriorating.

She didn't even know how Marang was going to take the news. She was probably going to hate her and her mother in law kept her distance ever since she told her everything she did.

She called her a witch and in a way she was. She pressed the buttons and looked at the number on the screen.

She dialed the number and it rang unanswered for a few seconds before it was answered.

In the car Marang placed the phone on loudspeaker as she answered

Marang:Dr Colton hello...

Aunt:Hello..

Marang:Hello, who am I talking to?

She looked at the back and her babies were tired.  
She smiled as a little aw escaped her lips.

Aunt:Aunt Doreen.

Marang:Oh hi, Mmaiye called earlier saying you want to talk to me?

She looked at the traffic and at her phone.

Marang:Uhm, I'm still kind of busy. Will it be okay if you call in an hour?

Aunt:It's still okay.

Marang:Thank you. Bye!

She hung up and rolled her eyes. She always had a feeling that this lady didn't like her and hated for some unknown reason.

At prison

The warden walked inside Lebo's room and she was still asleep. It was almost daylight and all the other in ages were working, why was she asleep?

She shook the lady but nothing.

Warden:Mma? Tsoga..ga o special case...

She shook Lebo but nothing. She pulled the blankets and she frowned. She checked the pulse and she couldn't feel it.

Warden:Mma it's not funny, wake up.

She shook Lebo but nothing. She walked out to call the prison nurses, it couldn't be what she thought it was

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Sorry for the late and short inserts(School)



# THE GAME

#124

## At Prison

The nurse arrived and she checked Lebo while the warden looked on from a safe distance. The nurse shook her head and straightened up.

Nurse:She is gone.

The nurse held the note pad in her hand and took out her pen from her uniform pocket. She noted the time on her watch and wrote it down. She was a prisoner so the time of death won't be that important.

Warden:I will alert the prison authorities about this and they will take over from here on. Thank you.

Nurse>Welcome. Let me go write this down.

She walked out of the room and the warden walked to the body. This lady never got visitors and she was sure she didn't even have family. She covered her face with the blanket and walked away, the body would be gone by the end of the day.

She closed the cell and locked it. She had to see her superior first.

At the Coltons

Marang sat on the couch and looked at her babies playing on the carpet. She couldn't believe she was leaving her children just to go have sex with their father. She shook her head with a little smile.

Ma Josh:I missed these four.

Marang:Can you have them for the night too?

Ma Josh:You know I don't mind.

Marang:Thank you ma.

Marang bent down and kissed all four of them as they giggled. This was blissful and happy.

She stood up and waved at them. They waved, they did behave when they felt like it so she wasn't surprised that they didn't cry for her. She got inside the car and she thought of calling Doreen but maybe later after she was at home. Right now she had to go home and change clothes.

At Theo's office

Phemelo checked herself into the building and smiled. She rarely came here, she didn't know why she was always scared of coming to his office. Maybe it was because a part of her was scared that she would find out he was having an office affair hence his delay to marry her.

She would understand if he broke it off not that they weren't in a good place but maybe to him, sex with a whole woman would be much more wholesome. She shook her head as she walked to his office. If she still remembered it's exact location. She took a deep breath and knocked on the door.

Theo:Come in(deep voice)

She opened the door and walked inside the office. His jacket was on his chair and he had his shirt sleeves folded. He looked up and smiled placing the pen down.

Theo:This is a surprise.

Phemelo:I was just checking up on you my love.

She sat on the chair and he closed his files.

Phemelo:What happened to the idea of you owning a farm?

Theo:I thought you forgot I once talked about that.

Phemelo:I understand I was young and fresh out of high school but I remember p, I don't know why though.

He smiled and he opened the drawer taking out a bunch of papers.

Theo:I actually have land I was thinking of buying. These things cost money so I have been saving up for the farm and when it makes decent money, I can leave my office job and work full time there. Create a legacy for our boys.

Phemelo smiled as he passionately talked about his love for agriculture, not once did he mention her in any of it and she knew that she will just be a girlfriend or his cohabiting partner till her end days.

Phemelo:That sounds wonderful.

Theo:It really is love, I just have ideas. Are you hungry?

Phemelo:Not really, I was just checking on you.

Theo:You seem distant. What's up?

Phemelo:Nothing really.

Theo:Sure? You can talk to me about anything.

Phemelo:I'm good love.

She checked her watch, she needed to get back to work.

Phemelo:I need to go back to work..

Theo:Let me walk you out.

He stood up and walked up to her. His cologne got to her and she forced a smile. She didn't see him off to work today and it was the same cologne he always used. He kissed her lips softly and she broke it.

Phemelo:I have work.

Theo:And I have an office.

She didn't get what he was hinting at first before it clicked and she pushed him away.

Phemelo:I have to get to work babe..

Theo:You rarely come here(wrapping his hands around her waist)

Phemelo:For a reason..

He chuckled and pecked her lips.

Theo:Baby girl..

