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## **PROLOUGE**

Finding true love these days is one of the most difficult task to tackle. It's rare and people are fake out there. It shouldn't be about your bank balance or what you bring to the table. It should be about that skip of a heart beat and the feelings you get. Money doesn't usually buy happiness and let's not forget it's the root of evil. People will do anything to get their hands on money even it means getting them dirty. True love should be a team effort; where you help each other when the other one is failing. I have mistaken that feeling with someone else before as even went as engaging her, thinking she's my soulmate until I set my eyes on her.

A free spirited girl who loves laughing. She's an introvert and a nerd who wears hideous glasses behind those big beautiful mesmerizing eyes and ridiculous clothes. I don't know whether

she's color blind or what. Who matches a grass green skirt with an orange top? Her clothes are always sore to our eyes and I sometimes wish I was blind. Zero fashion sense and style. Jo'burg or any big city is suppose to change people into what they always wanted to be growing up but not that girl. She's a hardcore Farm Julia. You can take her out of the Farms but you can't take the farms out of her and that's what I love about her. She's authentic and true to herself.

Pulling the photo out of the drawers, I trace my hand on her face and smile. The Queen of my heart and my castle. She's laughing at this picture as always and it's a refreshing site for my eyes. Don't ask me where I got the picture because a man has to always have plans. She doesn't even know I exist but I know about her. I have dozens pictures of her in my safe and I don't want anyone opening it. I'm the one who gets to see that beautiful face and fantasize about how our life we turn out. She passes me every single day of her life and I always stand there smiling like a retard, waiting for her to shower me with her sweet melodic voice when she greets me in the morning. I don't blame her though because I'm old enough to be her father but I can't help what I feel. This old heart beats for her.

The door of the study flies open and in comes the pest. I place the photo on top of my thighs and hold the cigar with my lips.

Yvonne: Babe it's getting late are you coming to bed?

She walks in further and makes herself comfortable on the chair.

Me: I'm still busy.

Busy stalking The Queen. I puff the cigar in her face. She coughs and lean back on the chair.

Yvonne: Okay but don't take too long. The bed gets cold without you.

She blows me a kiss and makes her way to the door. I breathe out and pick up the photo and stare at it. She has a mole next to her nose and a gap between her teeth. Her shoe size is three and wears size 40 in her waist. I never saw thick women attractive before. My type is the model type, slim with a tiny

waist. But it all change on her. She makes want to sin and give up everything I have just for her. I wouldn't hesitate to kill for her. The annoy device I call a phone chimes somewhere on top of the table. I flip the papers and look for it.

Me: Talk to me.

Voice: Boss the girl got on taxi.

Me: Okay. Follow it to make sure she's safe.

Voice: She's more than safe because she boarded it with another man.

Me: (shocked) What?

I jump to my feet feeling my blood boiling. I cough hysterically after being choked by the smoke.

Me: (hissing) And you let her? Stop that fucken taxi now. I don't care whether it's in the middle of a highway or what. I'm fucken coming.

I click my tongue and slip the phone in my pocket and march out of the study.

Me: Yvonne where are my fucken keys?

I stumbled on her sitting in the lounge

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sipping wine. Wasn't she suppose to be sleeping?

Yvonne: Where are you going so late?

Me: Where are my fucken keys?

I hiss at her. She shrugs her shoulders.

Me: What else do you know in your life except for hosting those stupid tea parties, drinking like a fish and chopping my money?

She bats her fake lashes at me. This is what I'm talking about. Everything is fake on her nothing is real. I don't know why didn't I see it sooner. I don't know the man up above didn't wipe the fog in my eyes earlier.

Yvonne: When you're starting to act like this I know these someone else. It wouldn't be the first time you do this to me. Tell her I said she's not the first and definitely not the last. They come and go because nobody can handle the shit you come with. The lies, bribes, rough sex, the bodies you have all over this country and the kind of business you're into. No sane woman can handle the police knocking on her doorstep at 3am looking for you.

She yells wiping her tears. I snort, slipping my hands in my pockets.

Me: Don't make it sound like you did me a favour because let me tell you something honey. You ain't shit so don't confuse that with anything. She's the first and definitely the last person who I know for sure won't turn her back on me. She matured than you ever will be and guess what I fucken love her. Deal with that.

I storm to the kitchen to look for my keys on the key rack. She yells after me and I ignore her. Tantrums are her specialty and they don't faze me.



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## ***NOMASWAZI***

I wipe the sweat of my face and heavily sigh. I've been running around like a headless chicken, trying to run the shop. My mother decided not show up at work today in all days. She knows how savage her customers are and I'm not used to them. Everytime someone yells or shouts at me I just cry. I don't like being yelled at, period.

Voice: This is not my order.

The customer yells placing the cup of coffee and freshly baked cupcakes. I shrink on my spot and pull out my glasses to rub my eyes. This is what I'm talking about. Nomathemba knows on month end we work twice the normal day but she decided not to pitch up. I'm so close to losing my mind because I've been holding the forth the whole day alone. I have been telling her to hire more stuff but she flatly refused because this is a family business. She said we don't need to pay another person where

else we could do the job ourselves. She's just stingy and it's not funny. I'm the one who struggles when she's not here.

Customer: Are we going to get our orders?

Me: Yes as soon as I sort out which order belongs to who.

I shriek out. I hate how my voice trembles whenever I'm scared.

Customer 2: Are you serious? We are late for work young lady.

Me: I'm sorry miss. Can everyone call out their orders again.

I retort. A displeased look emerges on their faces. I know what's about to come and I don't think I'll be ready for it.

Customer: Just give me my money because I wont wait for this nonsense. I have been standing here for more than half and hour waiting for my order.

Me: I'm so sorry sir, it's just I'm running the shop alone today. I have to run to the kitchen to make sure I don't burn anything at the same time I have to be here to take your orders and be your waitress at the same. I have 5 people who want their orders to be delivered; please just be patient with me.

My lips are wobbly as I mutter this. It doesn't help that my short self only reach his chest. His looking at me like looking a toddler and I hate it.

Customer: Young lady give me my money.

He sternly muttered. I nod and open the register.

Me: Can I see your slip?

He slams the slip on top the counter. I jump startled and swallow the lump growing in my throat. Judging by their displeased looks plastered on their faces I'm losing more than one customer. Nomathemba will have me for dinner this evening but it's not my fault. Should she have taken the advice I

gave her none of this would be happening. I hand the man his money back and rest of the others who want their money back. By the end of that I'm only left with 3 customers.

Lady: First time on the job?

I shake my head and remove my glasses to rub my teary eyes.

Me: I'm usually in kitchen baking. Sometimes do deliveries but its my first time dealing with customers.

Lady: Dealing with difficult customers is a norm to some of us. The best way is to ignore them no matter how much they provoke you. Unfortunely the law of the business always favours them because they are always right even when they are wrong.

I fake a smile.

Me: Let me check on your orders. What did you order?

Lady: Blueberry cake and a cuppacino.

She hands me her slip while the others do the same. I dash to the back with their slip and release my tears. I sound pathetic right now but I can't help it. I easily get offended and gets hurt easily not to mention my clumsiness. Everything about me is so wrong, my weight, my face, my voice on top of that I have to be 4 eyes. I stride back in the front and hand them their order then make my to the back to place another batch in the oven. The bell in the front rings just as I place the last batch in the oven. I close it with my leg and run to the front.

Me: Welcome to Noma's bakery. How can I help you?

He smiles staring at me causing my eyebrows to knit together.

Me: Can I help you sir?

Him: I heard this was the best bakery in town so I thought I should swing by and see for myself.

He leans on the counter as stares at me with a smile making me to smile back. His smile is contagious and his so nice for old man. People on his age as so grumpy and sour. They are short tempered and snappy.

Me: Would you like a menu to go through what we offer?

Him: Yes please.

He politely muttered still smiling. I wipe my hands on the apron and him the menu. He drops his eyes to the menu and place it back on the counter.

Him: What would you advice I have? What would you have that is your favourite?

Me: I don't have a favourite because I don't have a sweet tooth but I'll advice you on mint muffins or chocolate cake. They are there one who people go for. You should see them when complaining when they are finished like a bunch of kids. There

was one time when a lady and some gentleman nearly got physical because they both wanted to have the last slice of the chocolate cake.

I giggle shaking my head at the memory. It was my first time seeing people go crazy over food. I normally see that on Tv. I rise my head and find him staring me with an intense look.

Me: So sorry sir, I sometimes get lost in my head and start rumbling unnecessary things that were not asked.

Him: No,no, don't mind me. Your voice is melodic and I think it just become my favourite sound.

I drop my eyes to the floor and blush. This is the first time in my life I'm getting a comment from a man whose not my stepfather. Before I can say anything the door swings open and incomes my best friend Lihle. She pauses on her steps before broadens her smile and walks towards us.

Lihle: Good morning.

Me: (smiling) Hey.

She shifts her gaze to the man beside her and bats her lashes.

Lihle: Morning sir.

She squawks up trying to sound seductive. The man nods and shift his eyes to me. His whole deamonour has changed.

Him: I'll go for the chocolate cake, please.

I nod and make my way to the back to take out the cupcakes out of the oven and let them cool off. Padding back with a fresh slice of cake I find Lihle standing too close to the man. She heavinging his personal space and her breast are on his face.

Me: Shembe!



I exclaimed dropping the cake in shock.

Him: Your saggy breasts are not attractive little girl. Respect yourself.

He hisses taking a step back. Lihle swallows and covering her chest. My friend is forward shame and it annoys me sometimes.

Me: I'm so sorry sir. My friend is not normally like this. Please don't report this to my mother it won't happen again.

I'm on my knees begging him not to report me. My mother has banned Lihle from here because of things stunts and I don't want this to reach her. She will forbid our friendship if she hears what transpired and beside Lihle is the only friend I have. He clickes his tongue and march out of the shop and slam the door behind him.

Me: Sir, your order?

I call after him but he ignores me. I jump to my feet and glare at my friend.

Lihle: What? I was just making myself known to Mkhulu Bae.

Me: How many times did I tell you not to flirt with the customers. This is why mama banned you here because you don't respect personal space and peoples privacy.

She snort rolling her eyes.

Lihle: You worry too much my friend. Once I marry him you wont even need to slave for your mother. I will just hire you as my housekeeper.

I suck in a deep breath and walk to the mess I made. To say I'm hurt is an understatement. I don't know when will people see me as a normal person than their slave. I grow up in a neighbourhood were by "fat kids" as they call them seen as some sort of toy. The name calling, the bullying is what I went through day in and day out. It got much worse when I was in high school. There are days where I just lay in my bed asking myself why am I still alive. The punishment of knowing you're facing a bunch of bullies at school is what killed myself esteem

everyday. They used to laugh at me for being thick and it didn't help that I was short. They would slap me, shred my books into pieces and even piss on me. I've lost count of how many glasses my mother had to buy because they broke them. Not once has anyone stood up for me until I befriended Lihle. She was nice to me and the bullying become less. I don't know why was I even bullied in the first place. I'm just a reserved person who avoids conflict at all cost.

Lihle: Just imagine how beautiful our family would be like. Two boys and one girl.

Her gushing voice breaks me out of my thoughts. I groan annoyed.

Me: You're still on that?

Lihle: Of course I'm still there. That man is my future husband. I heard his fiance is an influncer but she's lacking something, she's not that beautiful. I don't know what that man saw in her and left the likes of us behind. Have you seen how gorgoues I look?

She twirls around in front of me. I just wish I was just that confident with my body like her. I would kill to have a body like her. One of the many reason I wear long skirts and loose tops just hide how big I am. I've tried Herbex, Hot water with lemon, jogging

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flat stomach tea, china tea and green tea but nothing works on me. I have tried everything to lose weight but it doesn't happen. My mother once I was wasting my time because my paternal family is like me, they have thick bones.

Lihle: I'll just forgive him for calling my boobs saggy.

Me: God! Can someone save because I know I won't hear the end of this.

I mumble under my breath mopping the floor.

Lihle: Do you think I stand a chance though?

Me: I don't know Lihle. Don't you think his way older than you?

She rolls her eyes.

Lihle: That didn't stop Mandela from marrying Winnie even though she was 20 years younger than him so what's stopping me?

I shake my head.

Lihle: Beside his on his earlier 50 and we are only 26.

I giggle.

Me: The right age to be his first born. Can you move I need to clean that spot.

She shifts aside and continues with her rumble. I zone her out and concentrate at the task at hand which is making sure the floor is clean. I would even chase the birds in the sky just to run

away from her right now because once she starts she won't finish. This is the only thing I will hear for the next couple of weeks until she finds another interesting thing to talk about.

Lihle: Maybe I should send his fiancée a DM, what do you think?

I shrug my shoulders. She groans annoyed.

Lihle: You're a mood killer sometimes. I don't know how I become your friend when you're so boring.

Today is not my day shame. First it was those rude customer and now it's her. She has offended me twice and guess what, I smile like usually do and move past it.

Lihle: I'm on study break and I'm fished. Can I have 2 cupcakes please.

Me: Are you going to pay?

Her eyebrows furrow.

Lihle: Haibo Nomaswazi, you going to make me pay? Me, Lihle, your best friend?

I snicker.

Me: This is my mothers shop not mine, Lihle. And you know that

She huffs and march to the door. I shake my head and follow behind her to lock the door and turn the sign to closed. My mother will have to forgive me this time but I can't run a shop all alone.

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I close the shop 6'oclock on the dot and navigate my way to the taxi rank. I cashed up on R200 and Nomathemba will skin me alive. I have been reharsing a lie I'm going to tell her when I get home.

Voice: Swazi?

I turn and find my neighbour; jogging my way.

Me: Hey.

Ntuthuko: I've been calling you for a while now.

Me: Sorry I tend to live in my head sometimes.

I flash him a smile.

Me: You knocked off early today.



Ntuthuko: Yea, it was not that busy what's your excuse?

Me: I was alone and couldn't handle the pressure I was in so I had to close early.

Ntuthuko: Why don't you guys hire more stuff?

Me: Tell that to my mother. She's so stubborn and a slavedriver.

He chuckles as we cross the street and make our way to the taxi rank.

Ntuthuko: Whose doing your deliveries?

Marshal: Las two.

Me: My stepfather and her sometimes. I do them once in a while.

He nods closing the door behind him. I lean on the window and yawn. He chuckles.

Ntuthuko: Don't tell me you also fall in the category of people who sleep in a taxi.

I giggle.

Me: This is my daily routine. Everytime I board a taxi I choose a seat next to the window so I can sleep in peace.

He laughs while I smile closing my eyes. Just as I drift into a deep slumber the screeching of tyres can be heard from afar before the taxi jerks into a stop. My eyes fly open when I see a man walking towards the taxi and pull the door open, his car is blocking the taxi. The passengers start to scream while the driver opens his door and runs off. The man goes through the passengers with his eyes before they land on me. My breath hitches in my throat while my heart skipped a beat.

Man: Swazi!

He jerks his head indicating I should step out. Tears welled in my eyes. I don't even know him and what could he possibly want from me?

Ntuthuko: You're not about to kidnap her on my watch.

He spat. The man's lips curve into a smirk before he steps inside the taxi and whispers something in Ntuthuko's ear. He paled on his seat before shifting his popped out eyes to me.

Ntuthuko: You should go with him.

Tears roll down my cheeks. I'm being kidnapped in front of people and no one is saying or doing anything. My parts are going to be used for umuthi. Maybe Noma won't be so harsh on me when I give her the R200 for checking, should I survive this. I'll just tell her I was robbed on my way to the bank and managed to save R200.

Man: Time is money, Swazi.

He calmly muttered looking at his wristwatch. I clutch my bag to my chest and slowly climb off the taxi. As soon as he shifts his eyes to close the door behind me, I bolt off.

Man: (chuckling) He's got his hands full on this one.

I don't know who he is referring to and not that I care anyway. I can almost taste freedom. Zola Budd and Caster Semenya have nothing on me.

Man: (amused) I don't know whether to call you a dwarf or-

I interjects halting on my steps. Placing my hands in my hips, I scowl at him, catching my breath.

Me: Hey, I'm not a dwarf but short.

I protest. With three long strides he's in front of me.

Man: Got you.

Kanti what have my short legs have been doing all along? I'm panting like a dog for nothing.

**TYSON**

I'm driving over speed limit to the scene. I know by the end of tonight I might have ticket but who the hell cares about a bunch of papers? I can pay that money even if I'm in jail. There are more pressing matter than dealing with traffic cops. From the minute I stepped in the car I knew I would lose my shit. Who the hell has some balls to accompany my woman. Don't they know she belongs to me? I should be the one who get to see her beautiful face and hear her sweet voice when she laughs. The incounter earlier on was just to perfect until that mosquito she calls a friend came in the shop. She had to ruin the moment when I was just getting to know her. The girl is forward for my liking and doesn't even deserve to be her friend. She will corrupt her and fill her head with nonsense. She deserves someone whose like her to be her friend not that girl. My phone rings snapping me out of my daze. I pull on the side of the road to answer it.

Me: Talk to me, Oliver.

Oliver: Boss I got her and it was not easy.

The sound of someone in the background causes my eyebrows to knit together.

Me: Don't tell me that's her crying on the background.

Oliver: Like I said boss it was not easy. She put up one hell of a fight and I have to manage the situation.

Me: What the fuck did you do?

I muttered through gritted teeth. He heavily sigh on the end of the line.

Oliver: I kind of used my gun on her.

He rumbles out in one go. The frown in my forehead deepens.

Me: Speak up boy. What the fuck are you saying?

Oliver: I used my gun-

Me: What? Are you out of your fucken mind?

I bellowed out in rage. My blood boils while hands start to quiver.

Me: Dammit Oliver do you know the damage you have done?

I bang the steering wheel frustrated.

Oliver: I'm sorry boss but she was not cooperating.

Me: Would you have cooperated if someone stopped the taxi you boarded and specifically ask for you to step out?

Oliver: Hell no!

Me: Exactly! In her own mind she was being kidnapped and you made things worse by using your gun on her.

Resting my head on the steering wheel, I shut my eyes and exhale loudly to calm myself.

Oliver: Shit! I fucked up.

Me: Big time. Where are you?

Oliver: Just dropped her off at her house.

Me: How was she when you dropped her off?

Oliver: Pretty shaken but she will be fine. She needs to sleep it out.

Before I could yell at him more another call comes through.



Me: There's an income call coming. The next time you decide to show her your gun I'll slice your balls and feed them to you.

I click my tongue and answer the call.

Voice: Jones, Jones, Jones.

The voice sings out on the end of the line.

Me: Who the fuck is this?

Voice: Your lack of concentration wounds me sometimes.

Me: Who the fuck is this?

Voice: Nc nc nc you seriously don't know me?

Me: I wouldn't be asking you to identify yourself if I knew who you are.

I hiss out. His deep voice chuckles on the end of the line.

Voice: Someone woke up on the wrong side of the bed this morning. What, didn't Mrs give you some ass.

He teases. I click my tongue and disconnect the call. The phone chimes again just as I start the ignition.

Me: I'm giving you 30 seconds to identify yourself boy or I'm hunting you and trust me you will regret it.

He roars in laughter.

Voice: Damn I knew that will ruffle up your furthers. Always a ticking time bomb.

I chuckle.

Me: I should have known. Don't you get tired of this shit?

Kagiso: Nah! I like pissing you guys off. I did the same thing to Dlamini and the fool put out a hit on me.

I laugh.

Me: Isn't he your best friend?

Kagiso: I thought he knew better than anyone else. I'm really offended that he doesn't know me.

Me: You call with a private number so what are you expecting us to think? We live a dangerous life that always makes you look over your shoulder all the time.

Kagiso: I fucken know that but I was expecting him to recognise me. He stormed in my study hurling insults and drank his liver away.

I laugh.

Sandile: His stupid that's why.

He yells on the background.

Me: He doesn't want to grow the fuck up.

Kagiso: Fuck you.

We laugh before Dlamini comes on the line.

Sandile: Jones my man how are you?

Me: Kicking and surviving. You know how the jungle is out there.

Sandile: The fool called to remind you about the annual meeting on Saturday.

Me: Same time and place?

Kagiso: Same time but different place. This time we are crippling the Nigerian boy, Adesola. We will be using his club.

Me: Send me the location.

I hang up and make a U-turn, driving home. I hope I will find that woman sleeping because I'm not in the mood to deal with her bullshit.

## **YVONNE**

I down the last glass and place the bottle back on the table. I'm still sitting on the same spot, throwing myself pity party. I don't understand men in general and I don't think I will ever understand them. I've put my life on hold for him. I nursed him back to health whenever his shot because he doesn't want the police on his case. I've dodged bullets because of him and not a single day has he shown how gratitude for that. A simple thank

would have been nice but instead I got the beatings. I got the swollen eye

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the dislocated jaw, broken ribs and much worse being cheated on. He does it like it's his daily sport and at this point age I've got used to everything. Every week it's a new skank and they don't faze me. The man always does this then comes back home to me his fiancée. They came and go and I'm still standing tall. I don't know when are they going to learn that his using them and it's not even nice anymore. The last skank decided to make herself known to the public and he went berserk. He was so close to killing her and I had to put out fire in which I didn't start in the first place. If it wasn't for me I don't know where would she be. He pretends like he doesn't love me and need me but deep down he knows no women can handle the shit he puts me through. I've seen it all in his line of work and protected him and his friends many times from the police because of the love I have for him. I sometimes ask myself is worth it for all the pain he puts me through? When he meets a new floozy he becomes someone else. He speaks to me whoever he wants. He yells at me in front of people, embarrassing me. What I love about him though is that he never brings them home with him.