Phemelo:Boy bye...

He laughed as they walked to the door. He opened the door and they walked out of his office. The two talked in hushed whispers as they made their way out of the building. Most of the employees at the building were rather surprised that Theo had a girlfriend. They always thought he was single and he never told anyone that he had a woman in his life.

At Joshua's office

Joshua placed his stethoscope on the table. Marang wasn't coming here was she? He sighed and removed his coat, placing it on the chair. He will get her at home. He sat down on his chair and took out his phone. He scrolled through Facebook and it was a picture of Dani in a wedding gown. That was nice. He scrolled through and he sent a text to his wife.

Joshua:Babe? Are you coming?

Baby Colton: † ♀Baby ke busy. Askies my love.

Joshua:Okay.

Baby Colton:Are you sad?

Joshua:I'll be fine sweetness. I'll be home before seven okay?

Baby Colton:Okay. Can I call?

Joshua:Yeah.

Baby Colton:You are sad? I can sense it through the text.

Joshua:Wena sensist.



Baby Colton: The word doesn't exist Dr. I'm not calling anymore.

Joshua: Iyoh! Okay.

He covered his face with his hand as he leaned back on the chair. He placed his phone down.

Meanwhile Marang sat in the car as she texted him. She laughed looking at his text. He was being such a big baby and it was funny. She went through her gallery and sent him a picture. She rolled down the window and looked around. He didn't even know she was in the hospital parking lot. She sent two more and waited for him to respond.

Joshua's phone beeped and he picked it up.

Message from his wife, she was probably saying he shouldn't be sad and he didn't know why he was sad.

He clicked on it and he rubbed his eyes before he looked at the pictures again. He whistled and spun

his chair around. He can never get used to getting such pictures from her randomly. He clicked on the first one and zoomed in on it, she looked good. Lil mama was the full package and he fucking loved it. He bit his lower lip as he scrolled through the pictures. His phone beeped and it was a message from baby girl.

Baby Colton:I love you akere baby?

Joshua:I love you and I think I might knock off early..

Baby Colton:Hai. Sir I still want to walk tomorrow morning autwe?

Joshua:That's temporary

Baby Colton:Mxm..

She laughed as her heels clicked on the tile. They sent texts back and forth and she shook her head. She stopped in front of his office and knocked on the door. Joshua typed the message and sent it before he looked at the door. He sat upright and placed files in front of him and pretended to be

looking at them.

Joshua:Come in.

Marang opened the door. He had his head low and she wanted to laugh.

Marang:Hey babbby..

Joshua:Y-you did not?

Marang closed the door, locked it and she got her ribbon from the coat pocket. She tied her hair with a little smile on her face before she started to unbutton the jacket.

Marang:So I won't be here for long..

Joshua:Fuck!

Marang:Came here just for that. Wa lapisa waitse baby? Anyway...

She walked to the desk and she neatly put the files away and sat on the table, he placed his hand on her thighs and she laughed. She moved his hand and

moved it to her inner thighs, he had never seen her in that piece before.

She started to unbutton his shirt and he rubbed her inner thighs with a smile.

Marang:Baby?

Joshua:mma?

Marang:I love you.

Joshua:O ratiwa ke nna motho wame..

She got of the desk and placed his shirt on the desk. She sat on his lap and she removed her coat. He moved his hands up and down her butt before they #EXPLICIT.

At Jaden's office

Seeletso knocked on the door of his office but there was no answer. She frowned. She didn't even ask if he was in or not, she just assumed he was here. She

knocked once again and she tried to open the door but it was locked.

Seeletso:Jay? Baby? It's me...

She heard some movement in the office and she frowned.

Seeletso:Is there anyone there?

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## THE GAME

#125

At Jaden's office

Seeletso knocked again and there was silence. She waited anxiously by the door, there was someone inside the office it wasn't her imagination. The door opened after a minutes and Jaden rubbed his eyes.

Jaden:Hey love. Come in.

Seeletso walked in and looked around. His jacket was on the chair and on his couch there was a little girl.

Jaden:Sorry. I fell asleep. I barely slept last night because I had to wrap up a lot of things. My sister brought Fiona over, she is fighting with her baby daddy again.

Seeletso:Oh. Did she eat?

Jaden:She fell asleep an hour ago and I wanted to get food but fatigue got the best of me.

She walked past him and walked to the couch. His niece was cute and Jaden just looked at his niece. A part of him was jealous because the doctor said he was fine but it might take some time for him to even make a baby. He sighed. His sister's baby daddy was also a shitty man but he didn't want to involve himself in their business, as long as Fiona was okay. Those two can deal with it.

Seeletso smiled secretly looking at his niece, she was at peace. How was he going to react to the news.

Jaden:Let me go get food okay? Are you going back to work?

Seeletso:No.

She straightened up and he smiled, revealing his left dimple. Will their baby have his dimple? She asked herself and found herself smiling.

Jaden:What?

Seeletso:Nothing.