I've broke some of them their ribs, clawed their face and shaved their hair off. I don't know how many times I've marked my territory on him but they just pop out of nowhere. Everyone in this city knows his my man so why can't they understand and respect that? We are featured on most magazines, social media knows us as the couple of the century and many more other fields,so why can't they back off? I know they don't owe me anything but his the father of my child that should tell them his taken. They are breaking a happy home and I know my baby girl would be heart broken to see her parents not together. Scarlet is used to seeing her father and I together so imagine the pain my baby will feel when that reaches her because of a skank that can't keep her legs shut. I always knew the most evil person in this world is a woman because how would they feel if the situation was reversed?

My trail of thoughts are disturbed by the sound of the garage door. I must have been too deep in my thoughts that I didn't hear the car driving in. I shift my gaze to the kitchen and wait for him. His footsteps approach the lounge after he closes the door. He pauses seeing me then proceed to the stairs

Me: You came back early. Trouble in paradise?

He ignores me and ascend the stairs. I watch his retreating back until he disappears upstairs. Pull the chair backwards, I jump to my feet and follow him. The first thing my ears pick up when I walk in the room is the running shower while my eyes set on the phone on top of the bed. I tiptoe to it and unlock it. I scroll down his messages and find nothing suspicious.

I move to his gallery and find Scarlets photos only. My heart drops to the pit on my stomach. He deleted all my pictures and only left his daughter's. I check his call log and huff frustrated. There's nothing suspicious here. I place the phone on top of the bed and run to the door when the water stops running. I peek on the door and see him making his way to the closet. He steps out a few minutes later butt naked and places his phone on top of the pedestal before he opens the blankets and slips in. He picks up the remote and switches off the lights. I wait for him to make that call so I can hear who is he talking too but instead he snores softly. I sigh dissapointedly and move from the door. I know I shouldn't be making this call but I'm desperate. He answers on the third ring.

Me: Hey, Oliver its Yvonne.



Oliver: I have your number. What the fuck do you want?

He snapped agitated. I suck in a deep breath.

Me: You work for my husband and-

Oliver: You mean fiancée.

He spat interrupting me.

Me: Yes that which means you also work for me. Your loyalty lies with me too as his fiancée and the mother of his daughter. Whose his new floozy?

He chuckles on the end of the line.

Oliver: I don't owe you shit, Yvonne. I work for your fiancée not you so don't make that mistake again. My loyalty lies to who

pays my salary which is not you and lastly but not least don't ever call me to ask me what doesn't concern you.

He roars and hang up on me. I huff out. Who the hell is his new flame? She better pray I don't find her because I'm going to beat the shit out of her. My man and I will be seperated by death not some homewrecker.

***NOMASWAZI***

I don't know what kind of kidnapping is this. The man threatened me with a gun, if I don't cooperate then when I was willingly cooperating he drops me off at my house. He should sharpen up his kidnapoing skills because he sucks on that department shame. I'm expecting myself to be dropped off to the airport so they ship me off with other women to another country not to be dropped off at my house. I'm disappointed on his behalf, I mean it would have been nice to baord a flight and see the world before I start screaming; demanding them to take me back. He robbed me off a dream. I've watched a lot of movies and I know how the trafficking and kidnapping thing works but this is not the scene from the movies. I knew I shouldn't be watching local movies because it's the only way to describe this moment.

Man: I'll see you tomorrow.

I nod wiping the tears off my eyes then place back my spectacles on my face. I don't even know what he means and I don't care. He saved me a lot of money, if I wasn't so shaken up and living in my own head I would have thanked him. I close the gate and find him still watching the house. I pick up my pace and rush to the door. All the items in my bag are thrown on the floor as I search for my keys. I place everything back after finding it and unlock the door and lock it behind me. Ntuthuko is a sell out and I don't think I will ever trust him again.

Me: Ma?

Silence.. I peek on the window and find the car still parked on the same spot. I know I said he should have done a better job on kidnapping me but I'm starting to be scared right now. I don't remember giving him the directions to my house so how did he know where I live? I close the window and the curtain before moving to switch on the lights.

Me: Ma?

I move from the window and padded to her room. I stumbled to the kitchen after finding her room empty and find a note on top of the sink.

\*\*\*\*Ma: Steven and I went home to check on his cows. I don't know how long will that take because you know how much he babies his cows. Take care of yourself and the business on my absence. I love you. \*\*\*\*

I throw the note in the bin and invade the fridge. I've got unknown days or weeks to myself without my mother and I don't know what to do with myself. Honestly speaking my parents are the only people I have apart from Lihle. Them leaving means I'm on my own until they decide to come back. I'm more relieved that I don't have to explain to my mother why did I come back with R200 only. That woman loves her money like she loves my stepfather, Steven. The man brought me up to the woman I am today and I will be forever indebted to him on the part he played in my life. Nomathemba doesn't want to tell me who my father is because she had an affair with a married man which resulted to me and she hates his guts. She doesn't make the mistake of slipping out his name by mistake like normal people. Everytime I mention that topic I become the worlds most villain and at this point I've stopped asking. It's

not that I need my father because Steven had played that role my whole life but it would have been a bad thing to know my real family. Every child deserves to know both parents not matter what the history is between them. Throwing the left over soup in the microwave, I open the bread bin looking for bread. I make my way to the living to check if the car is still there and I sigh relieved when I find it gone. I close the curtain and pick up my bag from the table and look for my phone.

Lihle: (sleepy voice) This better be good because I was still receiving the lottery numbers from the underground gang.

I snort giggling.

Me: So far how many did you get?

Lihle: None. I was still getting close to them and you decided to disturb that.

I laugh.

Me: You're exaggerating.

Lihle: Ihaba lani, when you're delaying my millions? I could have been a millionaire in the morning.

Tears stream down my cheeks. When I laugh, I mean like really laugh my tears will flow down my face, replacing the laughter that was suppose to come out of my mouth

Me: Stop it, Lihle. You're killing me.

She giggles on the end of the line. I remove the specs and place them on top of the table then wipe my eyes with the back of my hand. I stumbled to the kitchen after the microwave pinged and switch it off. Placing the phone on the counter

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I take out the juice and step out of the kitchen with my food.

Me: I'm home alone and I need someone to keep my company.

Lihle: Where is Noma and Bra Steve?

Me: Out of town. Noma wasn't specific in her letter when will they come back.

Lihle: I'll come by tomorrow after my trip to the clinic.

Me: (frowning) Are you sick?

Lihle: No but I have to take my shot. Thulani is coming this weekend.

She cheerfully muttered. Once she starts talking about him she won't stop.

Me: Okay, I'll see you tomorrow.

Lihle: Or better yet you can accompany me to the clinic.



Me: Whose going to look after the bakery?

Lihle: It will only take 30 minutes, please.

Me: Some other time.

Lihle: Pretty please mnge. This is the time for you to start taking those shot too. A lot can happen from tomorrow until your parents come back.

Me: What does that mean?

Lihle: It means you and I my friend are going to be having a lot of fun. We are young and need to act like it. Noma is not home and we should take advantage of that. This is a chance of a lifetime mnge. Siyajaiva akekho ugogo.

I giggle.

Me: I know you won't stop nagging me about this and I know I will regret it. Fine we can go.

She screams on the end of the line causing me go giggle.

Lihle: You won't regret it.

Me: I better.

Lihle: You won't. Let me go and pack. Love you and goodnight.

She disconnect the call before I could reply. I smile shaking my head then toss my phone next to me. I sigh jumping to my feet. The soup is cold again.

**YVONNE**

I've been secretly observing him but he doesn't show me what I want. I tried to touch him last night but he immediately left me in our room and went to sleep on the guest bedroom. His phone was on the pedestal and I waited for that call but it didn't come. I slept around 3'oclock thinking the floozy will be brave enough to call but she didn't. I don't know whether I'm reading out too much into the situation but I know my man. When he starts acting up there's a new cunt his burry his ball in.

Me: I've been thinking we should revist that topic of our wedding.

Him: Mmh!

He unbotherly muttered not sparing me a glimpse. How I wish I was that newspaper he was reading.

Me: Did you hear what I said?

He folds the newspaper and glawks at me.

Him: I did.

Me: And?

Him: And what?

I chew my inner cheek.

Me: What do you mean and what? We are engaged and it's time we take things to the next level. Scarlet deserves to grow up in a happy home with both parents.

He chuckles.

Him: I once wanted to marry you but you said you were not ready for marriage. Scarlet was a month old on that time. If I remember correctly your exact words were that you still want us to enjoy our engagement before we tangle ourselves up with marriage. So I'm still enjoying our engagement like you said.

He pushes his chair backwards and leaps up to his feet.

Me: Where are you going because we are still talking?

Him: I'm done talking.

He picks up his newspaper and shoves it under his armpit then march to the door. A lump forms in my throat. This is much worse than I thought. Not once has this man objected the idea of us getting married. Whoever this girl is has him by the balls. My phone chimes on top of the table. I compose myself and pick it up.

Me: Hey mom.

My voice comes out strained.

Mom: Yvonne, what wrong?

She shouldn't have asked that. I burst into tears.

Me: His having an affair again.

She heavily sighs on the end of the line.

Mom: You're not new on that territory so why are you crying?

Me: Because it's different this time. I can feel it mom I'm losing him.

Mom: You're being unnecessary emotional, Yvonne. What's so special about this skunk? You've always taken care of those ones who came before her so what's stopping you from doing so now?

Me: You don't understand mom. He just told me he doesn't want to marry me.

Mom: So are you going to sit back and let another woman take your family? I didn't raise a coward nor a weakling, Yvonne. Fight for you man and your family.

Me: I don't think I still have enough strength to do so. I'm tired of fighting for a man who doesn't fight for me back. When will he respect me and see me as his fiancée? When will he fight he for me?

Mom: (yelling) You're getting on my nerves, Yvonne. That man is yours not anyone else's. Are you just going to give up everything without any fight?

Me: I'm tired mom.

Mom: (shouting) Yvonne, Yvonne. Don't make me take the next flight there to knock some sense into you. You're not leaving that man especially for another woman. Have you ever thought what will happen to Scarlet once you let the floozy in? She will rob you daughter off her rights to her father. She will sideline her and my poor granddaughter will be a stranger in her own home. It would be much worse when he marries her because

they would have a family and Scarlet won't be part of that. Think about Scarlet, Yvonne. She still needs her father and she's too young to be exposed to such.

I sniff back the mucus.

Me: Maybe if she's around him he won't leave me.

Mom: That's my baby girl. Stop crying and book your sister that flight. Scarlet is the only child who gets to inherit everything should he die. That's her legacy nobody else.

Me: Okay.

Mom: Clean yourself up and stop crying like baby. Everything in that house is yours and you worked hard for everything. That man is who he is today because of you. You put up to his bullshit for him just to leave you now. Break the skunks bones if you have too because that's your man in the first place. If it means killing her, do so.



I gasp shocked

Me: Mom?

Mom: What? You're just protecting what belongs to you, there's nothing personal on that.

Me: (shocked) Mom I'm not a murder.

Mom: We are all are my baby. It just takes on push and you use all morals. Purchase that gun and shoot whoever skank comes your way. Don't shoot to injure her but shoot to kill.

My heart pounds in my ribcage while my eyes widen. I have never thought of that before I don't think that thought would have crossed my mind. Let's say I really kill the girl and the police find out. What about about my baby? I can't lose my child because of that because knowing Jones he will make sure he gets sole custody of Scarlet and I will never see her again.

4

## ***TYSON***

My nerves are scattered the whole place as I walk inside the bakery. I've decided today is the day I prophecy my love for her. I don't know how will she take it but I know I will take anything as long it's not a rejection. A friend is a start, everyone needs friends in this life time and I'm hoping to be hers. I'm tired of harbouring this feelings. She jumps startled as I open the door.

Me: I'm sorry I didn't mean to startle you

She smiles.

Swazi: It's okay just that I didn't expect any customer so earlier. Good morning and welcome to Noma's bakery.

She cheerfully muttered with a contagious smile plastered on her face. I smile back.

Me: Morning.

Swazi: I'm really sorry about what happened yesterday. My friend can be a little forward sometimes.

Me: Why are you still friends with her? She is not the right friend for you.

Swazi: She's the only friend I have.

Me: I could be your friend too.

I mentally face palm. This is not how the conversation was supposed to be playing out. I sound so stupid right now and I'm sure if Oliver was here he would have laughed on my expense. She giggles.

Swazi: You, being my friend?

She continues to giggle. I frown.

Me: What's wrong with that?

Swazi: I don't think we have anything in common.

Me: You don't know that yet.

Swazi: Okay let's say I agree to be your friend what will we be talking about? Your grandchildren perhaps or your sore back?

I roar in laughter and she joins me.

Me: I'm not that old.

She giggles. I stare at her, smiling like a retard.

Swazi: What?

Me: You're beautiful.

She blushes.

Swazi: Thank you I guess.

Me: I'm serious you should see yourself in my eyes.

Swazi: You mean your blind eyes? No thank you.

I playfully place my hand in my chest pretending to be hurt, laughing.

Me: Touché madam.

Swazi: Are you sure you don't need my glasses to see properly? I might be 4 eyes but I can still see with my other two and I'm not so sure about yours.

I chuckle.

Me: You're hurting this old man's feelings.

Swazi: I'm just warming up the old man. He said he wasn't to be my friend so I'm test driving the car to see if he can handle all this weight.

I laugh. Fuck, she's crazy. I thought she was an introvert but I was wrong.

Me: You're crazy do you know that?

Swazi: I dey try bros.

She imitates a deep mainly voice. I'm in stitches. Who would have thought she was this fun to be around with.

Me: Okay stop. My stomach hurts and I can't laugh anymore.

She laughs. I'm in awe by everything she does. I slip my hand in my pocket and quickly unlock my phone. I record her laughter then change my ringtone to be it.

Swazi: So what will you be having today?

Me: You.

I blurt out. My mouth has no filter today making me look like a fucken teenager. She giggles.

Swazi: No silly, I mean what will you be ordering?

I raise my head from the screen and lock my eyes with hers. She squints her eyes, tilting her head to the side still maintaining the eye contact. Her juicy lips are inviting me to have a taste. I resist the urge to jump on this counter and pin her on the wall.

Me: What if I tell you I want more than friend from you?

She clears her throat.

Swazi: You're being appropriate and I would like us to go back to the task in hand; which is you ordering your meal.

Me: Fuck the food.

I hiss banging the table. She jumps startled widening her eyes over the spectacles she has on.

Me: You drive me insane. Every time I see you my old heart beats faster just for you. The sound of your own voice calms every storm and every nightmare I have. I can't go on a day without seeing you or hearing your own voice. I know it might sound crazy to you but dammit woman I love you. I don't know what to do with this feelings.

Swazi: I think it's best you leave

My nostrils flare.



Me: I just told you I love you and you're kicking me out?

I chuckle bitterly as the pain of rejection seep in. This what I have been avoiding.

Swazi: Leave.

She yells. I furiously pick up my wallet and knock the chair I was sitting on before I padded to the door. I open it and slam it after and march to where my car is parked. Oliver drops his cigarette and steps on it upon seeing me approaching.

Oliver: How did it go.

Me: Drive.

I open the door and slam it after me. He stares at me on the mirror. I roll down the window

Me: (hissing) Don't fuck with me boy. Drive the fucken car.

He raises his hands in surrender then jogs to the driver's seat. He brings the engine to life and speeds off the parking lot.

Oliver: Where to?

Me: Just fucken drive, Oliver and stop asking me shit.

Oliver: Got you.

He nods and shift his eyes to the road. If this how woman feel when I reject them then I don't want to feel this pain anymore.

Me: I don't ever want you say her name again. She's dead to me.

Oliver: What did shorty do to piss you off?

Me: Like I just said she's dead to me.

Oliver: Swaziland is not that bad boss actually. I know you did something wrong.

I glare at him.

Me: Who the fuck pays your salary

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Oliver?

He drops his eyes.

Oliver: You do boss.

Me: Then shut the fuck up if you will be siding with her. That woman is dead to me. In fact she's not a woman but a little girl. I don't what the hell was I thinking of chasing her. She's weak and not matured enough. She wouldn't be able to handle me and the shit I came with.

I venomously spat. I wasted my fucken time investing on feelings for someone who wouldn't return them. How ungrateful of her. Woman would kill to be on her spot right now but she had to throw that back in my face. Does she know who the fuck I am? Ungrateful little bitch. I click my tongue and step out of the car after Oliver parks it in the driveway. I throw the kitchen door open and march to my study. I need to get rid of her pictures that I have and everything that will remind me of her. She betrayed the love I have for her by rejecting me. I chuckle bitterly and shake my head. I must be losing my touch and charms. No woman rejects this.

Yvonne: Ain't you going to greet us?

I sharply to turn on my heels to give her a peace of my mind but quickly swallow those words back I see a familiar face. I not at her sister Nancy as she waves at me with a smile on her face.

Scarlet: Daddy.

She jumps from her mother's lap and runs to me. I crouch down to her level and pick her up. I spin her around and kiss her head while she giggles.

Me: Daddy little girl.

Scarlet: I miss you daddy.

Me: I miss you too baby.

Scarlet: Mommy said I will be living with you guys from now on.

I shift my eyes to Yvonne and find her smile at us. I fake a smile and shift my gaze back to my daughter. I will deal with her later.

Scarlet: Is it true daddy that I will be living in the same house as you?

Me: Yes baby.

Scarlet: Yeah!

She screamed excited. I chuckle.

Scarlet: You get to read me a bedtime story?

Me: Anything for you my love.

Scarlet: Even taking me to Disney land so I can see Mickey, Minnie, Dicky, Donald, Goofie and the other characters on Mickey Mouse?

I chuckle ascending the stairs with her.

Me: Anything for you princess.

She untangles herself from my arms and runs down the stairs.

Me: No running in the house, Scarlet.

She ceases her movements and start walking.

Scarlet: Yes daddy.

As soon she's out of my sight she starts running. I smile shaking my head.

Scarlet: Daddy is taking me to Disney Land, Mommy.

Yvonne: That's great baby.

I turn on my heels and ascend the stairs. I open the study attempt to close the door behind me but someone's foot hold it down. She pushes the door and walks in.

Yvonne: The least you can do is to pretend you're happy.

Me: How did my daughter get here?

Yvonne: What do you mean?

She muttered feigning innocence.

Yvonne: By a flight of course.

Me: (hissing) Don't fucken patronise me, Yvonne. Scarlet doesn't have a passport.

She dropped her to the floor and fiddling with her fingers.

Yvonne: I kind of used our contact at the embassy.

Me: (yelling) You did what?

Yvonne: I know it's not an ideal thing to do but I missed her.



Me: Get out.

I seethe out.

Yvonne: It was about time we stay wi-

Me: I said get out.

I roar at her and pick up the ashtray and throw it her way. She ducks in time and runs to the door. My chest heavier up and down. How dare she makes my daughter cross the border illegal. I don't know how does her brain works sometimes. The sound of someone laughing breaks me out destruction. I slip my hand in my pocket and take it out. Didn't I delete this stupid ringtone? I click my tongue and delete the recording of Swaz's laughter I made earlier and read the text.

\*\*\*Unknown: Meeting scheduled for Saturday night. \*\*\*

I toss the phone on top of the table and march to the safe. Opening the safe, I take out all her pictures and throw them in

the bin with her background file. I open the drawer and take out a lighter and set those stupid pictures on fire. I'm erasing every memory I had in my heart and mind. Swaziland is dead to me and I'm closing that chapter for good. I don't know who the hell does she think is to reject me. I may be old but I'm still young in heart. I pick up the whisky bottle and open the cap before downing it straight from the bottle and watch the flame come to life. Goodbye Swaziland. She should be happy I made her a favor. Does she know it took everything in me to say that proposal? I'm tall and older than her so that makes me wiser than her but the bloody fool doesn't see that. She has managed to ruin my day. No in fact she ruined my whole year, 2022 is a shitty year for me. I click my tongue and swing the alcohol in my mouth. Bloody midget rejected me.

***NOMASWAZI***

I woke up earlier today so I can close the bakery early. It's a Friday and we usually close early. Since I'm all alone I had to wake up early so I can start baking. I lock the gate and make my way to the taxi rank. I halt on my steps seeing the car that dropped me off yesterday parked two blocks away from the house. I thought he was bluffing when he said he will see me today. I don't even know what does this white man want from me. I have ruled out the possibility of being trafficked because he wouldn't just drop me off at home if that was the case. But what if his buying time so he can strike when I least expect it? I sharply turn on my heels and change my direction. This route will take me forever to reach the taxi rank but I don't care. I have a serial killer on the loose whose after my life. I don't even know what I did to make him think I'm the perfect candidate to be killed. A honk breaks me out of trail of thoughts. I turn and find him driving slowly behind me. Clutching my bag under my armpit, I pick up my pace. He does the same with the car.

Me: What do you want from me?

I yell out stopping on the pavement. He rolls down the window smiling.

Man: Good morning Swazi.

Me: What's so good about this morning if I have someone stalking me?

He snickers.

Man: Believe me even if I wanted to stalk you I would be killed for that.

I frown.

Me: What are you talking about?

Him: Don't mind me. Hop in.

Me: I'm not about to willingly take a lift from someone I don't know. I'm fine by the way.

Him: (amused) But you took one yesterday.

I snort rolling my eyes.

Me: Not by choice. What do you want from me?

Him: Giving you a lift from and to work.

I squint my eyes.

Me: What else?

Him: Nothing.

Me: You think I will just believe you're decided to be good Samaritan overnight and choose me specifically to be the one you give a lift too?

Him: Yes.

Me: I don't believe you.

Him: Believe what you want to believe but I have no intentions of hurting you.

He shrugs his shoulders and opens the door. He steps and opens the backseat.