He handed Seeletso his phone.

Jaden:You know the password and give it to her to play games if she wakes up okay?

Seeletso:Okay.

He held her waist and gently kissed her lips.

Jaden:Thank you for the pleasant surprise baby girl. I'll be back in no time.

Seeletso:Okay love.

He pecked her lips and walked out with his wallet and car keys. Seeletso flattened her palm against her belly and smiled. She was excited and she wanted him to know first and they will take it from there.



Fiona turned and opened her small eyes. She sat upright and rubbed her eyes with her fists. Seeletso looked at the little girl. Maybe it was a sign that she was going to have a little girl too. That would be great and they could wear matching outfits and all that. Seeletso sat next to her in the couch.

Seeletso:Hello. My name is Letso.

Fiona:Hiii(small voice)

She was cute.

Fiona:Uncle J, where is he?

Seeletso:He went to get food. How old are you?

She counted her finger before she raised her hand.

Fiona:Five.

Seeletso:You are a smart girl.

Fiona:Thank you.

She looked around and brought her thumb to her lips.

Seeletso:What do you want to do?

Fiona frowned.

Fiona:Leto?

Seeletso:Letso baby..

Fiona:Uncle J said Seeleto is his baby..

Seeletso laughed.

Seeletso:Letso baby. Le-ts-o..

Fiona looked at her. She didn't want to try out but the name was what her uncle said. Seeletso unlocked the phone and gave it to the little girl. She looked at the Home Screen then back at Letso.

Fiona:You are Seeleto?

Seeletso laughed. She was pronouncing it all wrong but she was just a baby so she wasn't even going to hold it against her. Fiona looked at Letso and held her cheek.

Fiona:You are prwetty.

Seeletso:Thank you baby..

Fiona squeezed Letso's cheek the way her uncle squeezed hers. Seeletso smiled. She was used to this, she had three nephews and a niece. Kids were so touchy touchy and it was fascinating. That two people make a whole human being that turns out to be their whole world.

At Joshua's office

Marang smiled against his chest. Okay that was quite the workout and in the workplace.

Marang:I think I was too loud.

Joshua:It's none of their business. I'm a very happy man.

He rubbed her thigh and kissed her neck. She whined and he laughed.

Marang:This office reeks of sex.

Joshua:Thank you. So when we ge-

Marang:Dr Colton I'm resting.

Joshua:Baby..

Marang:Get dressed. I'm sure you have patient to check on.

Joshua:I'll check on them in thirty.

He kissed her lips and she laughed into the kiss before her phone rang disturbing the moment. She broke it.

Joshua:You'll answer it babe..

Marang!Get dressed motho wame. It might be important.

She got off his lap and walked to the bed where patient lie.

Marang:We could've used the bed.

Joshua:Wena kana.

Marang:It was just a suggestion.

She stretched her body and looked at her thighs, they were a bit red from where he grabbed them and she was sure she was adorned with hickeys. She really didn't want to know how many. She picked her phone and answered it even though it was an unknown landline number.

Marang>Hello...

Caller:Hello, is this Mrs Marang Colton?

Marang:Yes.

Caller:This is Botswana Prison Services, the one in Francistown.

Marang slowly walked to the table and looked at her lingerie. Utterly destroyed. She gave her husband a look as he buttoned his shirt and he laughed.

Marang:Ee mma...

She placed the phone between her ear and shoulder as she picked her coat and slipped her free arm before she held the phone with the other.

Caller:We have called to inform you that Lebogang Rutang, has just passed on in her sleep.

Marang paused and held onto the table.

Marang:I a-am not following.

Caller:Ms Lebogang Rutang is late. She died in her sleep a few hours ago.

Marang:Uhm. Can I-I call back?

Caller:Okay mam...

Marang slowly placed the phone down and lowered her head. She hated the woman but she didn't expect her to die. She had been angry and she needed to take out all that anger on her that time she visited her in prison. She is dead.

Joshua:Marang?

Marang:I f-(tears formed in her eyes)

He got up from the chair and walked to her. He pulled on the coat and slipped her other hand inside.

Joshua:What is it?

Marang:Lebo is de-dead.

Joshua wanted to say good riddance to bad rubbish. That woman out his wife through a lot but knowing how kind hearted Marang was, she probably felt bad for never visiting that woman. He hugged her and rubbed her back.

Marang:I-I didn't wan-want he-her to die though..

Joshua:These things happen, it's okay babe. I'm here for you.

He rubbed her back as she sobbed softly. Now she was going to be crying all the way home.

Joshua:I'm here sweetness.

At Jaden's office

Jaden walked inside the office and found his niece and the love of his life playing.

Jaden:Hey girls.

Fiona:Uncle J..

She saw him first and ran to him.

Seeletso:Hey love.

Fiona:Baby is beautiful.

He laughed. She talked too much. He wondered what he told Seeletso.

Jaden:She is isn't she?