Him: So what do you say about that lift?

Me: No thank you. You're starting to creep me out and I don't like it. Please stay away from me before I call the police on you.

Not waiting for his response, I turn on my heels and make my way to the taxi rank. I don't know what does he want from me. He knows where I work and where I stay and that gives him power to ambush me unexpectedly. Maybe it's time I involve the police because I no longer feel safe. This world is full of virtues and he could be one of them. Men are cruel this days, they slaughter us like they are slaughtering their cows. I don't know whether it gives them the power they seek when they see us crying and begging for them not to hurt us. I mean how do you sleep at night when you know you killed somebody's child in cold blood or raped her. Surely that affects your mental state and your behavior or they just don't care at all.

Voice: Swazi!

I click my tongue and pick up my pace.

Ntuthuko: Swazi wait up.

I ignore him and furiously march to the rank. What does he want from me after selling me out yesterday? He should be ashamed of himself. His footsteps get louder indicating his running.

Ntuthuko: Swazi wait, please.

I halt and sharply turn to face him.

Me: What?

Ntuthuko: (panting) You have every right to be angry and I understand but can you please give me a chance to explain myself.

Me: And say what? You literally handed me to him without thinking twice.

I yell. He swallows hard.

Ntuthuko: I'm sorry okay but I had no choice.



My nostrils flare. It's so early for me to be pissed because I will take out my anger on that dough and once that dough becomes something else it becomes a different story.

Me: We always have a choice, Ntuthuko.

I gritted out.

Ntuthuko: In my case I didn't. You have to understand Swazi that I will never hurt intentionally. That guy threatened me and I panicked. I'm really sorry.

Me: Apology not accepted. The next time you panic what will you do? Will you let them slaughter my head or much worse watch him rape me?

He gapes, opening and closing his mouth like a fish out of water. I push him out of the way and cross the road. The driver closes the door and jogs to the driver's seat. He starts the taxi and speeds off the rank.

Me: Great job Ntuthuko.

I sarcastically muttered and walk to the stand and wait for a new taxi. It's just me here and the next taxi to get full fast is around 7am. I was hoping to catch that 6:30am taxi because it gets full fast unlike the next one.

Voice: The offer still stands though.

I raise my head and find my knidnapper stalking my way. I sigh defeated.

Me: Seriously what do you want from me?

Man: Just to take you to work.

I squint my eyes.

Me: What's the catch?

Man: There's no catch.

I heavily sigh and take my walk of shame to the car, passing him. He smiles and follows close behind me. He opens the backseat for me and jumps to the driver seat.

Man: Buckle up.

I follow his instruction and lean back on the seat. He nods and steps on the gas. A scream slips out of my lips as the car flies on the road. I sink my teeth in my bottom lip while my eyes are popped out of the spectacles. I probably look hideous right now but anyone whose life is threatened looks like that. My stomach twist and turns while my heart pounds faster in my ribcage with each turn we take and each car we overtake. I'm screaming, crying, farting, burping at the same time. The car finally stops when my life just starts to flash right through my eyes.

Man: You can stop screaming now.

I throw the door open and rush out as a bile rises to my mouth. I bend down and empty the contents I had earlier on. He chuckles.

Man: I didn't take you as the type who has a weak stomach

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Swaziland.

I wipe my mouth with the back of my hand and rise to my full height. I glare at him.

Me: Are you trying to kill me?

He lips curve into a smile.

Man: Why would I do that?

Me: if you were not trying too then why didn't you drive like a normal person? I could have died.

He chuckles.

Man: That's because I'm not normal, Swaziland.

Me: It's Swazi. Swazi.

I call out emphasizing each alphabet. His eyes twinkle with mischief.

Man: Whatever you say Swaziland.

Me: Swazi you idiot.

He cracks up so hard. I click my tongue and march to the bakery. I hate people who call out my name wrong or calls me out on my height. I know I'm short and chubby so there's no need for them to remind me of that. The height part irks me to

the core. I'm not the first person to be short so they should stop acting like they saw Jesus performing a miracle. I take out the ingredients after rinsing my mouth and washing my hands. Noma is a hygiene freak and I sometimes see that I inherited her habits. I hate working in a dirty kitchen with dirty utensils. I make sure I leave the kitchen spotless when I knock off. 2 hours later I'm opening the blinds waiting for the customers to walk in. The sound of someone clearing his throat startles me.

Him: I'm sorry I didn't mean to startle you

I smile.

Me: It's okay just that I didn't expect any customer so earlier. Good morning and welcome to Noma's bakery.

I cheerfully muttered with cracking a smile. He smiles back.

Him: Morning.

Me: I'm really sorry about what happened yesterday. My friend can be a little forward sometimes.

Him: Why are you still friends with her? She is not the right friend for you.

Funny enough my mother asked me the same question.

Me: She's the only friend I have.

Him: I could be your friend too.

I'm thrown in a fit of giggles

Me: You, being my friend?

I giggle causing him to frown.

Him: What's wrong with that?

Me: I don't think we have anything in common.

Him: You don't know that yet.

Me: Okay let's say I agree to be your friend what will we be talking about? Your grandchildren perhaps or your sore back?

He throws his head back and roars in laughter causing me to join him.

Him: I'm not that old.

I snort giggling. He stares at me.

Me: What?

Him: You're beautiful.



My cheeks heat up.

Me: Thank you I guess.

Him: I'm serious you should see yourself in my eyes.

Me: You mean your blind eyes? No thank you.

I tease him. He playfully place his hand in his chest pretending to be hurt, laughing.

Him: Touché madam.

Me: Are you sure you don't need my glasses to see properly? I might be 4 eyes but I can still see with my other two and I'm not so sure about yours.

He chortles.

Him: You're hurting this old man's feelings.

Me: I'm just warming up the old man. He said he wasn't to be my friend so I'm test driving the car to see if he can handle all this weight.

He laughs like really laugh. A whole belly laughter.

Him: You're crazy do you know that?

Me: I dey try bros.

I imitates a deep mainly voice. Those Nigerian movies are coming in handy. His in stitches.

Him: Okay stop. My stomach hurts and I can't laugh anymore.

I laugh.

Me: So what will you be having today?

Me: You.

He blurts out. I giggle.

Me: No silly, I mean what will you be ordering?

He raises his head from the screen and lock his eyes with mine. Tilting my head to the side still maintaining the eye contact, I squint my eyes.

Him: What if I tell you I want more than friend from you?

I knew I shouldn't have bathed with Isiwasho my mother bought. Nozimanga is really doing miracles today because two white men are kind to me and it's really a miracle. I clear my throat.

Me: You're being appropriate and I would like us to go back to the task in hand; which is you ordering your meal. His whole demeanour changes.

Him: Fuck the food.

I hiss banging the counter aggressively. I jump startled widening my eyes over the spectacles I have on. My heart picks up speed. I knew apartheid didn't end in 1994.

Him: You drive me insane. Every time I see you my old heart beats faster just for you. The sound of your own voice calms every storm and every nightmare I have. I can't go on a day without seeing you or hearing your own voice. I know it might sound crazy to you but dammit woman I love you. I don't know what to do with these feelings.

Haibo mlungu! I've known this guy or should I say grandpa since from yesterday and he's already in love with me? It was my first time seeing him yesterday so where did he get the time to have feelings for me?

Me: I think it's best you leave

I shakly muttered. His nostrils flare.

Him: I just told you I love you and you're kicking me out?

He chuckles bitterly.

Me: Leave.

I yell. He uriously picks up his wallet and knocks the chair he was sitting on before he padded to the door. Bipolar much. He throws the door open and slam it behind him. I release a breath I wasn't aware I was holding then run to the door and lock it. I should stop bathing with pink water became it's attracting white psychos.

\*

\*

Lihle: You've been quiet since I got to the bakery and that's unlike you. What's going?

Me: I'm just tired. Running the bakery on my own is no child's play.

I fake a smile, lying through my teeth. I have been shaking since this incident in the morning.

Lihle: You sure?

I nod and move with the queue. We are at the clinic and my anxiety started the minute I step inside the premises. The reason I don't like hospitals or clinics is that I become more sick instead of healing. It's the fear of the unknown in me making me sick.

Lihle: So after this I'm going straight to Thulani's house and you madam will have to spend the weekend alone.

I roll my eyes.

Me: What's new.

Lihle: Don't be like that mnge. You know his swamped with his job and I also with school so this the only chance we get.

Me: Whatever.

Lihle: Are you sulking?

She smiles amused. I snort.

Me: Of course I am. This is not the first time you left me for that goat.

She giggles.

Lihle: I just wonder when will you and Thulani put your difference aside.

Me: Never. I'm not his friend so I don't have to like him.

She laughs.

Lihle: He said the same thing the other day when I was talking about you.

Before I could reply the next patient is called in. Lihle rise up to her feet and makes her way inside. I shift to the seat she was sitting in and wait for my turn. A few minutes later she walks out dragging her left leg. I frown.

Me: And then?

Lihle: Her hand is not right. I can't feel my leg.

I giggle. She whimpers sitting down.



Me: I don't think I'm going in next.

Lihle: Stop being a baby Swazi. We are already here.

Nurse: Next!

She yells in the room.

Lihle: Don't make me drag you in there.

I exhale loudly and jumps to my feet. Pushing the door, I slowly walk in.

Nurse: Hello.

I wave and take a seat.

Nurse: (amused) You look scared.

Me: Is that obvious?

She smiles nodding.

Nurse: So.

She darts her eyes to my folder and looks at me.

Nurse: Nomaswazi, how can I help you.

Me: (sighing) I'm here for family planning.

Nurse: Is it your first time?

I nod.

Nurse: Okay we have different times of family planning. We have the long -acting reversible contraceptions-the implant or intra uterine device (IUD)

Hormal contraception – which is the pills, Noristerat injection or the Depo Provera injection.

Barrier methods: Condoms

Emergency contraception

Fertility Awareness

Emergency Contraception

Permanent contraception.

I breath out nodding. She goes on and on about the side effects of each method and how long do they last in your body.

Nurse: Okay which one do you want?

Me: The implant, pills and the last 4 are a big no. I'll take the Noristerat-

She interrupts me.

Nurse: We advice kids to take that because as we grow our bodies changes and it's easy to fall pregnant while you're on the injection.

Me: Depo it is then.

She flashes me a smile nodding. Picking up the calendar she starts to count the joint down on my folder. She leaps up to her feet and walks to the cupboard. She takes out her equipments and place them on top of the table. She test the needle and turn to me.

Nurse: Okay I need you to raise your skirt.

I gulp leaping up to my feet. I slowly rise my skirt and shift my underwear to the side. She wipes my butt with the wipe. My eyes bulge out as the reality of what's about to happen seep in.

Me: Woah! Woah!

She pauses and look at me.

Me: I need some motivational speaking and courage to do this.

She giggles.

Nurse: I understand you're scared and it's okay to be scared.

I shake my head and pull down my skirt. She doesn't understand a thing. I have to be mental prepared and fit for what's about to come.

Me: Can I call the next patient while I gather my courage and strength?

She shakes her head laughing.

Nurse: Even if you call the next patient the needle will still be waiting for you after him/her.

I pace up and down calming myself. I could feel my heart pounding in my ribcage.

Me: You can do this Swazi.

I peep talking myself.

Me: Okay I'm ready.

She amusedly nod. Again I rise my skirt and shift my underwear to the side.

Nurse: Just don't think about it.

She wipes my butt again and rise the needle. I close my eyes and squeeze my butt cheeks. She laughs slapping them.

Nurse: (laughing) How am I suppose to inject you if you squeeze them that tight?

I release my breath and my cheeks.

Nurse: On the count of three okay.

I nod.

Nurse: One. Two. Th....

Me: Wait. I need to be mentally fit and emotional fit, phela this is trauma on it's own.

I interjects leaping up to my full height. She's in stitches.

Me: Let me count you down okay.

She nods.

Me: One. T...

The needle pierces on my skin before I can finish the count down. A scream echoes in the room. It takes me a minute to realise that the scream comes from me but what puzzles me is that I'm imitating the child from next door who I always laugh whenever they hair dry her hair.

Me: Mma wee! Thusang! Thusang ba mpolaya. (Help! Help they are killing me.)



6

**YVONNE**

A sigh slips out of my lips as I wipe my mouth with the napkin. I was hoping he would at least pretend that we are okay since my sister is here. I know I would have pretended if the tables were reversed just for him but he lives on to embarrass me. He spent the whole day with Scarlet today then when the clock struck 4pm he left to God know where. I just know his with her wherever they are.

Nancy: You've been sighing a lot this evening. Are you okay?

I fake a smile nodding.

Me: I'm okay just tired.

Nancy: Are you sure because from where I am it doesn't look so.

Me: I said I'm fine Nancy.

I snap raising my voice. She raises her hands in surrender. She's observing too much.

Nancy: Geez I got you. There's no need for you to bit my head off.

I suck in a deep breath.

Me: I'm sorry it's that I get so worried when he works late.

Nancy: You've been with this man for years and you still haven't gotten used to his job? What have you been going all along, Yvonne.

Picking up the cutlery, I cut the steak into pieces.

Me: I don't expect you to understand.

Nancy: I understand perfectly. You're a 38 old woman with no career or back up plan. What happens when the man decides to leave you for someone else or worse marry her?

My nostrils flare.

Me: Jones will never leave me. I will beat up and break any skanks bones who looks his way.

She shakes her head and picks up her glass of wine.

Nancy: When he wants to move on he will and you can't do anything about it. How long will you keep beating people up for someone who doesn't respect you and keep it on his pants?

Me: As long it takes for them to get the message. Nothing will break us up because we have a child together.

She snorts rolling her eyes.

Nancy: You think Scarlet is going to hold him down? You seem to forget Scarlet doesn't imply as a ring. Having a child with him doesn't mean you're his wife. Scarlet is not a ring, Yvonne.

I slam the cutlery back on the table and glare at her. Thank God my baby decided to eat in front of the TV because I don't want her to witness this and hear this conversation.

Me: What is your problem Nancy?

Nancy: You're my problem because you sound stupid right now. I have been on this house for a day and already I picked up tension and a lot of it. I heard him last night when he yelled at you.

Me: (yelling) What were you doing up at that time? Are you eavesdropping on our conversation?

Nancy: Insomnia is what got me up. At 3am you guys are fighting instead of sleeping. Is that the kind of life you want to live the rest of your whole life?

Me: This conversation is over.

I push the chair backwards and leap up to my feet.

Nancy: We are still talking, where are you going?

Me: Away from you. You're so judgemental like you know what I have been through. You know nothing about me and my relationship. Stay away from it.

Nancy: If you weren't my sister I would have long turned a blind eye on this but what you do also impacts me in the future. You met Jones while you were in school. It didn't even take two bloody years in the relationship and already you dropped out of school because you wanted to be cocoon you're right now. A whole fucken future doctor dropped out of school because of a man. You could have been a doctor right now.

She yelled throwing the napkin on the table.

Nancy: You've been wearing that stupid ring for years now and there's nothing else you have accomplished in your life except for that ring and Scarlet. The only thing you know is the glitz and glam, the fast life of being on every magazine cover and every platform of social media the world has. You beat up people because of the very same man who promised you to be Mrs but it hasn't happened. You dropped everything and everyone you love for him in return you got the ring but my question is what has he sacrificed so far in this relationship?

I gulp shift my eyes away from her.

Nancy: See you have no answer for me. I don't know why would you keep listening to a woman who snatched a married man for herself.

Me: Don't talk about my mother like that.

I caution pointing an accusing finger at her. She slams the finger and wave her hand dismissively.

Nancy: I'm just stating the honest truth. It seems like it runs in your veins to depend on a man. Your mother did it to my mother so what's stopping you from doing it?

Me: I'm warning you Nancy.

She rolls her eyes.

Nancy: I'm not those girls who you threaten and beat them up. I will clean this spotless floor with your face if you try anything with me. The truth always hurts and I as your half sister will tell you the way it is because your mother keeps feeding you shit.

She spits scrunching her nose in disgust.

Nancy: If she doesn't know what to advice you why doesn't she shut the fuck up instead of encouraging you to hurt others. What are you really teaching Scarlet? That it's okay to live stay

with a man who doesn't respect you? That it's okay to hurt others just to keep him? That's it's okay to lose yourself and dignity for a man? That it's okay to be used by him and depend on him?

She fires the questions at once. A lump forms on my throat.

Me: I'm not depending on him.

I weakly fire back. She chuckles shaking her head.

Nancy: Is that what you're teaching that little girl over there?

I blink rapidly to stop the tears from falling.

Me: You don't understand.

Nancy: (yelling) Make me understand

Yvonne.



Me: You will alert Scarlet. Stop raising your voice.

I grit out. She smiles shaking her head. I know she's judging me like everyone else out there who don't understand.

Nancy: I'm still waiting for your explanation.

I suck in a deep breath and lower myself on the chair.

Me: Scarlet needs both her parents. I can't raise her alone.

Nancy: (yelling) Are you listening to yourself?

Me: Lower you voice.

I mutter through gritted teeth.

Nancy: I grew up and turn out just fine after your mother snatched our father from my mother. She raised me all by herself for 38 years while daddy dearest was playing happy family with you and your mother.

I snort.

Me: Don't compare the two because they are not the same.

Nancy: Actually they are. There are many single mother's who raised their kids alone and those kids turned out to be okay. My mother did it so what's stopping you from doing it?

Me: I grew up in a home with both parents and that's what I want from my daughter. I'm not going to let some floozy who came just yesterday break my happy home. My baby deserves to see both her parents when she goes to bed each night just like how I grow up.

My chest heavier up and down. I'm angry at her for not understand what I'm doing for my family. She's my sister and

suppose to stand by me and understand the decisions I take are for my daughter.

Me: Your mother was stupid to not fight for her man while she can. I'm not going to be stupid like her and let some woman take what's mine. She was slow and pathetic for letting him to slip through her fingers. It shows just the kind of woman she is. Pathetic, naive and stupid. I worked hard to be where I am today and just to give everything up just because of a new fling that will end faster than I can blink would be stupid of me. I'm not going to be your mother and raise Scarlet alone. She had a choice to fight back but she didn't because she's weak. Men don't need weak women like her; they need strong, fierce women who know how to handle themselves when shit strikes the fan. I've been with that man for years and we have been engaged for 5 years. We have hiccups along the way but we always fix our problems and move on like we didn't face them. They tried to break us up, a lot of them but they couldn't because we love each other. They are meaningless flings that end within a week the relationship started because he knows his got his woman back home who is me. He always comes back home to me. To us her girls and live the skank with a broken heart. His my man and the father of my child, the only way to

separate us is through death. No skank formed against us shall prosper.

I jump to my feet and make my way to the TV room. She shakes her head as I walk away.

Nancy: You're more stupid than I thought.

She yells after me. I ignore her and pick up my pace. I don't need her negativity. She doesn't understand because she's single and doesn't have a kid to think about. Everything in this house belongs to my daughter and I. This is her legacy and I will be damned if I let another woman take what's rightfully mine. My lips curve into a smile as my eyes set on Scarlet sleeping in front of the TV. Everything I do is for that little girl.

Me: Time for bed missy.

She flips her eyes open and yawns.

Scarlet: Is daddy back home?

Her eyes lit up as she leaps up to her feet.

Scarlet: I was hoping he will read me a bedtime story.

My smile fades while my heart drops on the tip of my stomach. This is what I'm fighting for. I want my daughter to see her father every night before she goes to bed. He must read her bedtime story and when she wakes up in the morning she finds him sitting on his chair in the lounge eating his breakfast.

Me: Daddy is working late my love.

Scarlet: Oh!

It came almost as a whisper. I could see the disappointment written on her face it kills me to see this.

Scarlet: Some other time then.

She muttered bouncing on her feet. I'm not going to let some floozy rob my daughter her father.

Me: Let me call him and find out where he is okay?

She nods. I place the call and wait for him to pick up. It rings and rings and rings until he hangs up on me. I try again and he hangs up on the first ring.

Me: I've got a better idea my love. Why don't we take a bathe while we wait for daddy.

She nods smiling.

Me: Run along. I'm coming.

She turns on her heels and disappear on the corridors. I shift my eyes from the corridor and dial his number again.

Him: (annoyed) What is it?

It's the first thing he says after picking up.

Me: It's Scarlet bedtime and she's asking about you.

Him: I will see her in the morning.

My blood boils while my nostril flare.

Me: Your daughter is waiting for you to read her bedtime story and the only thing you care about is that hole you're dipping your dick in.

I seeth out in rage.

Him: I'm not doing this shit with you, Yvonne. I'll see Scarlet in the morning. I don't know why you're blowing things out of proportion. It's not like I went to Egypt and not coming back.

He calmly muttered.

Voice: Jones can we start.

My heart beat picks up speed as I hear the feminine voice in the background.

Him: Give me 5.

He shouts back to her before he comes back on the line.

Him: I've got to go.

Me: (shouting) You man whore. Is that why you're not here with our daughter. Is it because of her?

(Tu tu tu tu)



Me: (screaming) Who is she? Does she know I will land her in a hospital bed when I find her.

Silence.... I quickly move the phone on my ear and see that he hanged up on me.

Me: (disbelief) Did he just hang up on me?

I click my tongue and try to call him again.

**TYSON**

I could have been home with my daughter but they had to fucken reschedule the meeting to today. I woke up on the wrong side of the bed this morning after Yvonne pissed me off on the early hours of the morning. The woman is nagging and whining about shit that doesn't even involve her. I know I have a responsibly towards my daughter but she doesn't need to remind me about that. I'm a fucken great father when it comes to our child and she also knows that. I don't even want to think about the risk she put my daughter through when she decided to let her cross the boarder illegally. I sometimes wonder what goes through that head of her's because it seems like her brain shifted aside as the years go by. No sane mother could willingly let her child cross a boarder without any passport. Scarlet is a foreigner in South Africa because she was born in France but that stupid woman didn't think of that. One whiff the cops could be on my doorstep arresting us for that and taking Scarlet back to Paris. What's the use of having a brain if someone can't use it?