Fiona:Mmh..does she have babies?

Jaden's smile faltered.

Jaden:No...

Fiona:Oh.

Fiona looked at Seeletso who smiled. Jaden loved the fact that she was being a good sport about it. Maybe he will never get anyone pregnant. Treatment



doesn't always work or maybe he should go get a third opinion and start another dose of treatments or look into adoption or other ways of having children. He had already talked to his parents about wanting to marry Letso but he wanted to propose to her in a special way after hearing what was her take on having kids that might not be biologically theirs.

He placed the takeaways down and held her waist. She smiled looking into his eyes.

Seeletso:Baby can I talk to you about something?

She held his arm and he nodded.

Jaden:Sounds important..

Seeletso:It is.

She whispered into his ear as Fiona watched from the sidelines with a little smile. She wished her daddy and mommy were like that.

Jaden moved his head and looked at her. He couldn't exactly believe his luck. Or his God or even his ancestors.

Seeletso:Start saving up big daddy sir. I found out today(soft voice)

Jaden looked down with tears in his eyes. Here he thought he would adopt or something along those lines.

Seeletso held his chin and lifted it, rubbing his beard.

Seeletso:Baby are you crying?

Jaden:Uhm wow!

She laughed and used her manicured hands to wipe his tears.

Seeletso:Congratulations sir, the treatments were a success and we are expecting our little one.

At Theo's house

Phemelo arrived there and she knocked on the door.  
The house was quiet and she wondered why..

She walked to the nanny's bedroom and she was  
asleep.

Phemelo:Hey, are the kids asleep?

Nanny:Their grandmother took them...

She frowned.

Phemelo:Why?

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## THE GAME

#126

At Theo's house

Nanny: She said you said she should take them and she passed by your room too.

Phemelo sighed and walked out. She made her way to the room she shared with her partner and she switched on the lights. She found a box on the bed and she rolled her eyes walking to it. She unwrapped the box and opened it. She looked at the dress inside, attached to it was a note. She recognized the handwriting on the note and smiled.

'Hey baby, let's take a break from the kids tonight.

Love you'

She looked at the dress and smiled. It's been a year

since she wore a dress. Her leg still makes her insecure but he made the effort and bought a dress for her. She had to shower and fit into that dress. She wasn't expecting this at all.

At Joshua's and Marang's house

That early evening Joshua and Marang arrived at their house. Marang's eyes were puffy and she felt a headache coming.

Joshua helped her get out of the car and held her waist. She held onto him.

Marang:I think I'm fine.

Joshua:Don't try to think about it okay?

She nodded and let go of him as she walked to the door first while he got his bag from the car. She waited for him by the door and he unlocked the door. She closed her eyes, would she want to see the body? She didn't think so. She walked inside after he

unlocked the door and she headed straight to the bedroom. She rubbed her eyes when she got there and sat on the bed. So she was really crying about someone who didn't regret selling her and listened as she got raped over and over again by a man old enough to pose as a father figure? She was too sweet for her own good.

She sniffed and looked at the door as Joshua walked in.

Marang: Thank you.

Joshua: I'm always here for you. You know that.

She smiled and rubbed her eyes. So her aunt was gone and her chapter in her life was long over. She needed to move on. She is probably in hell paying dearly for what she did unless she got born again while in prison which she wasn't sure of because she went there only once.

Marang: I guess that chapter is over and done with.

Joshua:For good now sweetness.

She nodded and he sat next to her and placed their stuff by the bedside.

Marang:Your uncle's wife called and maybe we can find out what she has to say.

Joshua:It is most probably about a family gathering.

Marang:Let's find out.

Joshua passed Marang her phone and she dialed the number. She rubbed her eyes and put the call on loudspeaker as Joshua kept quiet.

Doreen>Hello?

Marang>Hello, Marang here. I hope I called at the right time?

Doreen:it is okay. I would like to apologize in advance..

Joshua frowned and Marang held the phone bored.

Marang:Ee mma...

Doreen sucked in a deep breath and she started to tell Marang everything. Ten minutes later, Joshua was shaking his head while Marang was left speechless. So all this time there was nothing wrong. Just a woman who hated her for no reason and decided to bewitch her.

Doreen:All I'm asking for is for your forgiveness, maybe my daughter will be well..

Marang:Uhm wow! If your daughter was not sick you would still be conniving and waiting for my children to die am I right?

Doreen was silent for a minute and Marang shook her head. She knew it.

Marang:All this pain and everything just for you to want me to forgive you just because your daughter is sick and all that witchcraft reverted back to you?

Doreen was silent while Joshua just listened.

Marang:I was in pain, it hurt and you were pushing fucking Nadia towards my husband yet you know



what the fuck you did!(crying)

Joshua held her shoulders as the tears rolled down her cheeks.

Marang:I am so sick and tired of being the good person because you take me for a fool. You bewitch me and expect me to forgive you because your daughter is sick? You didn't care that I was in pain because of the infertility in fact you rejoiced over it. If your daughter dies it's your fault not mine. Not my fucking fault. Have a good life..