Oliver: We are here.

His voice breaks me out of my trail of thoughts. I shift my eyes to the window and indeed we are on the underground parking lot of Red Club.

Me: I hope they make this quick because I'm not in the mood to socialise.

I mutter opening the door while he does the same. It's a minute past 8pm and I'm a little bit early.

Oliver: What's got your panties twisted? You have been sour since this morning.

Fixing my blazer, I glare at him. He raises his hands in surrender and locks the car. We make our way to the lift and press the last floor where all members will be meeting. I'm irritated because the lift takes longer while Oliver is chatting up a storm.

Me: Shut the fuck up, Oliver.

I gritted out and storm out of the elevator. It was about fucken time.

Me: Scotch on the rocks.

I mutter passing by the bar. The bartender looks at the man behind me who shrugs his shoulders before shifting his eyes at me and nod. The bouncer stops us on our tracks.

Me: The fuck are you doing?

Bouncer: Standard procedure. Every member has to be searched.

Me: Searched for what? Get the fuck out of my way.

I mutter pulling my gun out of my waist.

Oliver: Woah boss. Man just let him pass his not in the right mood today.

Voice: Let him through.

I rise my eyes and find Ade standing on top of the stairs. I push the bouncer to the side and storm to the stairs.

Ade: Damn Jones you look like shit.

He amusedly muttered puffing his cigar on my face.

Me: Thank you so much for the compliment brada.

I sarcastically muttered bypassing him.

Ade: People Jones is on his periods please don't fuck with him.

He yells behind me. Chuckles follows.

Kagiso: Damn man who pissed you off?

I lower myself on the couch across them and pick up the cigar. The waiter places my drink in front of me. Picking up the glass, I gulp it down in one go and hand him the glass back.

Me: Another one.

I could feel eyes on but I don't fucken care. Leaning back on the couch, I close my eyes and puff my cigar quietly. Realising the smoke, I could feel myself calming down on my 5th inhale. Flipping my eyes open, I find them staring at me with amused smiles.

Me: What?

Sandile: His back people.

I chuckle.

Me: I see your friend's sarcasm is rubbing on you.

They laugh. I pick up the glass and slowly take a sip this time. I cringe as the poison slowly goes through my oesophagus

Me: Good old shit.

Ade: Women and being late.

Kagiso: Get used to bro. My wife is always late and I'm used to that.

Ade: Talking about women do you know the woman in my life doesn't want me to marry her.

He clicks his tongue and shakes his head. We laugh.

Sandile: Reason being?

Ade: She says she doesn't want to get married forgetting we are already married. Stealing her ID was the best thing for me because I can see these days she's growing wings and I need to clip them fast.

Laughter erupts the table.

Ade: There other day I found her smile on her phone and I asked her whose she's smiling with and her response was that it's a meme from Facebook.

He clicks his tongue. Laughter.

Ade: I swear Zobuhle has me breathing through the wound. I have resorted to stalking her and cloning her phone. It's been two weeks and there's nothing suspicions I came back with. I'm losing my mind.

Laughter.



Me: Great to see I'm not the only one losing my mind.

Kagiso: What has Yvonne done now?

Me: Don't fucken start about that one. If she wasn't Scarlet mother she would have been long dead.

Sandile: Are things that bad?

Me: She can't read between the lines that I'm over her.

Ade: Didn't see that coming.

Kagiso thinned his eyes at me and smirk.

Kagiso: You've got that stupid retard smile on you. Who is she?

I chuckle and pour myself another glass.

Me: A goddess with big beautiful eyes and a killer smile. She's soft spoken and humble. A short, thick woman in the right places. A different flavor from what I'm used to.

I smile as I reflect our encounters.

Me: She has that no nonsense taker face and that keeps me on my toes.

A scoff snaps me out of my daze.

Oliver: Yep short base is not a nonsense taker that's why she rejected you.

Them: What?

They burst into a fit of laughter. I shift my gaze to Oliver on the wall and glare at him. He smiles raising his hands in surrender. I'm deducting his salary by 50%. Who fucken invited him in this conversion? His job is to stand on the wall and shut the fuck up.

Sandile: Wait, wait so you mean she rejected you.

I heavily sigh and gulp down my poison. I might as well let it out maybe I will feel a little better.

Me: She did. I have been observing her for months and yesterday I decided to take my shot. Went to the bakery where she works and luckily I found her alone. The previous day she was with that mosquito she calls her friend. The girl was all over me like a bad rash.

I shake my head disgusted. That girl annoys me to the core and I don't like their friendship. She will influence my Queen.

Me: We couldn't take so I went back yesterday determined to lay out my heart. Guess what she did.

Them: What?

They muttered eagerly in unison  
stifling their laughter.

Me: She kicked me out of the bakery after I told her I love her.

They in stitches.

Ade: What did you exactly say to her?

Me: I told her I don't like her friendship with her friend and offered to be her friend. She shook her head and said we have nothing in common. I begged to differ on that part but she laughed and said what are we going to talk about? My sore back and grandkids?

I bat my lashes mimicking her voice. They roar in laughter.

Me: I'm not that fucken old.

Oliver: (laughing) Swaziland is savage. No wonder you nearly chop off my head when I asked about her.

Me: Shut the fuck up, Oliver.

He laughs.

Kagiso: (laughing) Wait, wait, How old is this girl?

Me: 26.

Ade: How old are you?

Me: 47.

Kagiso and Sandile: That's 21 years younger than you.

Ade: Damn that's chicken murder, Jones.

They mutter in unison.

Ade: Don't you think she's a little bit young for you?

Me: She's not my daughter so no she's not young to me.

He shakes his head smiling.

Oliver: Boss what did you exactly say to short base.

Sandile: (amused) I would also like to know.

I huff and take another sip.

Me: So what will you be having and I blurted that I want her.

Laughter.

Me: She laughed and asked what will my order be. Our eyes locked on that moment. Those beautiful doe eyes were staring into my soul. I told her I want more than friendship. She told me I was being appropriate and would like me to order. I lost it and banged the counter.

Laughter.

Ade: (laughing) No Jones you didn't. You scared her.

Me: I really lost it on that moment. I even had her laughter as my ringtone but after she kicked me out of the bakery I slammed the door mumbling women throw themselves at me when they see me and she had the audacity to reject me. The drive back home was one of the worst drives of my life. The pain of rejection was just too much for me. Arriving home I deleted that silly ringtone and burnt the file I had on her which includes her pictures and background check. Deleted her numbers and moved on with my life like she didn't exist in the first place. I'm over her.

They are in stitches.

Kagiso: Your chose of words are the one that made her to kick you out. You dropped a bombshell on her and went nuts on her at the same time. Say the situations were reversed what will you have said?

Me: I would be thrilled that someone was pursuing me.

He shakes his head.

Kagiso: You didn't pursue her but sort of forced her to accept your proposal. See Jones not all women are into money. The glitz and the glam doesn't faze the others while the others faze them. Your proposal was sort of like throwing your bank balance in her face and most women hate that. Yes they love money and men with confidence in themselves but don't rub it in her face. I'm surprised you don't know that.

Me: Well I flashed my car keys and black card on Yvonne and she woke up on my bed the next day.



Sandile: You've got a lot to learn man.

I shake my head.

Me: You can't teach old dogs new tricks.

Ade: Then kiss her goodbye because on that attitude she's gone.

They laugh. I scoff.

Me: That's basically gravelling and I don't beg no one. I can't be sucking her pussy and be sucking up on her too.

Sandile: Well you might want to join me on the single club buddy because that club is woman free.

I frown.

Me: Meaning.

Voice: I divorce his ass.

She appears in the booth looking like a goddess she is. Her heels clicking on the floor.

Sandile: Throwing shades at each other now, MaDlamini.

She rolls her eyes and shift them to us.

Aza: Boys.

We nod as she takes her seat. My phones chimes in my pocket.

Me: (annoyed) What is it?

Yvonne: It's Scarlet bedtime and she's asking about you.

Me: I will see her in the morning.

Yvonne: Your daughter is waiting for you to read her bedtime story and the only thing you care about is that hole you're dipping your dick in.

She yells on the end of the line.

Me: I'm not doing this shit with you, Yvonne. I'll see Scarlet in the morning. I don't know why you're blowing things out of proportion. It's not like I went to Egypt and not coming back.

I calmly muttered.

Aza: Jones can we start.

Me: Give me 5.

Me: I've got to go.

I disconnect the call and slip the phone in my pocket.

Aza: Well there's a new client who wants cars. I told him I don't deal with that but it gets on the right ear and exist on the left.

Sandile: (frowning) What's his name?

Aza: Rodriguez.

I quickly whip my head and look at Oliver. His eyes are on me too.

Me: (alarmed) Did you just say Rodriguez?

Aza: Yes, do you know him?

I jump to my feet and pace up and down.

Me: I know that fucker.

Aza: Well he wants German cars tomorrow.

I cease my movements.

Me: He doesn't want cars specifically. He wants me.

Aza: Jones is that.....

She trails off looking at my chest.

Aza: (screaming) Shit take cover.

I drop my eyes to my chest and feel the bullet peirce in my skin. They jump to their feet and run for cover as more bullets fly around the club. I clutch my stomach cocking gun. I should have known that dick head Rodriguez wouldn't leave me alone.

Oliver: (yelling) Boss.

I groan.

Oliver: Tyson where the fuck are you?

Me: Behind the couch.

I yell back. He crawls towards me.

Me: I'm hit.

I murmur taking out my belt and throw it at him. He places his gun on the floor and takes out my blazer. I grunt as he ties the belt in my chest.

Me: Fuck that's too tight, Oliver.

Oliver: Stop being a sissy and hold on. We don't want you to bleed to death.

Me: Swazi.

He frowns. I'm fighting to keep my eyes open as my vision blurs.

Me: Take me to her.

I need to see her face.

8

***TYSON***

Shots are still being fired and we don't know which side are they coming from. From the looks of things all they bullets come from all sides, these motherfuckers has us surrounded. I'm sweating a storm as each minute passing by. My eyelids are getting heavier and heavier. The waitress are screaming louder than my heartbeat. Women are dramatic as fuck in nature. I don't know why can't they shut the fuck up and cry in silence. Their screams are infuriating me because they are disturbing my brain from thinking.

Oliver: You're still okay?

Me: I'm still fine. Numbers.

I grunt out.

Oliver: Lies or the truth.



Me: Truth, Oliver.

Oliver: We are outnumbered boss. This people knew we were going to be here.

Kagiso: Ade who did you piss?

He muttered, ducking behind the couch.

Ade: Always assuming the worst in me.

Me: It's either his one of our enemies or someone knew whose trying to make a name for himself. Can somebody shut them the fuck up.

Aza snorts.

Aza: Why does it always have to be a men? It could be a woman for all we know.

Sandile: Not all women are like you, MaDlamini.

She rolls her eyes.

Oliver: We can't sit here for long. We have to do something before he bleeds to death.

Kagiso: We are outnumbered and we need a plan fast.

Ade: I still need to win Zozo's heart. I can't die.

We all shift our eyes and him and chuckle.

Ade: What?

Aza: Nobody talked about dying.

Ade: I'm just being realistic my Queen. I still need to tap that ass or I'm going to come back and haunt whoever fills in my shoes.

They crack up so hard. I chuckle still pressing the wound.

Aza: (amused) Even facing death Ade, you're being stupid.

Ade: That's the only thing running through my mind right now.

Laughter erupts around the room.

Sandile: You need Jesus.

Me: This could take all night and I might not have time on my side. It either we sit here and wait for the to retreat or we face the head on. We are not fucking cowards after all.

Blood seeps out in the corners of my lips.

Them: That we are not.

They muttered in unison.

Oliver: It would be much better if we take the bullet out.

Me: Take what bullet from who? Nobody is touching me.

I hiss out grunting. Aza giggles.

Aza: I would have helped you out but I have a weak stomach.

Oliver: Can you shoot?

His voice is laced with concert.

Me: Yea

I grunt out nodding. He passes me my gun then helps me to my feet. The Dlamini's are covering each other, Ade and Kagiso each other and Oliver with me.

Ade: How many are still out there?

He yells out over the bullets. Silence consumes us. Nobody knows what we are dealing with.

Kagiso: From the angle of bullets are coming from I would say a lot.

Ade: They better pray I don't find them. I just open the club and already they are messing it up.

He clicks his tongue and move to the door with Kagiso on his heels. At this point we are only looking for a way to exist the building. We don't know what we up against and it would be stupid of us to go to war with people we don't know. I stagger

on my steps losing my foot. I close my eyes and wait for myself to fall face first but the impact doesn't come. Oliver is by my side in split seconds.

Me: (panting) I'm fucken fine.

Oliver: For once in your life Tyson stop being stubborn. This is not the time.

He places my arm around his neck and places one in my waist. I scrunch up my nose in disgust. He chuckles.

Oliver: Oh baby am I holding you the right way.

Me: You're just lucky I'm in this state or you would have lost your teeth.

And stop abusing my name.

He laughs shaking his head. We all know the rules and we have abide by them for years. No men touches another men not

matter what the circumstances are. Even if you're a doctor. Only female doctors are allowed to touch us but I guess this fool doesn't give a shit about the rules.

Oliver: Tyson. Tyson.

He sings out. I lightly chuckle. He will forever be an idiot.

Sandile: We'll cover the both of you.

He muttered to Oliver and I. I guess they don't care about the rules but who would when facing death?

## ***NOMASWAZI***

Turning on my side, I shiver and try to pull the blankets over my head but find none. I sigh annoyed then open my eyes. It will take me forever to go back to sleep again. My muscles and neck

are stiff. I squint my eyes trying to normalise my surroundings until I remember that I slept on the couch. The TV is playing softly while the equipment I was using is still on top of the table. I was watching a movie and my eyes forced me shut them. I was taking a 5 minutes break when the movie went to commercials. I knew I shouldn't have ate before I finishing this. A lazy Saturday is what I succumb myself into. The only thing tangible I did was make the bed and take a bathe after that I went back to my nightdress and lazily sat in front of the TV the whole day

flipping through channels. Multi choice is scheming us. We pay a lot of money but they keep repeating the same shows and same movies we know. From to Transformers to Mama Jack. Who still watches that nonsense this day and age? My neighbour from two blocks yelled out my name until she gave up because I didn't open the gate this morning. She had a cup in her hand indicating she wanted something. I ignored her on purpose because she always wany something. If it's a pinch of salt in her hand it's sugar. Sometimes an onion or even Handy Andy. There was a day when she came by with that same cup and asked for a bleach. I don't know whether this is a superstore or what. Who even asks for bleach in their neighbours?



My heart misses a beat when it hits me that it's dark outside. The lights are off and that could only mean one thing. Paranoid Swazi is out to play. Darkness and many more other things are my phobia. I have this thing of making up scenarios in my head especially when I'm alone. My eyes are widely open as I scan the whole house for any Tokoloshi. My hands quiver as I pick up my phone on the table and leap up to my feet. Bring the screen to life, I tiptoe to the bathroom quietly not to alert the Tokoloshi that I'm up. I don't know what it would do to me. I slowly stretch my hand to the toilet pit and breath out. Another phobia and paranoia of mine is that ever since I watched snakes on a plane I don't go to the bathroom without my phone. I don't care what time is it or how pressed I am. I always go with my phone because I don't want to find a huge snake staring right back at me in there. That movie ruined me for life and I don't think I will ever recover. I flush the toilet and make my way back to the lounge. I close the book and pick up the pen and calculator and place them on the TV stand. I knew I shouldn't have done the bakery books after I had my supper because I become drowsy fast when full. Noma should increase my salary because I'm basically doing three jobs. I'm a waitress and a baker in the morning then an accountant at night. The knock on the door makes me jump from my seat. I know I didn't open the gate this morning so how did this person get inside?

Voice: Swazi.

He bangs the door. I pick up the remote and lower the volume. Maybe when he thinks I'm not here he will eventually leave like my neighbour earlier on but the knocker is persistent.

Voice: Swaziland.

He continues to bang the door. I release my breath and march to the door. It's the white idiot. I recognise his voice and accent. Pulling the door open, I shift my eye to the gate and find it still locked then shift them back to him. A scowl settles on my face.

Me: How did....

He interjects.

Oliver: Jumped the fence.

My eyes bulge out.

Me: What?

Oliver: I don't have time for that right now. There's a situation and it needs your help.

Me: What could you possibly want from me?

Oliver: It's a matter of life and death.

I frown dropping my eyes to his clothes and notice the blood stain.

Me: Oh my god what happened to you?

I muttered unlocking the bugler gate. He steps aside and let me close the door. I don't want to be chasing rats around the house.

Oliver: Like I said it's a matter of life and death. We need your help.

Me: You and who?

Oliver: My boss. He's the one needing your help.

Me: If you want me to hide drugs in my house then forget it.

Oliver: No it's something much worse than that.

Me: Then forget it. I'm going to walk inside then pretend this whole conversation didn't happen and after that I'm going to call the police on you.

I yell out placing my hands in my hips. How dare he involve me in his criminal activities.

Oliver: I promise the boss that I won't do this but you're wasting time and he doesn't have that.

Me: (frowning) Huh? What are you talking..

He picks me up and march to the fence. I trash around trying to escape his grip. I have had enough of this man kidnapping me whenever he wants. His lost his chance the first time now he wants to act on those thoughts? Not on my watch.

Me: (yelling) Put me down white boy.

I squirm sinking my nails in his arms. He doesn't flinch instead he places my body on the fence and turns me to the road before I can jump back.

Oliver: Jump.

Jump to where? I sit on top of the fence not moving. He clicks his tongue and pushes me. A scream shoots out of my mouth as my body flies from the top of the fence. An excruciating pain

comes from between my thighs as my pubic hair gets ripped out of my skin. Did he just forcefully wax me? I'm not wearing any underwear and the nightdress is short. Does that man knows how much it took me to grow that hair up? My vagina lips are too thick so I hide them with the pubic hair and now he has left me bald. My hands and feet are on the air trying to grip something I could hold on. The cold wind seeping in between my legs indicate that the hair is gone. The wind is forcing itself in my lungs without my consent. Instead of landing on my feet my body lands on the grass with a loud thud, face first. My face feels hot and sore. I should thank the underground for sending that message to my brain not to wear my glasses or else they would have broken in my face and hurt me. I should also thank my parents for trimming this grass and leaving it instead of cutting it out. I roll the floor and groan. He lands on his feet beside me and gawks at me.

Oliver: Get up.

I click my tongue and jump to my feet. My whole region is exposed but the man doesn't seem to care. Whatever it is it must be important for him to not have a boner.

Me: Are you out of your mind? I could have broken a leg, hand or a hip.

I hiss at him.

Oliver: You didn't right?

I groan fixing my nightdress.

Me: That is not the point.

Where are my neighbours when I need them? Didn't they hear me scream?

Oliver: I apologise but time is not on my side. You were wasting time and I had to take action.

He sincerely muttered. I click my tongue fuming. The man robbed me off my pubic hair and now he has the audacity to tell me time is not on his side. I've got a lot of time in my hands.

Oliver: Follow me.

I stand rooted on my spot. He stops on his tracks.

Oliver: Swazi please follow me.

I heavily sigh and drag my feet. He looks at me then open the backseat. I could feel my heart skipping a beat while my armpits itch. My hands quiver while my breath becomes shallow.

Oliver: Come closer.

I slowly walk towards him and stop on my tracks. The first thing my eyes set on is a body of a bleeding man. I stand on my tiptoes and stretch my neck to his face. I stagger with my eyes bulge out.

Me: What is this?



Oliver: We need your help.

Me: Help with what? Can't you see his bleeding? Take him to the hospital.

I mutter pacing up and down the tar road.

Oliver: He can't go to the hospital. We don't use hospital Swazi.

I cease my movements and scowl at him.

Me: (yelling) What do you mean you don't use hospitals? The man could possibly die and wena ungitshela amasimba.

I throw my hands in the air dramatically. I'm fuming. What does he want me do with him? Strap him on my back perhaps?

Oliver: He needs help.

Me: Of course he needs help. He needs the hospital. What is wrong with you? Are you blind?

I fire the questions at once, clicking my tongue.

Oliver: That's where you come in. We need you take the bullet out.

Say what now? My ears are deceiving me.

Me: (shocked) What?

Oliver: We wouldn't be asking you this if we were not desperate.

Me: You and who?

Oliver: Me and him. His the one who asked me to bring him here.

I break into a fit of laughter.

Me: Where are the hidden cameras? Tell the crew to come out now.

He chews his bottom lip frowning.

Me: (laughing) I would say I failed the auditions but I wasn't aiming for any role.

I stop laughing when I see his poker face. The man is dead serious. Paranoia 101 starts raising.

Me: You're joking right?

Oliver: (sighing) I'm afraid I'm not. His loosing a lot of blood and the more you waste time is the more you put him in danger.

Me: (panicking) I'm not a doctor. Take him to the doctor.

Oliver: I repeat we don't use the hospital Swazi. His baby mama was the one who was tending to his wounds but he doesn't want her to touch him. He wants you to do it.

Me: (hissing) Take him to her. I'm not going to jail because of you.

Oliver: Nobody is going to jail shortbase.

He calmly muttered while I'm panicking.

Me: (yelling) I'm not going to jail. Have you seen a chubby prisoner before? I don't even know the thug language. What am I going to communicate with the other prisoners in there?