She hung up and started to sob onto her husband's chest. People where so freaking unbelievable. So unbelievable.

Joshua:It's going to be okay, if people are that toxic we cut them off my love..

Marang:All this while I thought I was the one with the problem, I thought I did something wrong but n-no...someone had to go to a witch doctor.

Joshua:But they didn't succeed and that's all that matters.

Marang:I guess so.

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## THE GAME

#127

At Theo's house

Phemelo turned around looking at the mirror. She looked so beautiful in the dress and it was like it was custom made for her. She rubbed her hands against the dress and smiled. She did know where he was taking her but she was excited. The bedroom door opened slightly and there he was in a black suit, all sharp and handsome in that.

Theo:Hey there pretty lady.

Phemelo:Hey(blushing)

Theo:You look beautiful in that babe, are you ready?

She nodded and he walked towards her. He slipped his hand in his pocket and took out a necklace. He

stood behind her and she lifted her hair as he put on the necklace. His fingers brushed her collarbone and she shuddered, his lips found the nape of her neck and she held his hands.

Theo:I love you okay?

Phemelo:I love you too.

He spun her around and kissed her lips as she giggled.

Theo:We can go now, you look perfect babe.

He wrapped his arms around her waist as they walked out of the door. The house was silent and Phemelo was really not used to a silent house. The boys were always around and they were so energetic as toddlers should be.

Phemelo:We really made beautiful babies.

Theo:they wouldn't be here if it weren't for you miss.

Phemelo:Is it possible that we can try for another kid?

Theo turned his head to look at her.

Phemelo:It was just a suggestion. I want a little girl.

Theo:Really?

Phemelo:Yes really. Two boys and a little girl and it will be okay.

Theo:Soon..

Phemelo:Why soon? Why not now?

He laughed as he unlocked the car and opened the door for her. She got inside and he walked to his side.

Theo:We are being impatient now?

Phemelo:I mean a quickie just before we go there..

Theo:Soon love not now.

Phemelo rolled her eyes as he fixed her seatbelt.

Phemelo:Just like that?

Theo:Just like that...(kissing her cheek)

He started the car and she faced the other way before laughing.

Phemelo:Theo tlherra wena...

Theo:Rest Phem rest..

He reversed and she looked at him as he started to drive. So she has known this guy for years now. Now he was the father of her kids but he said nothing about marriage? Marriage might not be her portion at this point in her life.

At Jaden's house

Seeletso pushed Jaden away as he tried to hold her while she was cooking.

Seeletso:Mr...

Jaden:Fiona is asleep.

Seeletso:And I'm hungry. Relax.

He kissed her neck and held her waist from behind.

Jaden:Is it too early to tell my parents to do their job?

Seeletso:What job now?

He kissed her neck again before he squeezed her breast.

Seeletso:Not too hard, it's painful.

Jaden:Sorry my love

Seeletso:What job?

Jaden:Don't worry about it okay? I love you...

Seeletso:I know. Let me cook in peace.

Jaden:Let me help you then.

Seeletso:Wena kana.

He opened the fridge and looked at her.

Jaden:What do you want?

She started to tell him what she wants and he took

out more of the ingredients, he was going to help more. Making sure that she has the smoothest pregnancy in the history of pregnancies.

At The location

Theo opened the door and Phemelo stepped out as she took his hand.

Phemelo: Thank you.

Theo: Let's make our way inside baby girl.

They walked out of the parking lot and into the hotel. He held her waist tightly and didn't let her go. They got to the elevator and she held onto him.

Meanwhile a lot of thoughts were crossing Theo's mind. What if she didn't want to marry him and she says no? He really loved her and he wasn't willing to lose her. It took some time for him to be here because he had to save for their wedding and everything.



They got to their destination and they both stepped out of the elevator. Phemelo could hear faint music as they approached the conference room. Theo opened the door and she gasped. This was sweet, they always went out on dates but this was sweet. A candle lit dinner with pillows on the floor, more like an indoor picnic with soft music playing in the background.

She hugged him and he kissed her neck.

Phemelo: Thank you so much..aw.

He led her to the pillows and they both sat down.

Phemelo looked around and smiled yet again. This was honestly sweet.

Their night went on cozily as the two then slow danced to their favorite jams.

Phemelo:I remember when I sneaked out to go on a date with you..

Theo:Who would've thought we would be here right now?

Phemelo:in your terrible voice you sang my favorite song at that time...yele ya Sledgehammer by Fifth Harmony..

He laughed as he kissed her neck and she shook her head.

Phemelo:I was like this dude learned the song just to sing it for me a tswa Gabs..

Theo:Love makes us do crazy things doesn't it?

Phemelo:It does, I love you okay?

She held his cheek and kissed his lips softly. She broke the kiss as she smiled and looked into his eyes. She was content with this and if it does end, she did give her all into this love thing with this wonderful man right here.

Theo paused and stopped dancing.

Phemelo:Why did we stop dancing?

Theo:Babe?

Phemelo:Yes? Is there something wrong? Did I do anything wrong?

Theo went on one knee and he removed g box from his pocket.

Theo:At some point in my life, I almost lost you. We have been through a lot from the accident that caused a drift and some of our issues that we had to deal with but in all these years I've been with you..

Phemelo held back tears as Theo continued with his speech. He had been planning this all along?

Theo:I have come to realize that I cannot live without you, I haven't looked at any other woman ever since I met you and I swear I won't..

She giggled as she wiped her tears with the back of her hand.

Theo:I promise to love and to hold. To cherish you for the rest of my life. I want you forever and ever. I want to grow old with you with our three kids. So will you do me the honors of being my wife?

She nodded and extended her hand. She was rendered speechless at this point as he slipped the ring on her finger and got up to hug her.

Theo:I love you okay?

She nodded as they sashayed to the current song.

The following morning

At Joshua and Marang's house

Marang woke up first and she looked at her blessing laying there in his sleep. This was a new day, she was going to forget everything and everyone who hurt her. She was happy with her current life and that was all that mattered to her.

She rubbed her eyes and smiled as she got on top of him. She started to kiss his face all over and he turned his head.

Marang:Baby wake up tthe...Mr? Tsoga tthe rasta..

He opened his eyes and she kissed his cheeks with a little giggle.

Marang:Good morning baby..

Joshua:Hey baby(softly)

Marang>Hello my love..

He smiled and she couldn't help but melt as she kissed his chest. This was happiness right here.

Marang:Since the kids are not here we can spend some time together. Tell them that you are not feeling well..

Joshua:Dr Colton?

Marang:Pretty please. Pretty please my love..

She got off him and got his phone to hand it to him and got hers. She unlocked her phone as she cuddled into his chest.

She opened her messages and nearly screamed.

Joshua:What's up?

Marang:Ke best lady..my best friend is getting married..

Joshua:Congratulations..

Marang started to text back.

Marang: Aawww. Baby congratulations let's pop out the bottles. I am so happy for you my love(sending the text)

She sent the text and grinned. Everything was finally coming together. She opened another message from Seeletso.

Sister :You have a niece or a nephew on the way.  
Talk later mma dikgang

She laughed into her husband's chest, all her girls  
were happy. This was great.

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3 MONTHS LATER

## THE GAME

#128

At Joshua and Marang's house

Marang smiled as her sister in law rubbed her bump in a white dress. Her engagement ring shined against the sunlight that pierced through the window.

Seeletso: You guys are just going to make me have a lot of dresses I won't wear.

Phemelo: So Theo and I have postponed the wedding..

Seeletso and Marang looked at her as Marang's makeup artist fixed her makeup.

Marang: Why?

Phemelo: We found out that I'm three months and a week pregnant.



Seeletso:Bathong congratulations love.

Marang:Aw the boys have a sister on the way..

Phemelo laughed as she sat down. The makeup artist did her final touches and once she was done she spun the chair around.

Seeletso:Look at you..

Marang:Thank you(smiling)

She stood up and grabbed her phone. She went to stand by the window as she dialed her husband's number.

Marang:Baby..

Joshua:Hey there pretty miss.

Marang:I'm nervous.

He laughed and she rolled her eyes smiling.

Joshua:Babe...breath in and out.

Marang:And I miss our babies.

Joshua:hee Bathong.

Marang:I have baby fever too.

Joshua:Ijoo..Sweetheart breath in and out.

She did as he said while she pulled the robe closer. This was just a vow renewal ceremony and who knew they would get here someday. Knowing that love was a tricky game and life was a classroom where they learnt new things everyday? Now they were celebrating their seventh wedding anniversary and more than eight years of knowing each other. It would be weird to let people know that they met when she was fifteen and started dating when she was sixteen but they knew. They just didn't get intimate till she was of age.

Joshua:Are you listening?

Marang:No. I love you okay?

Joshua:I love you too sweetness..

She smiled. That name has been his go to nickname for her and it was he little things. The stolen kisses,

unexpected hugs, the cut nicknames and them being goofy around each other with no shame.

Joshua:We'll talk later baby girl. Bye sweetness.

Marang:Bye.

She hung and placed the phone against chest.

Seeletso:Your love is one for the books I swear.

More than five years together and he still gives you butterflies.

Marang:Because I long met my soul's equal and he was my missing puzzle piece.

Phemelo:That's so beautiful Bathong..

Marang:It is.

She stared out the window and folded her arms as she slowly went down memory lane.

At Raine's little house

Raine smiled. Maybe one day she will tell Phemelo that she was Angel's mother but she won't take her away from the home she grew up in. Her small phone rang and she answered it.

Raine:Hello?

Caller:Hi mam. Is this Miss Raine Mogapi? Your application for the youth loan has been approved.