I muttered pacing up and down. I could see the image flashing through my mind. The picture becomes clearly with each step I take. There I stood behind bars in an orange jumpsuit with

crooked yellow teeth. Tall and skinny. No hair or any sign of life in my eyes.

Warden: Prisoner 659

Me: Sho, sho vader. Ufuna sicamthe ngani?

Tears roll down my eyes as the images keep playing in my mind. I'm talking the thug language with no care in the world. A rough grip on my shoulders and someone shaking me breaks me out of my trail of thoughts. I rise my moist eyes to him.

Oliver: (hissing) This is not the time to be panicking Swazi. Focus.

I remove his hands on my shoulders and wipe my eyes.

Me: I'm not going to jail because of you two. Take him to the hospital and move from my mothers gate before I call the police on you. You're trespassing.

I breath out in rage then furiously turn on my heels and storm to the gate.

Oliver: Swazi.

He calls out after me. Calming my abnormal heart, I ignore him and pick up my face. How dare he asks me to commit such crime? Do I look like a doctor to him? I push the gate but it doesn't barge. I click my tongue and furiously push it again. I move my eyes to the lock and widen them. Reality sink on me that I jumped the fence instead of opening the gate. Where am I going to sleep? The cold wind piercing on my skin makes me shiver. My phone is inside and the spare keys are under the bin. I huff bending down and stretch my hand trying to the reach the bin since its not far from the gate. I scream in frustration as my short arm doesn't reach the bin. My heart thudded on my ribcage as I rise to my full height. I'm shaking like a leaf as I play out scenarios in my head. I don't want to see MaMkhize' baboon or MaNdlovu's tokoloshi live. I don't know what will I say to them. Shifting my gaze to the car, I bite my lip and run to it as he brings the engine to life. I'll rather take my chances with

them than seeing MaMkhize's and MaNdlovu's pets. I knock on the window. He rolls down the window and scowls at me.

Oliver: (hissing) What?

Me: (ashamed) Can you help me jump the fence again?

\*\*Unedited

**NOMASWAZI**

I had to plead and bargain in order for him to help me but of course it came with a price. So here am I in this car with surgical gloves around my hands digging a bullet out of someone's stomach. I force the bile down my throat but my stomach keeps churning and twisting. The blood keeps gushing to my nightdress while the one in between my hands feels so slimy and disgusting. The man groans as I gag. Opening the door, I quickly jump to the ground and empty my stomach on the pavement. The front door opens and footsteps approach my way. He heavily sighs.

Me: I told you I have a weak stomach.

I mutter gagging.

Oliver: Here.



I take the open bottle without looking at it and gulp it. I immediately spit out as the burning sensation reach my throat.

Oliver: It will help to calm your nerves. Trust me.

I shake my head wiping my mouth. I march back to the car and suck in a huge breath. He opens the other side of the backseat where his head is on and stand towering over him. The car is now parked at the park away from my house just incase of were meeting with someone. I don't know where he got the gloves and all the other stuff he has. We had to strip him his shirt and I nearly collapsed when I saw the wound. Oliver the driver as he introduced himself earlier didn't want us to move him because he said the bullet my move to his spine column if he moves around. They have already wasted a lot of time from moving him to where he was shot to the parking lot where his car was parked. It still bluffs me why are they taking him to the hospital. Chances of him dying are very high and I'm starting to be scared. I willingly participated in a crime instead of reporting them but what was I going to say to the police? That his shot and what?

Oliver: Your hands.

I stuck my hands out and he pours the alcohol on them on top of his body. He groans sweating. The alcohol helps him to not get an infection. I excuse my breath then slip my fingers back on his stomach. It feels weird touching someone's intestine. I don't even know which direction the bullet is but I keep moving my fingers around hoping for a miracle. I don't want him to die in my hands because I know I won't forgive myself.

Oliver: You're doing great.

He cooes softly encouraging me to go further. I'm grateful for the moral support because I don't even know what I'm doing. I'm not a surgeon but a baker. My daily job is to deal with dough and other ingredients that I use to make a cake or muffins came alive not a human body.

Me: What if he dies?

My voice breaks in between my speech. Now I know how devastating doctors feel when they lose patients. This is trauma on its on and I don't think I will ever be the same again should he die. I've wasted a lot of time not knowing the situation was this deep but you can't blame me or judge me. I was scared out of my mind and reacted the same way any normal person will react like. My reaction and actions are justified. He shouldn't have brought him to me in the first place. The man needs professional care which I don't have.

Oliver: His not dying Swazi.

Tears roll down my eyes as I navigate my hand around his stomach. Where is that damn bullet?

Me: (sniffing) You don't know that. God this is harder than I ever imagined.

Oliver: Drink up.

I shift my mouth close to the bottle and hold it with my teeth. I shut my eyes and scrunch my nose as the bitter taste hits my tastebuds. Why do people enjoy alcohol if it's this bitter?

Oliver: I'm not trying to get you drunk. Slow down.

He forces the bottle out of my mouth. Dropping my eyes back to the task at hand, I sniff and ignore the blood gushing to my body and the one all over my face and hands. Raising his head he forces the alcohol on his mouth. He chokes groaning.

Oliver: Hurry up.

I nod sniffing and move my hand. If someone told me I would spend my evening digging into someone's chest looking for a bullet I would have laughed my lungs out.

Me: Does he have a family?

The atmosphere is getting to much for me and I need a distraction so I won't think to much on what I'm doing.

Oliver: He has a daughter.

Me: How old is she?

Oliver: She's six.

Me: Does he stay with her?

Oliver: Her mother recently moved her here without his consent.

Me: Moved? Where was she staying?

Oliver: With her grandparents in Paris.

I nod.

Oliver: You know he really love you.

I rise my head to him.

Oliver: I'm being serious. The man is madly in love with you but doesn't know how to express himself. He can't select and arrange his words properly. I've been with him for years and this the first time he's done something so stupid like this. He risked his life just to see you.

I release a shaky breath sniffing. I've stopped crying but the tears haven't left my face.

Me: I don't want to think about her daughter should he die. He could have went to the hospital instead of coming to me. His selfish for risking his life.

Oliver: It's called love short base. It's the unconditional love he has for you that drove him to that decision. You're the only person who came to his mind in those moments.

Me: He could have thought about his daughter not me. Should he die he will rob her a chance to grow up with her father around. I'm not about to mention the hate the mother will have towards me when she hears that I'm responsible for snatching her baby daddy away from them.

Oliver: She's not in the picture and even if she was she knows her place.

He coldly muttered. I shiver feeling his whole demeanour changing. I guess the topic of the baby mama is a sensitive one. My eyebrows knit together as he forces alcohol in his mouth again. Is he trying to send him off drunk?

Oliver: He numbs the pain when his drunk. He doesn't feel the pain much like when his sober.

I nod. He coughs groaning. Looking at his face right now I know his in pain. His upper body has changed color including his eyes. Its s blessing and a curse to be light skinned.

Oliver: Let's say he pursued you the right way. Will you allow him to love you?

Me: Love me? His older than me.

A frown settles on his face.

Oliver: So what?

Me: What do you mean so what? Don't you see anything wrong with that?

Oliver: Age is just a number shotbase. What matter is the heart and what you want.

I scoff.

Me: Maybe to you white people because to us blacks it's a sin. A forbidden one.



Oliver: You will never find peace and happiness if you live your life according to the society. There are many people whose relationship are seen as taboo but the don't care what the others say as long they make each other happy. You happiness doesn't lie on other but you.

Before I could reply I feel something between my fingers.

Me: I have something.

Oliver: What is it?

Me: I think that's it. How do I remove it?

Oliver: Is it between his bones or between his tissues?

Me: It's much slimmer here so I would say it's his tissues.

Oliver: If it were his bones it would have been difficult because you would have to perform a surgery on him to remove it.

My eyes bulge out. What does he think I am?

Oliver: What a minute.

He takes out his phone and makes a call.

### ***YVONNE***

I'm sitting in the lounge with a fleece blanket wrapped around me waiting for him. His phone and Oliver's are both off. I'm losing my mind and I don't want to fall asleep without knowing when he will come back if he will come back. This pure and plain disrespect. The least he could have done is send a text that his not coming back or a phone call. My eyelids are getting heavier and heavier but I'm forcing them to be open. I want to see what time he will come home. I don't want to miss anything he does when he comes back. I want to see if he will jump in

the shower indicating he was whoring or he will sleep without taking one. I'm tempted to call the tracking company to track his car and cellphone but I know he will go berserk when he finds out what I did. Yawning, I place my head on the cushion and close my eyes. Any sound and movement I will jolt awake to catch him in the act. I know he will sneak in thinking I'm upstairs not knowing I'm waiting for him.

The sound of footsteps jolts me awake. I toss the flecee aside and rub the sleep of my eyes. I rise my eyes to the clock on the wall and it reads 11:45pm. I leap up to my feet and slip on my slippers. I resist the urge to march to the direction the footsteps are coming from. They are taking longer to reach me and I'm fuming. His probably checking the coast if it's clear not knowing I will catch him in the act. The figure finally comes my way.

Me: Where are you coming from?

I yell out switching the lights on. Busted!

Nancy: The kitchen.

She calmly muttered. I click my tongue.

Me: What are you doing up Nancy?

Nancy: Couldn't sleep so I went to drink milk.

She waves the glass my way and take a sip. I bite my lip resisting the urge to snatch that glass and throw it across the wall.

Nancy: Why are you still up?

Me: You don't get to question me in my own house.

Nancy: Why are you being defensive? Nobody is fighting with you.

Me: When are you living?

She chuckles.

Nancy: I haven't been here for a week and already you're kicking me out.

Me: (hissing) That's because you overstayed your welcome. You've been poking your nose in my business.

Nancy: Just for asking why are you up you're kicking me out?

Me: Like I said you're poking your nose where it doesn't belong. Whether I sit outside and sing or decide play music at this hour it's my house and I can do whatever I want.

She claps her hands once and roars in laughter.

Nancy: I see what's going on here. You were waiting for him but he didn't pitch up instead of him viola I show up in his place. Now you're pissed off and you're taking out you're anger on me

the wrong person. If you valued your sanity and peace of mind enough none of this would be happening. Don't worry sis I'll be out of your hair tomorrow afternoon.

I heavily sigh calming down.

Me: No I didn't mean you can live so soon. It's just that my business is my business and you're invested too much into it.

Nancy: Don't worry Yv

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I'm just that person who can read behind the wrong interpretation. Or between the lines.

She turns on her heel and padded to the stairs.

Me: Nancy I didn't mean like that.

I muttered following her.

Nancy: Whether you meant it or not I'm still living. I know when I'm not wanted and don't stick around, forcing myself on people something you should learn.

My jaw drops to the floor as she ascend the stairs. What is imply? And where is that man?

### ***NOMASWAZI***

A man with a briefcase just waltz out of nowhere and took over from me. I don't know why in the first place didn't he take him to him because his the doctor judging by how much he knows about the human body. What was the reason for me to dip my fingers in there if there was a doctor on standby?

Oliver: Get job short base.

I smile taking off the gloves. Where is my GP certificate? Doctor Swazi is in the building y'all. His jabs are not bothering me anymore. Everyday he has a new name for me and I choose to embrace all of them. The backdoor surgery was a success. I managed to remove the bullet from his tissues with his help of course. It puzzles me of how much he knows about that stuff.

Me: Now what?

Oliver: A minute.

Man: We have to move him here before I can continue with the blood transfusion.

Oliver gawks at me.

Me: What?

Oliver: We will need a place to stay.



Me: I hope you're not thinking I will accommodate you after what you made me do.

Oliver: You're the only person I can trust right now. I would have booked a hotel or bnb but I don't them calling the cops on me especially if I show up with him. We don't know if he was shoot by mistake or it was on purpose so we have to lay low until the dust settles.

Me: Who are you people?

Oliver: Just ordinary people making a living just like you but not the legal way.

I knew it. I should have known they are criminals. Lord the police will think I'm their accomplice should they get a whiff of what I have done.

Oliver: Panic attacks are real short base if you let your imagination run wild. Take a deep breath and stop thinking too much. Nothing will happen to you.

I close my eyes and inhale slowly and exhale. At least now I know how criminals look like.

Oliver: Better?

I nod opening my eyes.

Me: I can't accommodate you two. You will have to find somewhere else.

Oliver: (amused) Unless you want to spend the rest of your life in jail the go ahead and be my guest.

Me: Lord have mercy upon my soul for what I'm about to do to one of your children.

I reside the prayer.

Man: We have to move now.

Me: Fine.

Oliver: That wasn't so hard was it?

I ignore him and climb of his lap. The poor man's thighs must be numb by my weight. I open the passenger door and make myself comfortable.

Oliver: You're going to be okay Ty.

He pats his shoulder and closes the door before he jumps to the driver seat. The good doctor opens the passenger door and arch his eyebrows.

Me: You're the doctor so stay with him.

I pull the seatbelt and close the door. He chuckles and opens the backseat door. Oliver shifts his gaze to the backseat then

brings the engine to life. His groaning softly in his sleep. I sink in the leather seat and close off any negative thought that keeps creeping in my mind. My imagination can run wild sometimes and at this moment I don't need it. I just need a hot bathe and my bed so I can forget about this day. The car comes into a halt in front of my house

Oliver: Where is the key?

Me: Under the bin.

I muttered looking around for any preying us. I know one phone call to my mother the woman would be here in a blink of an eye. He steps out of the car and makes his way towards the gate. It doesn't take long for him to stand back to his feet with the keys after he bended down. He opens the gate and walks towards the car. Stepping out, I lock the gate after he drives in and parks the car close to the kitchen door. I walks towards them and pick up the briefcase while he and the doctor take Ty inside all the way to my bedroom. I sigh exhausted after they placed him on the bed.

Me: (hissing) You had the choice to call someone all along and you chose not to?

Does he know how shaken and traumatized I am? I'm done with them. Whatever friendship we built over the minutes or hours we were together in that car is gone. I hate liar's and backstabbers.

Oliver: He specifically asked me to drive him to you because he wanted to see you. I'm just following his orders.

He hisses back and pushes me out of the way before he storms out of the room. Orders my left foot. I look at the two men in my room, one on the bed and the other one a doctor and shake my head. I swallow the lump in my throat and close the door on my way out. I'm crossing my fingers he won't die on me cause I will never forgive myself.

Oliver: Swazi.

He yells on the longue. I drag my feet to him.

Me: What?

Oliver: Your phone.

I picking up my phone from the table and answer the call.

Lihle: (crying) Can you please open the gate for me.

Me: Huh?

Lihle: I'm outside your house. Thulani and I had a fight so I took my things and left.

My eyes widen.

Me: Thubelihle what are you saying to me? Didn't you say you will come back on Monday? You can't be here right?

Oliver snatches my phone and disconnects the call.

Me: (panicking) What am I going to do?

Oliver: Get rid of her because she will be trouble.

Me: It's already late and I'm the one who invited her to keep me company until my parents are back.

Oliver: Make a plan then. That girl shouldn't enter through that gate.

Lihle: (screaming) Swazi. Nomaswazi.

Is this girl out of her mind? Why is she yelling my name at night? Doesn't she know you don't yell someone's name at night no matter what the circumstances are. Does she want MaNdlovu and MaMkhize's pet to start with me when they are harvesting organs?

Oliver: Get rid of her now.

My newly white father firmly muttered. I roll my eyes and walk to the door. Can this day just end already. I'm tired. Why did they involve me in this in the first place?

***TWO WEEKS LATER******TYSON***

I bite back a smile as she fusses over me. Two weeks passed since that incident and they haven't found who shot me. I have a mind to tell them to let it go but I don't want this goddess attention shift from me. I'm enjoying each moment I have with her and I would say I'm getting to know her better than the file that was provided to me. Everything about her fascinates me and I don't think it's ever normal to feel the way I feel for her. She can never be wrong in my eyes. I'm hoping our little bubble won't end any time soon but I know at some point I have to get back to my life, and be the Tyson everyone knows not this whipped man hiding in the bedroom of the woman I love.

Swazi: Will you be okay?



Her voice is laced with concern. My heart swirls at her question. She's been asking me that every day before she goes to work and my answer doesn't change.

Me: I'm fine.

Swazi: I don't know where Oliver is and I don't want to leave you alone.

Me: This is nothing compared to what I have been through in the past. I promise you I'll be okay.

Swazi: Okay, my numb-

I cut her short.

Me: Your number is saved in my phone and you're one phone call away if I'm in pain. I know.

She clamps her hands together smiling.

Swazi: Okay, I have put everything on arms length so I will be on my way. Have a good day.

Me: Same to you.

She turns on her heels and stalks to the door. I watch her until she vanishes. I sigh and pull the covers off my body. It's fucken hot but the woman has me on bed rest with heavy blankets and shit. In her own head my wound isn't suppose to catch the wind. Rising the vest I have on, I groan peeling the bandage. It's too tight and suffocating me. I grunt throwing it on the floor then take a deep breath before leaping to my feet. I slowly walk to the mirror, my legs numb from being not used in days. My appearance in the mirror makes me shake my head. Bloody hell I look like a cavemen. My beard looks longer than the day I was shot. I haven't shaved in days and I have aged within these two weeks. Footsteps approaching the bedroom makes me rush to the bed. I clench my jaws as the pain makes itself known but I ignore it. Picking up the bandage, I caressely wrap it around my stomach then slip in the bed and pull the blankets over me and pretend to be sleeping. The wound is already bleeding. The door flies open and shut after the person stalks to the bed.

Oliver: (chuckling) I know you're not sleeping Ty.

Holding my posture, I ignore him and keep my eyes shut.

Oliver: She's gone.

He amusedly muttered. I flip my eyes open and the fool roars in laughter.

Oliver: When are you dropping this act?

Me: When I finally know she feels the same as me.

Oliver: You do know that she will be pissed once she knows you're faking everything?

Me: Who will tell her?

He shakes his head.

Oliver: Serious though Ty, did you have to resort to such extreme measures?

Me: It was the only way I was going to get her attention. After the incident at the bakery I knew I didn't stand a chance so I had to make a plan.

Oliver: Your plan was miscalculated, missing a lot of holes in it. The least you could have done was to notify me. The other will be much pissed as she is when they find out that you planned all of this.

Me: What they don't know won't hurt them.

Oliver: They are on high alert. Word on the street is that they put out a bounty on the sniper. Whoever comes forward with information will be handsomely rewarded.

Me: They won't find anything.

His demeanour changes while his nostrils flare.

Oliver: What the fuck does this bitch have that the others didn't to make you risk your life?

Me: (hissing) You watch your mouth.

Oliver: So I'm suppose to shut the fuck up when I see you going straight to the danger zone?

Me: You're overreacting Oliver. I have everything under control.

Oliver: Dammit Tyson, don't you see where this is leading? The gang will obviously will retaliate once the get a whiff you were behind the shooting.

Me: Like I said Oliver

I have everything under control. No one has to know about that and you will keep you mouth shut too.

Oliver: What are you really doing Tyson? Do you think the girl will fall to your feet and everything will be alright and the both of you will run to the sunset and live happily ever after?

Me: That's exactly what's going to happen.

Oliver: Then you're stupid than I thought. If this how you will react when that short woman is by your side then I'm afraid you're setting yourself for your doom. She's not the right woman for you if you have to resort such measures just to get her attention. She's worse than Yvonne.

I chuckle.

Me: You know as my friend and right hand man I expect you to be happy for me, that I finally find the woman I love. The woman who melts the stone cold heart. The woman who is my beginning and my end. The woman who I see nothing in her eyes but my future. We have been through worse shit together and I expect you to understand. The line of work we chose I'm

hoping for peace and happiness. Basking in that every time I step foot in my house when I come home not a boxing ring.

Oliver: I-

I hold out my hand interrupting him.

Me: I expect you to understand Oliver because ducking bullets isn't something I want to do for rest of my life. I'm getting old each day and I need to settle down before I depart this world. Beside Scarlet my life is pointless, if that little girl was not in this world I would have long let my enemies kill me and thank them for taking me out of my misery. I'm miserable and I expected you in all people to see that. I expected my best friend to see that not only am I hiding behind this fake facade and smile everyday to see that I'm not happy. I'm just an empty shell of what I used to be and the taste of happiness doesn't linger on my lips anymore. The last time I had that was when my daughter was born and that was it. The light in my eyes dimmed like a bonfire running out of its flames. I expected you to understand that what I feel for that short woman as you call her cannot be matched by anyone. She brings back the light that was once snatched away from me. Breathing in her scent

and seeing her everyday makes my heart skip a beat reminding me that I'm still human and living. She brings out the old Tyson who I once forgot who he was. She brings out the best in me and I fuck hate it and love it at the same time.

Oliver: Waoh that's some weird deep shit. I didn't know you feel that way man.

Me: That's because no one pays attention to you when you smile and laugh not knowing the demons keeping you up at night when everyone is deep on their slumber. The turmoil you keep in bay everyday so no one can notice the change in you from yesterday till today.

Oliver: (frowning) You're being a motivational speaker right now.

I snort.

Me: That's because I'm telling myself I will do anything to make her mine even having to risk my life just to get her attention. I



don't regret having Scarlet but I regret bedding her mother. If it was up to me Swazi would be her mother not Yvonne. That woman is just a centerpiece in my house who wants to host her tea parties and do her nails and shopping nothing more. She has no ambition in her life. Spineless with no backbone and I don't need someone like her beside me. I need someone who I can't control. I need someone who will defy my commands and put her foot down when push is shoved through. I can't be dodging bullets trying to protect myself then try to protect her also. She's the kind that won't hesitate to betray me when shit hits the fan and I don't need that.

Oliver: Are you feeling okay man? Should I call the doctor?

I chuckle and raise my middle finger.

Oliver: I thought I lost you for a minute there.

I laugh.

Me: You're an idiot, do you know that.

He laughs.

Oliver: Honestly speaking Ty, I didn't know that's how you feel. I apologise for insulting short base. If she makes you happy I say go for it and fuck everyone else. I give you my full support even though the woman is stubborn and infuriates me to the core.

I chuckle.

Me: She's fierce and that's what I need.

Oliver: And short.

We crack up so hard.

Me: Defiance is in her nature and I find myself excited to explore every inch of her body. Her plump juicy lips are always invited me to drink on them. My cock twitches every time I

wonder if her other lips are just as ripe. I want to sink between those thick folds and burry myself deep balls in them.

Oliver: Okay too much information.

I laugh.

Me: If it means pretending to be sick more than I am just to get her attention then I'm prepared for that.

He chuckles.

Me: I love how she fusses over me. Everytime when she's around even my tongue is painful and sore although it had nothing to do with the wound in my stomach.

He burst into fit of laughter.

Oliver: I can't wait for the day she bust you. She will kick you balls.

I chuckle.

Me: I trust her to do so.

## **YVONNE**

True to her word my sister left the following afternoon. I've never been so guilty and ashamed of myself about her departure. I didn't want her to leave per say but I wanted her to butt off my business. She was invested too much and I didn't want her to stay hating Jones when we fix our issues. It's been two weeks since I last saw him and I think I'm losing my mind. I don't know how many times I resisted the urge to drive to the police station. I had to remind myself that we have no business with the police and my best shot is that he comes back home to us. Sleep hasn't visited me in days, I stay up all night hoping by a miracle he will walk through that door to ease my pain. I'm slowly slipping and I can feel every tear I have been holding back wants to be let out. I'm cranky in desperate need of sleep but also desperately need to see him. I called his phone everyday but the machine says the number doesn't exits. I don't know what to do or think anymore. The pain intensify

each time my eyes land on our daughter. I refuse to believe some skank out there snatched my finance away from me and broke my happy home. That man loves me or should I say us more than he loves himself. No woman can make his heart beat faster than I do. I know this is the part where I have to put on my big girl panties and my detective skills on use to find him and his whore. I was damn serious when I say only death will break us apart. The future is so bright for us, waiting for us to take the next step which is marriage.

My lips curve in sad smile as I think about the plans we once made. We were so carefree and so much in love with each other. Oh how I miss the good old days when he still had his eyes on me only. I miss the road trips we used to take from here to where to road take us. The destination didn't mattered much because the only thing that mattered in those moments was that we had each other. How smooth he was on his to tongue when he asked me out and and how happy when he was I broke the news of our pregnancy not to mention when he proposed. It was best day of our lives and if life had a manual I would switch it on and keep it there. I miss how his eyes would warm up to my sight not to mention the steam sex that once drove both of us crazy. We couldn't keep our hands to ourselves and I ask myself everyday what changed from now

and then. I'm still the same Yvonne he saw years go and trusted with his heart so why was he breaking mine with each time he gets? A painful lump chokes me causing the tears I have been holding back for two weeks to roll down my cheeks. I raise my hand to my mouth to muffle the sound so my daughter doesn't hear the sound. God my heart is breaking into pieces and I don't think I could mend them back together, only he can.

Scarlet: Mommy.

My breath hitches in my throat. I quickly wipe the tears with the back of my hand and force my lips to smile before turning to her. I'm sitting outside in the garden.

Me: Yes baby.

Scarlet: When am I going to school?

Me: Soon baby.

Scarlet: How soon? When is soon?

Me: Soon baby you will see.

Scarlet: (smiling) Is soon tomorrow?

Me: (yelling) Dammit Scarlet, stop being a brat. Which part of soon don't you hear?

Her lips quiver before her eyes get moist with tears. Regret washes over me as I leap up to my feet and make my way towards. She moves backwards with each step I take. Tears stream down her cheeks.

Me: Baby I didn't mean to yell at you.

I softly muttered. She turns on her heels and runs back to inside, crying. I'm hot on her heels.

Me: Scarlet.

She runs to her room after ascending the stairs and slams the door shut in my face.

Me: Scarlet.

I push the door and stumble in. She's on top of the bed on her stomach, crying.

Me: Mommy didn't mean to raise her voice at you baby.

She raise her head and mutter.

Scarlet: I want to go back home mommy. I hate it here. You're always snapping at everyone.

My heart breaks furthermore. I wrap my arms around her and blink rapidly. God knows I didn't mean to yell at her but she just caught me on the wrong time. She just kept pushing and pushing and I lost it. I wasn't aware she noticed my change of mood.



***NOMASWAZI***

I have been waiting for the police to show up at my doorstep but it looks like they are not aware of the criminals I keep in my house. I couldn't 'get rid' of my friend that night because it was too late and I didn't want anything to happen to her. Oliver was not happy but I didn't care. I had to put my foot down and remind him that it was my house not his. They are just cohabiting rent free in my mother's house so he has no right to tell me what and what I shouldn't do. I had to hide Lihle from them and vice versa. She stayed for two days then her father demanded she comes back home. I have never been relieved in my life. The hide and seek was getting too much for me and I couldn't take it. I have never lied to Lihle before and she could see something was eating me up. Everytime she was around I was so jumpy and couldn't take my eyes off the passage. Oliver was really not impressed by me because he had to sneak out at night when she was asleep and sneak back in when she was not around. She wanted to know why didn't we sleep in my bedroom anymore and I had to come up with a lie. My parents bedroom was off limits no matter what the circumstances were

but at on those day I didn't have much of a choice. Those were the most difficult and restless days of my life.

My phone chimes just as I wipe the counter. My lips curve into a smile when I see the caller ID.

Me: When are you coming back?

She laughs on the end of the line.

Ma: Hello to you Swazi.

I giggle.

Me: Sawubona ma.

Ma: I see someone is missing me.

She teases. I giggle.

Me: I miss you guys everyday. When are you coming back?

Ma: We were suppose to be take off this evening but Oyama's mother disturbed our plans. Apparently the girl is missing and it's been two days. She thought she was with us but we last saw her on the day we arrived. She said she was going to stay with her mother for the time being because she's spoilt and I don't take such nonsense.

I laugh.

Me: I trust you to put her in line.

Ma: That girl is rude and disrespectful especially when her father is not around. I was so close to slamming her head on the wall, driven by rage.

I gasped shocked.

Me: I don't want to lose you ma. Please don't touch her because it might be her plan all along. You're the only parent I have beside baba and we don't know if he won't turn his back on me when you're arrested. Just think about me and ignore her.

Ma: One day when somebody's child is making you feel the heat then you will understand how I really feel.

I heavily sigh. I don't think I will live to see that day. No man wants me and I'm fine alone. I don't think being in a relationship is for me. I get bored easily and being submissive and needy is not on my DNA.

Ma: We are think on opening another branch here.

Me: And you will be living me alone?

She laughs.

Ma: It's just a thought on paper baby. We still haven't implemented anything. Once we have enough cash to run both bakery then that's where we will be opening it. We still need capital to start the business and another money on the side that will keep the business floating before it starts to make profit. Not to mention the equipment we will need and we still have to buy a building where we will run the shop. I don't want to take from the savings we made because that's your legacy. I will be leaving the bakery on your capable hands and I trust you to keep it running like it is now. Steven has always wanted to us to be partners but I couldn't because I didn't know where will the relationship end up. We are thinking on going 50/50 on this one and I was clear to him that the bakery that side is yours alone. I'm not sharing it and I'm not compromising on that. He has 7 kids in total including you so I don't want his baby mama to mistaken my shop as his should he depart this world.

Before I could reply a beautiful lady who if I'm not mistaken is around my age walks in the shop.

Me: Ma I have a customer. Can I call you back later.

Ma: Of course baby.

Me: By the way I'm hiring new staff member because I'm the boss right now.

She laughs.

Ma: That's still my bakery for now and not yours. I'm still very much your boss and I'm still saying no to new staff members.

She giggles.

Ma: Just wait until you're the boss then make those changes.

She hangs up after that. I shake my head and slip my phone in my apron pocket before turning to the customer.

Me: Hello.

Her: Hi.

Me: What will you be having?

Her: Well I'm a sucker for mint so anything that has mint is my favourite.

I giggle.

Me: I've got mint muffins that are from straight from the oven. They are still fresh and waiting for you to sink your teeth in them.

She giggles.

Her: (smiling) I think I will be coming here regularly just for them. I'm Zobuhle by the way and everyone calls me Zozo.

She sticks her hands out and I do the same.

Me: Nomaswazi but everyone calls me Swazi.

I muttered shaking her hand, smiling back.

Zozo: I think you and I will be good friends because of your baking skills.

She giddily muttered. I throw my head back and burst into laughter.

Me: Well friend if you must know I don't have a sweet tooth like you.

Zozo: As long you can bake me anything that has mint then I don't care.

She waves her hand dismissively and we both giggle. The bell on the door chimes indicating a new customer. We both shift our eyes to the man walking. She rolls her eyes.



Me: Hello and..

She interjects.

Zozo: Don't bother greeting him. His my babysitter.

She retorts causing the man chuckle.

Zozo: What are you doing here?

Man: Just doing my job. You know the boss will be much pissed if he hears you left the house even though he told you not too.

She scoffs.

Zozo: Well Adesola is not the boss of me so he can't control me. If he was paying my salary I was going say he can control me but he doesn't.

She sickly smiled at him. I take that as my cue to get her order ready. I normally don't judge people but she looks like those rich housewives. I might be judging the book by it's cover but she reeks spoilt brat tendencies. Probably one of those kids who grow up with silver spoons on their mouths.

## **ZOBUHLE**

If someone could change his/her life with mine I wouldn't hesitate to do so. I hate my life and how complicated it has been ever since I met Adesola. That man has turned it upside down without my own permission. What annoys me the most is that I'm always guarded like I'm the presidents daughter or the someone royal princess. If it's not bodyguards all over me like flies on shit then it's the driver and some heavy security around the house. I was just a simple girl who only wanted to get my degree

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get a job and change the situation and home but sadly my grandmother and brother passed away before they could enjoy

the fruit of my labour. Not to mention the man who made my stay in the village so easy. My first love who died in a car crash alongside my grandmother and brother Khwezi. I don't think I would ever love any man like I loved him. He was my first on everything and it broke my heart when he left me alone in this world. I saw my future with that man. Every time I think about him I just burst into tears.

Therapy helps but it doesn't mend back the broken pieces of my heart that are scattered all over. My mother and I are in a good space but it will take time for me to fully let her in. Ever since that faithful day I trusted someone who I thought was my best friend with my life it's difficult for me to trust men and just let them in. They are all the same in my eyes and the only thing they want is just to keep hurting me. I have my fair share of days where my personalities take over but recently they have been quiet. I haven't had an episode in a while.

Furiously walking out of the bakery, I march to my car but my babysitter stops me.

Me: What is it Michael?

Mike: Someone will fetch your car.

I resist the urge to open my mouth and let out a scream. They are suffocating me and I need a place where I can just escape them even if it's just two minutes. He opens the backseat for me and closes it after I hop in. He jogs to the driver's seat and brings the engine to life after stepping in.

He keeps stealing glances at me through the view mirror. I icy glare at him and click my tongue. They ruined my whole day while it just started. The driver is long to the house. Not waiting for him to park the car on the driver way, I open the door and storm to the house not bothering to close the door. I find the source of my spoilt mood watching TV. I block his view and slam the items I had on top of the table.

Me: What the hell is your problem?

Ade: Mrs Emeka how good for you finally grace us with your presence.

He sarcastically muttered. I click my tongue.

Me: Don't call me that. And stop treating me like a child.

Ade: I'm not treating you like a child but just looking out for you. Your safety is my number priority.

Me: You are treating me like one.

He heavily sighs.

Ade: Look everything will go back to normal as soon as we find out who ordered the hit on Jones. All I need from you is to stay put and not jeopardize your safety.

Me: (screaming) Jeopardize my safety? I didn't ask for any of this.

Ade: I know and I will always apologize for that but come on with me here Zozo.

I scoff.

Me: Work with you? My life was fine before you came along. I had peace and I definitely wasn't cooped up in this fucken mansion like a princess waiting for her prince charming.

He leaps up on his feet.

Ade: There isn't a single day that you don't remind me of that.

He spits hissing. His Nigerian accent that was tucked away flies out.

Me: That's because you don't deserve my forgiveness. You stole my identity Ade and you married me without my permission. You expect me to be okay on that? I'm suppose to smile and everything will be okay?

I'm screaming on top of my lungs while my chest heavier. This man just know how to make me crazy in seconds. He infuriates me to the core.

Ade: I'm sick and tired of you reminding that. I live each day apologizing and you keep throwing that back at my face.

He claps back matching my voice.

Ade: Why can't you just move on from that? Everybody forgives and forgets but every time you become a brat you bring that up. I asked you nicely Zobuhle to stay at home until the dust settles but as usual you defy me. My enemies could kill you just to get to me while you're gallivanting alone without your bodyguards.

He yells.

Me: That's because you're suffocating me. Everything that has to do with you suffocates me. I wanted to be away from you and get some fresh air.

I yell back.

Ade: You could have asked someone to buy those for you. I don't know what do you want from me. The sooner you get used to this life the better for everyone. We are married whether you like it or not. You're Mrs Emeka until the grave. Deal with it.

He picks up his car keys on the table and storms out of the room. I click my tongue and pick up the muffins. Walking to the kitchen, I shove the muffins on the microwave and slam the door. The sound of the car speeding away makes it's way to my ears. I would never accept that I'm his wife. Over my dead body.

\*

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Unedited.



***NOMASWAZI***

There's a reason why children and I can never be best friends. These little terrorist can make a person go insane in seconds. I never saw myself as a mother before and I don't think I will ever be one. They are a full time job worse than mine and demanding a lot of attention. Every woman has those motherly instincts but mine a tucked away when it comes to kids. This is why I find myself babysitting my neighbour's daughter this evening. She knows I don't like kids in general but she left her in my capable hands. My mother was the one who did the babysitting for her but now since she's not here I'm forced to play the mother to this rascal. This child has been crying for hours and I'm starting to feel my head pounding. Her screams and cries are shooting straight to my skull causing me a migraine. I've been rocking her back and forth like how my mother does but it doesn't stop her crying. I heavily sigh and pick up her towel and strap her on my back. I nearly jump for joy as she settles down.

Me: Finally.

Oliver: Whose child is this?

Me: My neighbours. My mother usually babysits every after two week when her mother does her night shifts.

Oliver: You mean to tell me everyday we will be seeing her?

Me: Didn't you hear what I said?

I'm annoyed. This is not how I wanted to spend my evening. I already had a plan in mind with my bed but I don't see myself sleeping this evening because of her.

Oliver: Isn't there anyone who can babysit her? She's loud.

I giggle shaking my head. His looks spooked and I don't blame him. This is how I was the first week when she was left here until I got used to it. My mother knows I have no patience in me so she didn't bother me about her.

Me: It's not like you guys are staying here forever anyway.  
When are you guys going back?

I stumbled to the kitchen and open the takeaways that I bought when I knocked off. One thing about me is that I excell in baking but when it comes to cooking it's a different story. My cooking is horrible and cannot be eaten. I once tried cooking rice and beef stew. The stew was burnt not to mention my rice that was semi raw and had a lot of salt. The food had to be thrown away and it was decided that I should stick to baking only and live the cooking to people who knows how to do it. I can fry an egg and boil it but that's all the cooking I know. My frying skills when it comes to meat they are terrible. Once I throw it in the oven it gets better but they can't eat that for the rest of their lives.

Oliver: Are you kicking us out?

His voice snaps me out of my daze as he padded to the kitchen. He leans on the fridge and cross his ankles.

Me: No, it's just that you can't live with me forever. Some day you guys will have to go back before people become suspicious. It's bad enough that I have forbidden Lihle from coming over. She will add the maths and come back with the results.

He runs his palms on his face.

Oliver: As soon as Ty is better we will leave.

Me: Did he call his family to ease them?

His eyes run around the whole room.

Me: Are you kidding me?

The baby on my back starts crying again as I yell. I rock her back and forth calming her down.

Oliver: It's a little complicated.

Me: What's complicated? He should have called them to let them know he's okay. They must be worried sick about him.

Oliver: He will call them.

He dismissively muttered. I don't believe a word he says but I just need to take his word for it.

Me: You should wake Ty up. Dinner is ready.

He nods and walks out the kitchen to the bedroom. I open the cabinet and take out glasses. Rinsing them, I pour out the juice and place everything on a tray and wait for them. They walk out the room with Tyson's hand on Oliver's neck. My eyes widen.

Me: When I said wake him up I didn't mean drag him out of the bed.

Does Oliver's brain work sometimes? The man has a wound and doesn't need to be moving around because it might not heal.

Tyson: I'm fine. I'm tired of sitting in that bed.

He muttered flashing me a smile. I smile back and shake my head. He looks better than he was a couple of days ago. I was so sure that he was dying after the surgery. I didn't know how was I going to explain it to my parents on what was he doing here in the first; especially his family.

Me: That's the whole point of the bed rest. Stop being stubborn Ty and go back to bed.

Oliver snorts.

Oliver: And the bickering starts.

He muttered rolling his eyes. I glare at him.

Oliver: What? It's annoying to listening to you two bickering about stupid things. You heard the man short base. His strong as an ox so stop fussing over him.

Isn't there a shop in the country that sells people? Because I will gladly sell Oliver in a heart beat.

Me: I'll get the pillow then.

I muttered making my way to the room. I pick up the pillows and stride back. I place them behind him then walk back to the kitchen to take the food.

Tyson: Thank you.

He politely muttered after I place the tray in front of him and pick his fork.

Oliver: Where's my plate?

Me: You're not sick Oliver. Your plate is in the kitchen and needs you to fetch it. Excuse me I'm going to put the baby to bed.

I turn on my heels and stumbled to the room. I carefully place the baby on the bed after unstrapping the towel and place her pillow. She flips her eyes open just as I tiptoe out of the room and starts crying. I breath out and make my way towards her. I check her nappy then lay on my side then hush her back to sleep. She cries louder kicking the towel with her tiny feet. I heavily sigh resisting the urge to plunge my hair out of my skull and pick her up then walk out of the room. She becomes quiet the minute I pick her up. The two men furrow their eyebrows as I walk in the lounge.

Oliver: Was she not sleeping?

Me: She was but woke up just as I was about to walk out of the room.

I lower myself on the couch and pick up her bottle.



Oliver: Should I warm up your food?

Me: Please.

I murmurs shoving the bottle on the little rascals. She sucks with her eyes glued on mine. I'm mentally swearing at her. What kind of child doesn't sleep at night in her age? Her agemates are sleeping at this hour so why is she still up? She flashes me her toothless smile and keep on sucking.

Me: You better sleep or I will let you cry the river of Jordan.

My subconscious threatens and this time I agree with it. This child is slowing testing me and I'm running out of patience. Oliver places my food in front of me and take his seat and shift his eyes on the TV. They are watching the news channel. She pushes out the bottle with her tongue and yawns. She loudly burps before I could place on my chest. I giggle and place on my chest humming a lullaby. Her eyelids grew heavier and heavier but she fights to keep her eyes open. I don't know why children like to punish themselves like this. I for one knows how to fight sleep off but at the end nature always wins. She yawns for the

umpteenth time still with her eyes open. I could feel the eyes of the both men in the room burning my skin as I humm the lullaby but I shut them out and focus on the baby on my hands. Yawning, I take out my glasses and wipe the tears that slip out of my eyes and close them.

Oliver: Shouldn't you put her to sleep not you?

He amusedly muttered. Flipping my eyes open, I glare at him.

Me: Shhh!

I hiss and shift my eyes to the baby and find her sleeping before closing my eyes again and continue humming.

***TYSON***

I'm looking at my future wife as tries to put the baby to sleep. I'm in awe. The image is already in stored in my mind. I'm just imagining her short self with a swollen stomach

barefooted in our kitchen carrying my seed inside her. I know I shouldn't be jumping the gun but I can't help it. The image alone excites me. The sound of someone snoring breaks me from my trail of thoughts. I shift my eyes to her and chuckle.

Oliver: I knew the humming will make her sleep.

He murmurs stifle his laughter. I smile.

Me: I guess she just got comfortable.

He thinned his eyes at me.

Oliver: You've got that stupid smile on your face.

I snort.

Me: What smile?

Oliver: The I'm loving with her kind of smile?

I laugh.

Me: I didn't know smiles can be differentiate.

He playfully rolls his eyes.

Oliver: You know what I mean.

Me: Well you better get used to seeing this smile because it's a permanent one. Only her can make me feel giddy like a teenager and smile like this.

He chortles.

Oliver: Isn't this love thing overrated? Does true love really exist these days?

Me: That's what I was asking myself the same thing everyday until I met her. I knew the day I set my eyes on her that she was the one.

Oliver: That sounds so cheesy. Your pick up lines though are wack.

I laugh.

Me: Okay genius let's hear what you have.

Oliver: I've never been in love before and I don't think I will ever reach that stage in life. Smash and grab is my thing and I like it like that. From the random women I've bedded, I picked up that women in general love to be courted even for bed. You have to be slick and smart with your words. Choose your words wisely because they are the one that determines what kind of

men you're. It's either you're a lover in general, an arrogant jerk or the I don't care type.

I chuckle.

Me: Look at you schooling me about women. When did you get so smart?

He laughs.

Oliver: I've always been smart but didn't want to outsmart you.

We crack up so hard causing the goddess to wake up from her slumber. She scowls at us.

Us: Sorry.