Raine held back tears. After years of struggling she finally got a response and she was going to start something sustainable. She looked at her son, she was going to make a legacy for him. Something he will call his and no one can ever take it from him.

Caller:Hello?

Raine:I-I'm still here. Thank you.

Caller:You can pass by the CEDA offices to fill in the documents.

Raine:Ee mma. Tanki.

Caller:No. thank you. Have a good day.

The caller hung up and she smiled as tears rolled down her eyes. She was finally going to start doing something meaningful and be happy. Life had dealt her a heavy blow but she was going to bounce back soon. After all it was all a game of wins and losses and she had been on the losing end for far too long. She said a short prayer of thanks and smiled picking up her son.

Raine:Hey boy boy so mommy is finally going to have it all together.

The little boy giggled and she punched his cheeks. He was going to be a healthy little boy.

At the gardens

The dj played soft love jams as the sun set slowly leaving behind hues of pink and orange behind. The lanterns were lit by the decor company as a handful of guests started to arrive to the beautiful scene.

White, baby pink and dark pink roses adorned the location. The air was fresh and the view was magnificent. The guests felt like they were attending the couple's second wedding.

Ma Colton sat down in one of the front seats and looked around. It had been a month since Doreen lost her only child and she couldn't heal. It hurt to lose a child and she knew that the world worked in mysterious ways but no bad can go unpunished and she was sure Doreen regretted what she did. It cost the life of her own grandchild to see that and in Ma Colton's heart she will miss her grandchild. She didn't deserve such a death most especially because she was an innocent in her mother's malicious games. She shook her head and smiled. Her remaining grandchildren were happy and she had great grandchildren. When the Lord finally takes her to her resting place she will be a happy woman having met all her great grandchildren.

Ma Joshua and her husband arrived with the quads and Sara all dressed in their cute clothes. At least this time, they will appear in their parents' wedding pictures even if this is just a vow renewal ceremony. The couple made the kids settle down and they sat down as they looked around. The guests invited to the wedding arrived and that was when they saw the man of the hour along with Theo and Jaden. They looked dapper in fresh cuts and clean suits. Joshua walked to the alter and greeted the pastor with a small smile as they took their places waiting for the lady of the moment.

At Joshua and Marang's house

Seeletso:Sis, it's time to go.

Marang:The car is here?

Phemelo:Yes.

She checked her phone. Her fiancé told her the boys

are with her parents at the vow renewal ceremony. Marang took a deep breath and she looked at the rings on her finger. Her engagement ring and her wedding ring. This journey of her life has been a blissful since her husband became a part of it.

Marang swirled in front of the mirror and handed her sister in law the phone.

Marang:We can go.

The girls waited for her to walk out first. They had the flowers sorted and she was wearing a white gown along with a crown on her head. Dr Joshua's princess for life, the way that man has been there for her was admirable and their love was one for the books. They would say again, it was a love story worth being told. They managed to show that love can exist and last.

Marang watched the sun set and she held back tears, she wasn't sure if she was going to hold back her tears as she walked down the aisle to her husband,



her personal hero whom she knew would always be there at all times.

Marang: Thank you Lord!

She walked behind her best ladies as they opened the car door for her. She got inside first and they walked to the other car. She greeted the driver and he greeted her back before he started the car.

The first car got out first before the second one followed.

In the other car

Phemelo and Seeletso conversed over baby names.

Seeletso: I wanted a girl so bad but unfortunately it's a boy.

Phemelo: I hope I have a girl. I can't have a household full of men. Honestly.

Seeletso:I'm praying that if I fall pregnant again, I have a girl. Two kids would be enough. I don't want to have a baby shower nor a bridal shower.

Phemelo:We can plan something among the three of us.

Seeletso:That would be a great idea.

Phemelo:After Dr Colton's second honeymoon of course.

Seeletso rolled her eyes laughing.

Seeletso:Love lives there and I am honestly happy for her.

Phemelo:She deserves the world and more, Marang has always been the kindest soul I have ever known and it makes me happy to know that she is living her best life right now.

Seeletso:And thank you for being there for her..

Phemelo chuckled.

Phemelo:I haven't always been the best friend for

her at times but we made it and she is happy, we are all happy. That's the important part.

Seeletso:True..

They went on about babies as Phemelo told Seeletso about her labor experience.

Seeletso:You sound as if you were calm..

Phemelo:Di stitch di a nyesa yoh!

Seeletso laughed. She has a sister in law who is a doctor and she was sure she was going to prescribe herself something for the pain. She had a low pain tolerance and from the way Phemelo described it she made it seem as if it was the worst thing to ever happen in the world.

At the gardens

The two cars arrived and the planners were waiting for them. They handed the bride her favorite pink

roses and the ladies walked first leaving the bride waiting in standby. She declined her father in law's offer to walk her down the aisle. He did so the first time but now she was okay.