We muttered in unison like children caught with their hands on the cookie jar. Oliver is stifling his laughter on the corner of my eyes and I'm also dying to release my own.

Swazi: You guys didn't think of wake me up?

Me: You needed the nap.

She yawns and place the baby beside her on her stomach. She picks up her food and starts eating. The baby cries as she shoves the second spoon. She place the plate on the table and pick her up. She settles down and closes her eyes. Swazi clicks her tongue and places the baby back on the couch. She cries again but she ignores her this time. I shift my eyes to Oliver who shrugs his shoulders and leaps up to his feet. He picks up the tray and makes his way to the kitchen. Judging by the noise coming out from there, his washing the dishes. I try to concentrate on the TV and shut the baby out but her cries are hysterical now.

Me: Aren't you going to pick her up?

Swazi: No!

I frown. What does she mean no? Am I the only one perhaps who hears her crying?

Swazi: Can you please increase the volume. I want to hear when is the next state national address.

I freeze on the chair while my eyes widen. Seeing me not moving, she picks up the remote and increase the volume. The baby cries louder than the volume. She furiously places the plate on the table and pick her bottle and shove it on her mouth. She pushes out with her tongue and continues to cry. The woman doesn't spare her a glimpse but continues to eat. I'm spooked.

Swazi: Don't worry she will eventually sleep.

She murmurs when she feels my gaze on her. I swallow hard.

Swazi: Don't look so shocked. The crying will tire her and she will sleep. The whole point of her letting her cry is to teach her hoe to console herself.



My eyes widen furthermore. What?

Swazi: I once saw this technique on Tv so I thought why should I try it on her.

She calmly muttered still eating. I'm tongue tied and shocked to utter a word at this moment. The only audible in the room now is the Tv and the baby's hiccups. Oliver walks out of the kitchen with a frown plastered on his face.

Oliver: Short base the baby is crying.

Swazi: I know.

We share a look.

Us: Aren't you going to pick her up?

We muttered in unison.

Swazi: How will she learn to console herself if I keep cutting her learns short?

My jaw drops to the floor.

Oliver: If you're not going to pick her up then let me.

Swazi: No!

She urgently muttered and furiously pick up the baby. Instead of calming her down she does worse.

Swazi: (crying) Hiiiiiiii!

Oliver quickly whips his head to me shocked while my face matches his. She continues crying until the baby settled down and gawks at her. She stops crying and curve her lips into a smile. TF!

Swazi: See that wasn't hard. My lessons worked.

She happily muttered.

Swazi: I knew you will learn so fast. Inimba yenzalo anginayo mina.

She cooed softly to the baby before shifting her gaze to us.

Swazi: I fed her, changed her diaper and she was still crying. My arms are not made of rubber. If her parents taught her to be a Kangaroo baby then I'm not a Kangaroo mother. She must know when to console herself. I have parents too just like her. I'm not an orphan.

She leaps up to her feet and picks up her plate before walking to the kitchen. What the hell just happened? Shock doesn't even describe what I'm feeling right now. I'm mortified. That woman is dangerous and I take back my words. My children will not be safe with her. The poor baby is still shocked to cry again.

***NARRATOR***

It's that time of the year where she has to drag herself out of bed, force herself to eat and stop the tears from streaming down her eyes. Its been 5 years already but the wound is still fresh like it happened just yesterday. Everything was snatched out of her grip in a day and as always she's locked up in her room on top of the bed crying. Her hands are shaking burning in rage. Wasn't she suffering enough in her childhood life until her adult life? Why did it have to be people she loves the most? Why couldn't it be Uthando? Someone she once considered as a friend. She knows she wouldn't have even shed a single tear on her funeral. In fact she would have spat on her grave and raised her skirt or dress to piss on her grave. The girl did her dirty and she never wants to see her ever again in her life. She wipes the tears of with the back of her hand and padded to the door. Her stomach has constantly begging her to be fed and she give in to the request. Under normal circumstances she ignores it and endures the twists and turn of her intestines until she feels a bile of liquid rising from the tip of her stomach to her throat. She passes the lounge and find it empty and continues to make her way to the kitchen. She finds her dinner covered

on top of the counter and pulls the barstool and makes herself comfortable on it unaware she had an audiences watching her.

Ade: This is the first time she has eaten something I made for her on this day.

He mutters to the doctor standing next to him. His here because like every year on this day the woman loses her marbles and cries none stop. If she's not switching personalities and swearing at any man close by her side she harms them and herself. The doctor is always on standby to calm her after the storm. Ade has gotten used to the routine and he always avail himself on this day because he knows how much it means to her. Her being locked up in the bedroom the whole meant that was more to come but his surprised by the switch of things this year. She hasn't stood on her balcony and threatened to cut out every men's balls in the world. Sometimes Ade finds it funny because the population of men in the world isn't that many compared to women but which men will let her cut of his balls willingly? The woman is a nutcase that needs to be in a mental asylum but she is his nut case. He wants to love her right and smothered and love her the way she deserves. Not all men are out there to hurt her. She just has to pull down the walls she's built around herself and see that not men are evil.

Her vulnerability side is not something she displays everyday. Zobuhle has been hurt from childhood and that trauma she carries it everyday forgetting not everyone is out to hurt her. She was robbed a childhood in which all kids have but except for her. At the early age of 12 she had to make mends for her and her brother because her grandmother had suffered stroke and her mother left to god know where. She practically had grow up and be a mother to her brother Khwezi at just the tender age of 12. She doesn't regret raising his brother but what she regrets the most is opening up her heart for her mother again. On her happy days she calls her mother more three times a day and they will chat for hours but once she switches to one of her personality she doesn't consider Thandeka as her mother. She calls her out with all the swore names she could think of and it gets worse on this day. Ade makes sure him and the staff working around here especially men stay out of her way on this day.

At some point he understand where she comes from. She's been fending for herself from a young age. She fell in love with a man who she thought was the love of her life but life turned on her and took him away alongside her grandmother and brother. The wound gets deeper and deeper for her each year. People expect her to move on from that but what she endure

on those bushes at night can never make anyone sane again. Rape isn't something you just move on from it not matter how you suppress it. Everything triggers you especially if you don't have anyone to talk to. Zozo doesn't bother wiping the tears away, she shoves food in her mouth with tears and mucus all over her face. Her body is her but her mind is mile away from her. She picks up the plate and slam it on the floor screaming. Ade exhales loudly. For a second there he thought she was making progress and he didn't have to watch her spiral out out of control. He watches her bang the counter with her fist. She leaps up to her feet and open the cabinet. She takes out the set of dinner plates and glasses.

Doctor: What is she doing?

Ade shrugs with a frown plastered on his face. Each year he deals with a different her. He doesn't know whether it's her personalities or it's her in control. She picks up the first glasses and smash it through the wall. She picks up two this time, one on each hand and throws it on the wall. A sigh slips out of Ade's lips. If he knew how to help her he would have longed done that. Isn't therapy suppose to help her? This person has been attending therapy since she came in his life so he doesn't understand why is she still messed up like this. He clicks his

tongue and fishes out his phone the pocket and walk to the sliding door to make a call.

Ade: I thought you were helping her.

He hisses as the therapists picks up the call. She sighs.

Therapist: Good evening Mr Emeka.

Ade: It's not a good evening to me when my wife screams and slams glasses and plates on the wall like a lunatic. What the fuck am I paying you for?

He yells.

Therapist: These things take time sir. I understand your frustration but your wife isn't ready to confront her past. Yes she talks about her grandmother, brother and her ex but not the big elephant in the room. When she does a family therapy with her mother she talks a lot but some days she doesn't want



to talk and I can't force her to open to me when she doesn't want to.

Ade: (yelling) It's your fucken job to make her talk. I pay you a lot of money for you to tell me that bullshit.

He spits out rolling his fist. This woman was taking everything lightly because she never saw how she acts out of this particular day. If she has been staying in the same house as her's she will know what his talking about.

Therapist: Like I said Mr Emeka your wife isn't also making my job easy. She has to open up to me in order for me to help her. I can't cure a diseases without knowing what caused the outbreak of it.

Ade clicks his tongue and hangs up on her.

Ade: Bloody useless bitch. The only thing she knows is send chop my money without working for it. She's useless to me.

He frustratedly mutters

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slipping his phone in his pocket then made his way back inside. He closes the sliding door and peek over wall and find her still throwing everything she can get her hands on whether on the wall or on the floor.

Ade: She's crying silently.

The Zobule he knows is loud and a screamer.

Doctor: People deal with greif differently. Some they take few months to move from the deceased some just move like it never r happened. Your wife is that type who doesn't want to let it out no matter how much it eats her up. She's suffering inside and calling out for help. As much as doesn't want to see you around her but knows she wants someone to be there for her.

Ade runs his hand on his face frustrated.

Ade: How do I help someone who doesn't want to be helped?  
Someone who hates me like passion?

Doctor: Just be there for her.

Ade chuckles and leans on the wall, arms across his chest.

Ade: If it was that easy as you say it we would be on a island around the world on our vacation. She would have been the most happiest woman on earth.

Doctor: You have to understand that you chose to fall for a broken woman. Maybe if you found her way before life took a lot from her she would have responded the say way you do but you found her broken. Those are her demons and she doesn't want to face them head on.

Oh he wishes everything was that easy for him. He wishes she could open up so they could move past that incident but she doesn't even want to acknowledge what happened to her, so she can't do that how will she move on? The doctor is

psychoanalysing her and he hates that. She's not a pet from the zoo wanting to be caged out but a whole human being that can't differentiate between day and night at day at this moment. He shifts his gaze to her and find her on floor just laying on top of the pieces of glass that could harm her. He waits until her eyelids get heavy before and stumble towards her. Drugging someone isn't his style even his enemies know that his also sick and twisted like her. He watches victims squirm and beg for the lives until the couldn't. He sighs and bends down to pick her up before he turns on his heels and makes his way to her room.

Ade: You can leave now.

The doctor nods and picks up his belongs and rushes out of the house like his been chased by dogs. The woman was a nut case and he couldn't understand why doesn't he get her admit her to looney bin because she was crazy as they come.

Ade places Zozo on the bed and look for her vaslap. He fills the sink on the bathroom with lurk warm water then dips her vaslap before he walks back to her and start wiping the blood on her body.

She whimpers softly in her sleep and cling on him and he tries to stand up. He sigh and lies on the bed with her and cuddle with her. She sighs in content in her sleep before she snuggles closer to him. If only this position was a permanent one things would be so easy. Ade would know how to help her but how do one help someone who doesn't want to be help? The cycle of her hurting herself and the people around her on this day has to end. She can't live like this for the rest of her life. At some point she has to let people in so they couldn't know how to help her. She has to let down the walls she has arojnd herself go and see the world from everyone's perspective. It's not black and white as the adults paint it to their kids but she has to know that being vulnerable and needy doesn't make her weak. She was once vulnerable and weak in her life and after that faithful night she vowed to be on that position again. She hated how pathetic she sounded when she begged those men to not do what they did to her. She should have been more firmly and fought more than what she did. Some days she blames herself for being stupid and naive. She trusted someone because she has known her, her whole life and she never thought in her wildest dreams she could turn on her life that.

Her phone rings on the floor disturbing Ade from his trail of thoughts. He ignores the phone but the called is persistent. He slowly removes her head from him and slide out of the bed. He picks up the phone just as the caller disconnects the call. He places it back on the floor and plugs the charger in but a please call me from the same number caught his attention. Clearly whoever the caller is desperate to get her answer the call. He calls the number back and the caller picks up on the second ring.

Voice: Thank god you got back to me. I was worried you will not pick up my calls.

The feminine voice mutters after picking up the phone.

Voice: I know I shouldn't be calling you and everything but I know what day it is to day and what it means to you. I'm sorry I was not the friend I was suppose to be when you needed me. I chased a concert instead of sympathizing with you like I should have been doing.

Ade's nostrils flare as it clicks on him who the caller is.

Ade: What the fuck do you want?

He firmly muttered.

Uthando: Whose this?

She frowned on the end of the line.

Ade: It doesn't matter who it is but what matters is what the fuck do you want?

Uthando gulped on the end of the line shaking in her boots and the man's tone got more aggressive.

Uthando: I just wanted to apologize to her.

Ade chuckled bitterly.

Ade: After 5 years. You have the nerve to even call her.

Uthando: It took years to come to terms with what I have done. The guilt was eating me up and I couldn't live with it anyone.

Ade: Let it eat you up because apology not accepted.

Uthando: You have no right to tell me that. Give Zobuhle the phone.

She screams on the end of the line frustrated. Why do people always have to spit back on her face when she does something nicely? It started with Mthuthuzeli not it's man who Zobuhle hides behind.

Ade: My wife doesn't wish to talk to you, not today not ever. Don't ever call her again because you trigger out emotions that she's working hard to keep at bay.

Uthando: (shocked) What? Wife? Zobuhle is married and didn't even have the audacity to tell me? What kind of friendship is



this? Its clear that it was once sided because if she was a true friend she would have told me and invited me to be her matron of honour.

Ade chuckles in disbelief and hangs up on her. A text follows shortly from the her.

\*\*\*\*Uthando: Please tell her to borrow me money. I'm short with nappies and my baby needs food. If she is a true friend she will help me for old time sake because I have been helping her through her childhood life until varsity. She's married now meaning she's rich and living in a mansion with you as her husband so that indicate you guys have money. Don't be stingy to give it to the poor because because of me she wouldn't be where she is today. It's all thanks to me and she has to give me credit for that.\*\*\*

Ade re read the message three time before he understood it. It was never about her calling her to apologize but it was about her wanting money on his wife. Oh he will be damned if any cent goes to her. The bitch is crazy and entitled to things that she doesn't know where they come from. He clicks his tongue and copies the number in his phone before he deletes the

message and blocks her number. It's clear that she feeds on bullying Zozo but not this time around. He will be dealing with her and by the time his done with her she will wish she never contacted Zobuhle in the first place. Zozo screams in her sleep startling him. He drops the phone and rushes to her. He places her head on her lap and caress her face. The nightmares have began and that means no sleep for him.

Ade: I'm here and I'm not going anywhere. Go back to sleep.

He cooed softly still caressing her face. She nods her head and settles down before going back to sleep. He wants to take every pain away from her but he knows that wouldn't make her the woman she is today. Every person who hurt her deserve to be six feet and not breath the same air as her and will live that promise he makes this evening starting with that bitch she calls her friend. She deserves a slow painful death while she pleads and begs for her life and mercy on Zobuhle. What pissed him off it the fact that he doesn't see anything wrong with what she did. His ex wife and child are in a better place and if he loved them right they would be still here with him but on that day he found their tombstone and cried in disbelief he vowed to himself that the next woman who comes on his life he will treat her right and love her the way she should be loved. He will

protect her peace and happiness at any cost and that's he will do for this woman whose had is on his lap. He will do anything to see her smile and be happy. If it means killing people just to protect her peace so be it. He will love her until she loves him back the way it should be. It's funny how love comes from hopeless places. He had never imagined his coming from a broken woman like her. She is his mess and he will mend her back to life.

\*

\*

unedited

**ADESOLA**

A groan slips out of my lips as I feel my body being pushed out of the bed. I sigh before opening my eyes and lock mine with her burning one's. I don't know what time it is but one thing I know is that it's too early for this.

Me: You could have woken me up like normal people do instead of pushing me.

Zozo: If you were not overstepping your boundaries none of this would be happening. What the hell are you doing in my bedroom?

She yells out. Jesus Christ are women always this moody in the morning? I haven't brushed my teeth and peed yet but I'm being yelled at like a toddler who peed on his bed. Oh yes how could I forget this is how she is the day after.

Me: What time is it?

I gruffly muttered. I slept around 4am this morning. She couldn't sleep and I had to be her security guard all night.

Zozo: Why should I answer you when you haven't answered mine?

She retorts. If I don't walk out now I just know a fight will break out and I'm tired. Leaping up to my feet, I slip on my shoes and padded for the door after taking my phone out of the charger.

Zozo: (yelling) Where the hell do you think you're going?

Me: To my room.

I calmly muttered and drop my eyes to my phone to check the time. It reads 6:30am. No wonder I feel like I have been hit by a truck. I only slept for two hours and thirty minutes.

Zozo: We are still talking.

She means I'm still yelling at you.

Me: Can we pause this and reschedule it for later in the day?  
I'm tired.

Zozo: Tired yoknuka! You will stand there-

I pull the door open and walk out of the room.

Zozo: Get back in here Adesola.

She screams after me, jumping out of the bed. I open the door leading to my room and halt on my steps and she throws something on my back. Slowly turning on my heels, I find her phone on the floor. I shake my head.

Zozo: You have the nerve to walk away from me when I'm still talking to you. That's your problem with you men. You think the world revolves around you and you can do anything you want.

I close my eyes begging myself to calm down as I could feel my hands trembling.

Zozo: (screaming) You ain't shit Ade. Did you hear me? You ain't shit Adesola.

Me: If I had any energy I would be bickering with you but I don't. For the love of god Zobuhle can you please let me sleep. You kept me awake all night and I'm tired. Whatever you want to say just hold it for later. I'm begging you to just let me sleep.

She scoffs.

Zozo: You men are animals. You have no single bone in you to be begging.

She murmurs poking my forehead.

Me: Get the fuck out of my face woman before I hurt you so badly that you will not recognise yourself the next day.

I calmly muttered. She chuckles

Zozo: You think I'm scared of you? Do your worst Ade.

I exhale my breath before looking at her.

Zozo: (screaming) What are you waiting for? Should I make things easy for you and give it to you before you snatch it from me?

My eyebrows knit together. She furiously walks inside and start unbuttoning her pants.

Me: What the fuck are you doing?

Zozo: Making things easy for you.



She strips naked and lays on the carpet and widely open her thighs. I freeze on my spot while my heart skips a beat.

Zozo: What are you waiting for you animal? (screaming) Rape me.

My eyes popped out of the sockets. In that moment that's where everything dawns on me she will never feels safe on her life. Everything will always trigger her as long she keeps hourbing what she feels. She's angry at the world and hate men and I don't blame her. How does someone get an erection while someone is crying and begging underneath them?

Gulping he thick saliva that accumulated in my mouth

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I slowly move to the door with my eyes still on hers. I don't know what she will resort to but I don't want to set her off. She's a ticking time bomb waiting to explored any minute and the her first victim is me. Lord knows I have tried with her but I don't think I can anymore.

Zozo: (shouting) What are you waiting for?

I turn on my heels and stride to the door and take the key before close it behind me and lock her inside. She bangs the door as I lean on it. My throat dries out but I'm trying to grow a thick skin. This is too much for one person and I'm asking myself for how long will I subject myself to this abuse. It's been 5 years already and there's been no sign of any change.

Zozo: (screaming) Open this door you coward.

I swallow hard and slide on the door. If this really my karma for how I treated Happiness then it's a bitter pill to swallow. It's a painful one that I don't wish on my worst enemy. Tears blur my vision but I don't let the fall. I can't afford to fall apart right now. Someone needs be there for the other one between us and I'm person but how do I help someone like help. Someone who can't see that I mean no harm to her. I just want her to be okay.

Zozo: (screaming) Once I come out of this room you will know me.

She threatens still banging the door. Regardless of the situation I find myself chuckling. I doubt she will do much except for hurling me with insults.

Zozo: Open this door Adesola.

The sound of someone clearing her throat drags me out of my thoughts. I rise my head and find Mam' Eunice our maid.

Eunice: That time of the year?

I nod jumping up to my feet.

Me: I feel so useless when it comes to her. I desperately want to help her but don't know how.

Eunice: You're being too hard on yourself. Give yourself some credit for staying with her through this years. If it was someone else she/he would ave thrown her out but you didn't. Each

relationship or marriage has its own ups and down and this is yours. Don't fail the test.

Me: It's a difficult one I have ever faced in my life.

Eunice: That's why the God gives out tasks to his strongest warriors. You're a warrior in your own way. Be the the honoured crown like your name.

I chuckle.

Me: Adesola is far from being the crown honoured us. I was given the a wrong name from birth because I don't know how to honour that crown.

Eunice: Don't be too hard on yourself. It isn't too late to learn that now.

I heavily sigh.

Me: I'll try.

Eunice: That's all I ever wanted to hear. Keep trying until you get it right. There's no formula for this life thing but we keep trying until we get it right. She sees everyone as her enemy right now. Just don't give up on her.

Me: I won't.

Look at me lying through my teeth. A minute ago I was ready to give it all up. That woman drains every energy I have. It's a toxic environment to live in and too disturbing for ones mind.

Me: Please make sure she eats. I'm going to sleep.

Eunice: You do look like hell.

She teases causing me to laugh. Zozo has stopped banging on the door, I bet she's eavesdropping on our conversation because she's good at that.

Eunice: Never give up on something you want. It's difficult to wait but worse to regret my boy.

She murmurs as I turn on my heels and make my way to her bedroom. I lock the door after stumbling in and close the curtains. Kicking off my shoes, I take off my phone on my pocket and place it on the pedestal and take off my pants before I throw myself on the bed.

## ***TYSON***

Oliver: I think this will do for now.

I nod leaning back on the couch.

Me: It will take us time to get new clients and we need to clean that money as fast as we can.

Oliver: I'll look for a company or any business that needs to be saving.

Me: I only care about the end results. Whether it's a church or a hospital that needs funding.

Oliver: You do know that we can't clean the whole bag at the same time right?

I roughly run my hand on my face. It's the next morning and Swazi just left for work. The baby's mother came to fetch her this morning after knocking off and the poor child was too traumatized to even cry. She didn't cry after 'the lessons' as Swazi calls them instead she fell asleep after her outburst on her own on the couch. The wound is healing and I have removed the bandage this morning after she left. I'm no longer limping but in front of her I'm the most sick person she has come across. I don't know how long will I keep lying to her and I know she will go berserk once she finds out I was lying.