As the two ladies arrived, they locked eyes with the men in their lives and smiled. Ra Joshua looked around and stood up, the bride had arrived, he didn't even take her seriously when she said she didn't want her hand to be held as she walked down the aisle.

People ignored him and he walked till he found her. Marang laughed in surprise.

Marang:Dad I said not this time.

Ra Joshua:Wena a reye mma..(extending his hand)

She took it laughing ad hugged him. He fixed her crown. His son found his missing rib, they were suited for each other in every other way.

Ra Joshua:Ray?

Marang:Rra?

Ra Joshua:You look beautiful today.

Marang:Ah ah. Why say today? I always look beautiful..

Ra Joshua:I know. They are waiting for you..

She smiled as he held her hand delicately as if she was a royal of some sort. As they approached the aisle, Wildest Dreams started playing in quartet. Just the instrumentals and in her heart she was singing along just so she isn't nervous. Her baby was fly as a jet stream, with his head down. She stifled her laughter, he was a big baby at times. Her baby. He finally looked down, he was the one she was walking to as the song played. Joshua kept his eyes fixated on her as she made her way to him. He will keep this memory of her in his mind till the day he dies. His wife was an ethereal Angel and he had no idea how he got lucky. Marang looked down as she stopped in front of her husband. The song stopped and she

could hear her babies' giggles. She and Joshua looked at the crowd and they laughed same time as the quads clapped their hands. The guests laughed and the two finally focused on each other.

Joshua:Hey sweetness...

His father let of Marang's hand and placed it on Joshua's before walking away. Marang looked down as blush covered her cheeks.

Priest:We are gathered here today to witness the renewal of vows by this beautiful couple. They are celebrating their seventh wedding anniversary and what better way than to revamp their love for each other. Mr and Mrs the floor is all yours.

Joshua:I'll start...

Everyone and everything went silent as Joshua's cleared his throat.

Joshua:It all started 10 years ago when this little pretty little miss. She isn't afraid of dogs anymore

but our dog at the time bit her. I don't know why I felt compelled to help her with everything but a week later I was crushing on her.

Marang laughed. Seeletso once told her this but he has never admitted it so openly and looking back at the fact that she wasn't the prettiest girl on the block back then. She smiled and held his hands as he laughed embarrassed at his confession.

Joshua: A whole university student and she was 15. In my mind I was like she is a kid Josh. I helped her out and she was always on my phone whenever I was with her. Music and drawing are her favorite coping mechanisms. Fast forward to a year later... I finally had courage to ask her out.

Marang: Can I talk about that part? (laughing) so guys kana this gent..

Joshua: ke gent?

Marang: I was at his place studying with Letso and well I haven't seen him in months. I had a crush on him but he was way older than me. I just buried that little crush. Okay he wants to take me out and I was like

sure. He treated me like a sister in a way though he called me by the nickname he still calls me today.

Joshua:Babe..

Marang:This gentleman had a fire playlist that was why I was always on his phone. Ee kana gent took me to Milkylane akere I'm not used to such stuff. We have ice cream and he drives back to his parents place. He leaves the car and offers to walk me to the orphanage. It was a ten minute walk from my in law's place to there.

Seeletso:I think I remember.

Marang:My sister in law guys...anyway, we start walking and the doctor starts asking if I have a boyfriend. I said no and he shot straight to the point. He was like I think I have found my soul's equal in you(smiling)and I said he was my missing puzzle piece. He was nervous around little Marang and wow.

Joshua:All we are trying to say is that we will be together till eternity. We have been through a lot as a couple and we are at a stage in our life where we will keep trusting God to keep our marriage this way.



Marang:I found love when I wasn't looking, I found my missing piece. The man who completes me and till my very last breath I will love him and the kids he gave me.

Joshua pecked her lips and she knew. His love language was touch.

Joshua:as long as I live I will love you. My soul's equal, I don't think I love you is enough to describe how I feel about you because each and everyday I find myself falling deeper for you. With every flaw and imperfection.

Marang:And everyone fades to nothing when I look at you, you are the only one right thing I did.

He smiled and his hands moved to her waist. They locked eyes and she grinned.

Marang:You love me like I am brand new each and everyday. You really know me and to have you as my husband and the father of my kids is...I love you okay? Happy seventh anniversary baby but you know we have been together for nine years.

Everyone laughed and he brought down his head to

capture his lips before the priest could say kiss the bride. It was such a beautiful sight to see.

Love is like a chess game, you protect your queen no matter what. The queen should always be safe because as they say, the woman knows almost everything and a happy wife is a happy home. Life is also a game of wins and losses. You lose yourself on the way, you get used but you have to get back in your feet and gain extra points by working as hard as you can to catch up. All in all there is no formula to this life thing, what works for one might not work for you. As Marang said, life is a university full of adversities ad we are all trying to graduate with distinction but some will fail while some will have to repeat chapters but in the end it will work out.

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\*\*\*\*\*THE END\*\*\*\*\*