Me: That's why I'm thinking we don't relay on one business. We have to be smart so that incase the cops are on our tail that money isn't on one place. We have to have at least three of four companies on our side.

He nods and shift his eyes to the passage as my phone rings for the umpteenth time in the bedroom.

Oliver: Aren't you going to answer that?

I shake my head.

Me: I regret switching that thing on. Yvonne has been blowing my phone.

Oliver: Then switch it off.

Me: Let it ring until she gives up.



Oliver: I passed by your house this morning after dropping off shortbase. I saw Scarlet but she didn't see me. That kid doesn't look good man. I can tell she misses you.

Me: I've been thinking about her a lot lately. She deserves better than what we can give her. I don't shit about raising a baby because Yvonne parents have been doing that since from her birth but know I want to make up for lost time. I want to be a present father in her life.

Oliver: Then let's go home.

Me: Let's wait for hostesses to come back and thank her for her hospitality. We can't live while she's at work. It will be rude of us.

Oliver: And his learning people.

He teases. I snort laughing.

Me: Fuck you Oliver.

He laughs.

Oliver: Unfortunately I'm not into men but women. Sorry for you loss.

He sasses causing me to laugh harder.

Me: You're forever an idiot.

My phone rings again as he chuckles. He jumps to his feet and make his way to the bedroom.

Oliver: I'm going to switch it off. It's getting on my nervs.

I shrug and leap up to my feet and stumbled to the kitchen. Opening the fridge, I take two beers and open them before making my way back to the lounge. The door flies open just as I gulp my beer down. Incomes Swazi.

Swazi: Why do people have phones if you're not going to answer them?

She murmurs closing the door and turn to face me. I freeze on my steps while my eyes widen. The beers slips out of my hands and falls on the floor.

Swazi: I left my charger....

She halts on her stops and narrows her eyes at me. A frown settles on her beautiful face as she looks at the floor then back to me. Shit! This is not happening. Isn't she suppose to be at work?

Oliver: It's not Yvonne but Swa....

He trails off shift his eyes to me then back to her. He freezes too.

Oliver: Fuck!

Swazi: What's going on?

Words are stuck on the roof of my tongue. I'm tongue tied. She shifts her gaze to the man next to me.

Swazi: Oliver what's going on?

I gulp the thick saliva and mutter.

Me: I can explain.

Oliver: I can explain.

We say in unisons before shifting our eyes to each other with the same look plastered on our faces. We are in deep shit!

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***NARRATOR***

Placing her bag on top of the table, Swazi calmly folds her arms across her chest and taps her foot on the floor.

Swazi: I'm waiting and it better be good.

Oliver: Eish!

He stretches the back of his head nervously before shifting his eyes to his friend.

Swazi: So his the master mind of everything?

She muttered glaring daggers at Tyson who kept formulating an explaining that will not piss her off.

Tyson: It's not what you're thinking.

He blurts out. Swazi arches her brow.

Swazi: So you know what am I thinking? Are you my brain perhaps?

Tyson: Fuck! This is harder than I imagined.

He mumbles under his breath.

Oliver: Look short base we kind of got hitched up in some weird shit and you were our only hope.

Swazi: You already told me that. What I want to know is why is Tyson walking on his own and has a beer on his other hand. When I left him this morning he couldn't even lift his fingers because the pain was too much for him.

Tyson rubs his temples and exhales loudly.

Tyson: Promise me you won't be mad at me if I tell you the truth.

Swazi: Tyson stop wasting my time. From the top. I'm listening.

She snaps agitated.

Tyson: I did everything so I can get your attention.

Swazi clapped her hands once in disbelief.

Swazi: Come again.

Her ears are probably deceiving her. She didn't hear what the man said and it's best he repeats it before she can get it.

Tyson: I just wanted you to notice me and acknowledge what I told you the other day.

Swazi: So you toyed with my emotions? Here was I worried sick about you and all along you choose to do that to yourself.

With each word she spits her voice rose.

Tyson: I wasn't toying with your em....

Swazi: Shut up!

She interjects yelling at him. Oliver flinches, wishing he could be out of here. The woman was sure loud for someone whose short. Aren't short people suppose to be soft spoken and everything theirs is short? So where did she suddenly get the voice to be yelling like a demon?

Swazi: Uma ningibuka nobabili mhlawumbe niyawubona upopayi wenu eningadlala ngawo? { When you both look at me do you perhaps see your puppet that you can play with?}



Both men stare at each other tongue tied. They couldn't understand shit she was saying and she didn't give a zero fucks if they understood her or not. Her data bundles to download her English run out. And beside what will she say when she shouts at them in English? Her mother tongue will do the trick because she can't be saying this she also can't understand.

Swazi: Swazi is a puppet and you're the puppets masters let's pull her strings.

She continues scolding them.

Tyson: It's not like that I just wanted you to notice me.

She scoffs.

Swazi: Why would I even notice you? Are you Eldris Alba perhaps or K.O? You're not even near close to my crushes so why should I bother myself about you?

Tyson gulped as her words stings. This is the second time she rejects him and the pain is worse than before. She's seeing people on TV but doesn't see him.

Oliver: Short base he did everything because he loves you. Him being shot was all part of the plan and....

Swazi: (shocked) What? He did what?

Oliver: Shit!

He turns his eyes to his friend.

Oliver: It slipped out. I forgot she wasn't suppose to know.

Swazi chuckled bitterly while Tyson wanted to throw Oliver on the window. How could he slip out like that? His mouth is like a running diarrhea.

Swazi: Ningijwayela amasimba nina. You're sick in the head.  
Who does that?

She throws her hands in the air dramatically. What did she get herself into?

Tyson: I'm sorry.

Swazi: You're sorry? Will sorry stop me from being traumatized?

She shifted her eyes to Oliver.

Swazi: You stood there and watched me go through his stomach with my shaky hands; looking for a bullet that could rupture his spinal cord and all along it was all an act.

Oliver: I also didn't know until the last minute it happened. I only found out when we were love living with you.

She chuckled.

Swazi: Is that suppose to make feel better? For all I know you both conspired against me. I can't even look at your faces right now. Pack your shit and get the hell out of my mother's house.

Tyson padded towards her and gripped her hands.

Tyson: Just hear me out.

Swazi: I don't want to hear anything from your rotten mouth. You're sick and you desperately need help. Let go of my hand.

She clicked her tongue and yanked her hands off him. His mere sight repulses her. She hates lies and people who spew them. They make her sick to the pit of her stomach.

Oliver: Swazi just give him a chance to explain himself. He really loves you.

Swazi: How many times must I tell you I don't want to hear anything coming from you guys. I'm going to the bathroom right now and when I come out of there I better find my living liars and criminal free.

She pushed Tyson aside and marched to the bathroom to pee. Tyson heavily sigh.

Tyson: Did you see the look on her face?

Oliver: I told you this plan of yours is stupid. I knew it wouldn't work.

Tyson: This is not the time to say I told you so Oliver.

Oliver chuckled.

Oliver: What do you want me to say? I did tell you so but you didn't listen. You said your plan was solid proof and there's no way she can find out about it but look where we are now.

Tyson: Fuck! I know. I know.

He lowered himself on the couch with so emotions going through his mind. He couldn't even focus on one emotion at a time because they were all over the place. He raised his hands and buried his face on them.

Tyson: How do I make her understand that I did everything for her. Man I love that woman and she doesn't get it. Everything I say she doesn't take me seriously. I tried raising this topic when I woke up weeks back but she brushed me off and told me to focus on healing and that was the end of it. I just wish she could see herself in my eyes and see the truth hiding behind my skin and heart. I wish she could peel off my skin and search for my soul so she can find the truth she will only understand. I don't know whether she's in denial or choosing to ignore my advances on purpose or she didn't see things from the way I see them.

He heavily sigh.

Tyson: I fuck hate feeling like this. I hate being helpless and useless when to it comes to things. I don't know how to approach this matter anymore. I've tried every trick in the book but she still doesn't give me her time of the day. I know I shouldn't have done what I did but I was desperate and desperate times always calls for desperate measure.

Swazi: And I'm also calling for desperate measure.

They jumped to their feet startled. They didn't hear the bathroom door opening and they definitely didn't hear her footstep approach them.

Swazi: I gave you time to pack you bags but you didn't. Your time is up.

Tyson: I'm not living here without you hearing me out first.

Swazi: You're not living?

Tyson: I'm not.

He lowered himself back on the couch. Swazi chuckles nodding before turning on her heel and marched to the kitchen. She pulled out the kettle from the plug and walks back to the living room with it. Oliver eyes widen as he jumps to his feet. His heart skipped a beat as he looked at his friend who had his face buried on his hands.

Oliver: Tyson let's go man.

Tyson: No! If you want to live you can go but I'll stay and try to convince her that I meant no harm.

Swazi opened the kettle and raised towards Tyson's direction. Oliver screamed gripping his hand and pulled him to the door with him. He open the door and drags him out but the man is confused by his action.

Tyson: The fuck are you doing?



Oliver indicates with his head that she's behind him. His eyes widen while his heart picks up speed. Slowly turning on his heels, he finds Swazi with the open kettle. She aims it on his direction causing him to push Oliver on his way trying to escape the hot water. Swazi stifles a giggle and tries to maintain a straight face.

Swazi: I told you to live.

Oliver: Please put the kettle down before you hurt someone. We were going to live.

She scoffed.

Tyson: Really? Couldn't we sit down and talk about this like two normal adults?

Swazi: There's nothing normal about you. You should have thought about that when you kept lying to my face. Where did you think you will end up with your lies? Me running to the sunset with you?

Tyson: (sighing) That's what imagining.

Swazi: Then you're more delusional than I thought.

Tyson run his palms on his face irritated. He was tired of begging her. His been begging this woman for weeks and did something as stupid as hiring a sniper to shoot him just to get her attention and she still wasn't budging. Does she know how many women who will like to be in her position right now?

Tyson: What do you want me to say? I've apologized already. Do you want me to slaughter a cow and call the whole neighborhood?

Swazi: You have a nerve to even say that. Who do you think you're?

Tyson: I'm Tyson Jones. I don't beg women for my attention but they do.

He retorts. Swazi snorted.

Swazi: Yet you were seeking for mine.

She claps back.

Tyson: You should consider yourself lucky that I choose you in all the women in this province.

He snapped.

Swazi: Cry me a river, Tyson. Maybe I should be the one who slaughter that cow and call the whole neighborhood so they can see a black woman like me was lucky enough to be picked up from all the women in the province by a white guy like you. Don't make any mistake and think you're all that. There's nothing special about you. You're just a sadists who preys on young women like me.

She snapped back matching his voice. Oliver whose tongue tied kept whipping his head from Tyson to Swazi each time the

He speaks. Wasn't Tyson suppose to be begging her and not exchange words with her? He mentally shakes his head. Not all women are like Yvonne and that doesn't get through his head. He has continuously told him that but it gets in from the left ear and exit on the right ear.

Swazi: Who the hell do you think you're? I did you a favor by not report you to the police and this the kind of thanks I get? I thought that was black people's disease but clearly I was wrong. A plate full of spectrum is what I get from you white people. This is not 67's were you were ruling over us. If you can get any women out there quickly live my home and go find her.

Tyson: How much?

A frown settled on Swazi's face while Oliver shook his head disappointedly.

Swazi: (scowling) Excuse me?

Tyson: How much will it take for you to be mine? Name your price I know no women can resist money because that's what you guys love right? A rich husband man whose loade...

He didn't get to finish his sentence as Swazi pours the water on the kettle on his face. He screams.

Swazi: What do you think I am? A prostitute maybe?

Tyson: What the fuck?

Swazi: Try Hillbrow or Jo'burg CBD. Next time it won't be cold water but hot

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boiled one you jerk.

She clicked her tongue and moved back before she slammed the door on his face, leaving him shocked to the core. No women had the guts to pour him with water and speak to him like that. The dwarf surely has some balls and he has give that to her.

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Hanging the dress on her closet after ironing it, Yvonne switched off the iron and took it from the plug. She folded the ironing board and placed it behind the door. This has been her stress reliever and it took her mind off of many things. She didn't know why didn't she try it before because it was therapic. The maid did the laundry yesterday and she suggested her to do the ironing since she was lashing out more on everyone. She's trying to keep it together for her daughter but she was failing dismally. Little Scarlett has been avoiding her mother and whenever they are in a room together she quickly skips to the other so she doesn't shout at her or lash out. The poor kid was having a difficult time to be her normal self. She wished her grandmother was on the same country as her. She would have runned away from home to her place because her mother scared her to death.

The sound of the gate opening and a car driving in drags Yvonne out of her thoughts. She frowns and makes her way

downstairs to investigate. She quickly picked up her pace, descending the stairs when her ears picked up voices.

Scarlet: Daddy.

She runs to Tyson and throws herself on his arms. He picks her up and spins her around causing her to giggle.

Tyson: Hey princess.

Scarlet: Where were you? I missed you.

She sadly muttered burying her face on the crook of his neck. Tyson kissed her head.

Tyson: Daddy had work to attend to.

Yvonne scoffed causing Tyson to shift his eyes at her. She dropped her eyes and he glared at her.

Tyson: Baby why don't you go with uncle Oliver. He will buy you ice cream.

Scarlet eyes lit up.

Scarlet: Like an ice cream date?

Both men chuckled.

Oliver: Anything the princess wants, the princess gets it.

Scarlet: You won't leave right?

Tyson: No baby you will find daddy here waiting for you.

She planted a kiss on his cheek before jumping out of his arms and rush to Oliver. He picks her up and the walk out leaving the two alone. As soon the doors shuts Yvonne starts yelling.



Yvonne: Where the hell have you been?

Tyson: You don't have any right to ask me that because you're not my wife.

He calmly muttered and skipped the room. Yvonne clicked her tongue and followed him.

Yvonne: You've been with her right?

Tyson: Like I said I don't answer to you.

He ascended the stairs while she's hot on his tail.

Yvonne: You can't even respect me enough and tell me a lie. Do you know how worried I've been. I thought you were dead or something.

She yelled out throwing her hands in the air dramatically.

Tyson: That would have been a great thing don't you think? You get to inherit everything after I pass on so you can continue with your ridiculous parties and never ending shopping spree? Dying isn't my style Yvonne I thought you knew that.

He mused causing the woman's nostrils to flare.

Yvonne: Is that all you care about? What about your daughter? She spent night waiting for her father to return but you didn't.

Tyson: I'm sure you mad an excuse on my behalf. That's what you're good at.

He muttered dismissively throwing the door leading to the bathroom open. He padded to the closet and takes out his clothes.

Yvonne: What are you doing?

Tyson: What I should have done a long time ago.

Her heart pounded in her ribcage.

Yvonne: I don't understand.

Tyson: In simple words I'm moving out. You will keep the house and the car you have. My lawyer will call you during the day regarding joint custody of our daughter.

Tears welled in her eyes.

Yvonne: (breaking voice) Tyson please don't do this.

He ignored her and continued taking out his clothes. The whole Swazi saga taught him one thing. He needs to close one door before he opens another one. He can't drag Swazi in this mess and the woman showed him earlier on she won't tolerate such nonsense.

Yvonne: Please don't break up with me.

She kneeled in front of him crying. He heavily sigh and joined her on the floor.

Tyson: You're a wonderful woman Yvonne and any guy will be lucky to have you.

Yvonne shook her head crying.

Yvonne: I don't want any guy but you.

Tyson: I'm not the right guy for you. I'm in love with someone else and I'm setting you free to find that someone who will love you back the way you deserve.

Yvonne: I'll stop being a nuisance and I will stop nagging but please don't live me.

She cupped his face.

Yvonne: I'll change baby and do everything you want. I love you.

He shook his head.

Tyson: You only love the things I have not me.

Yvonne: I'll change just give me one more chance. I swear to God I will change.

Tyson: I wouldn't make any difference even if you change because I won't love you like I love her.

Yvonne: (crying) You're breaking my heart Tyson. What am I suppose to do without you?

Tyson: Go back to school or start a business, anything. Calling off our engagement is not something I thought off over night. It has been on my mind for a while now but didn't have any reason to act on it. Now I do. I'm sorry.

Yvonne: Is sorry suppose to unbreak it and uncry my tears I shed so many nights because of you? (yelling and crying) Is it?

Tyson gulped and jumps to his feet. She furiously wiped her tears with the back of her hand and also jumped to her feet.

Yvonne: No bitch will raise my daughter while I'm still alive. You will not play happy family with my child.

Tyson heavily sighed.

Tyson: The hard way it is then.

He stumbled to the door and walked out on her screaming and swearing at him. He did try to be civil with her but she chose to be stubborn. She made her bed and she will lie on it.

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***MONTHS LATER******NOMASWAZI***

I grind my teeth and pull my pillow under my head and place it on my ears as the music shakes my bedroom window. It's the wee hours of the morning and my neighbour have been blasting music since yesterday afternoon. I'm sure the whole neighborhood knows by nows that it's her pay day. This woman is lowkey subjecting us especially me to torture. It's a weekend and I want to sleep but I can't even close my eyes because of how loud her music is. She's selfish for not thinking about anyone but herself. She doesn't live alone in this neighborhood so why is she being like this. If my parents were not in their room I would have probably moved there to sleep but they came back a week after I chased those two criminals away. My mother has been smothering me since and I'm enjoying every single minute of it. Apparently one of my father's child who was missing was not missing at all. The girl found out that the father she knew her whole life was not her father. She was

eavesdropping on a conversation her mother was having with her aunt when she heard that and decided then and there to go on a trip to look for her father. I wish my mother would also slip out like here's one day so I can know where I come from. I don't have daddy issues or anything because my stepfather has been filling that void from day one but I don't want to mistakenly date my brother or cousin in future because of not knowing my real surname.

I'm tossing and turning on the bed trying to shut out the loud music but sleep doesn't visit me. The speaker is loud and judging by the repeat of sound she's kak drunk. This is her monthly routine. When it's the 15th of the month we just know we won't be sleeping because she will be hosting a party for her friends and they will drink until the next day. Funny enough is that she will curse and swear at everyone in the when the alcohol reaches certain places in her brain. She will tell them how useless they are and they are drinking her money and that will result to her being beaten up by her friends and she will call the police on them and they will be arrested. When her mind becomes sober she drops the charges and apologize to her friends before they start drinking and beating each other up again. Sigh! I don't know whether she knows the whole purpose of the police station or what but she has turned it to



her circus. I'm sure the poor police officers are tired of seeing her and her friends. That woman makes their job difficult.

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The knock on the door jolts me up from my sleep.

Ma: Nomaswazi.

Me: Ma?

Ma: It's 10:30 and we are going to be late for church.

I thrash around the bed wanting to throw her out of the window for waking me up. I don't know what time I slept yesterday but I know the sun was already peaking through the curtains when I finally closed my eyes. I ended up facing the roof and singing the song until I couldn't.

Me: Ungibeke.

Ma: Vuka.

I scrunch up my nose and throw my head on the pillow and thrash around.

Ma: Swazi.

Lord have mercy upon my soul.

Me: I'm up ma.

Ma: Good! I ironed your uniform. Get up and take a bathe.

I feel like crying as I drag my auto pilot Zombie self out of the bed. This woman is damn serious about this and I know she won't leave me alone. I have been skipping church when she was not around and made excuses about the bakery but now since she's here I have no escape route. I open the door and find her waiting for me.

Ma: Stop dragging your feet and hurry up. I don't want to be late.

Me: I will follow you.

Ma: Not happening. Sheshisa.

My shoulder sag as I make my way to the bathroom. I walk in and close the door behind me. My reflection staring back at me on the mirror shows how tired I am. I sigh and move at a snail pace hoping she will just live me behind. My hair is a mess and I had a plan of going to the salon and relaxing it after I woke up. The straight back I had left with my most of my hair at the front. Now I'll be forced to make a huge ridiculous hairline just to hide that.

Ma: Swazi.

She yells on the other side of the door. Jesus Christ come take your child now.

Me: I'm quarterly finished ma.

I yell back draining the tub.

Ma: Shesha bo. It's ten too now.

Me: I'm almost done. Why don't you li...

Ma: Ngizoksakaza ngempama uma ngikuzwa ukhuluma lokho. {I will slap you if I hear you say that.}

She threatens opening the door and stumble in.

Ma: Le dimoni likungenile aliphume.

I resist the urge to snort as I clean the tub. She stands there and place and on her hands on her waist, waiting for me. She cannot be serious right now. It's not like I have anyway to

escape too. She's hot on my heels as I make my way back to my room. I stifle a giggle as I find my bed already made. Her phone rings just I wipe myself.

Ma: We are on our way.

She mutters before ending the call.

Ma: That was your father asking our whereabouts. I have no choice but to leave you behind.

My lips curve into a smile.

Me: I'm right behind you.

I cheerfully muttered and wait for her to step out of the room. As soon as I hear the gate outside closing, I bolt to the front door and lock it before I run back to my room and fix my pillow before throwing myself on top of the bed. Jesus will understand that missing church means I have little situation I need to deal with. I have been to church my whole life surely he can't punish

me for this. He's been staring at me above the ceiling, hearing my neighbour torment me with that loud music the whole night and he did nothing. He helps those who help themselves and I'm doing exactly that.

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Voice: Swazi.

Me: Mmmh!

Voice: Wake up.

I shake my head and open my mouth ready to snore but the person violently shakes my shoulder. I have had enough of people trying to keep me away from my slumber. Who did I wrong this morning?

Me: Yini? {What?}

I snap flipping my eyes open. The first thing the set on is my best friend wearing a blue and white uniform. I furrow my eyebrow and shift my gaze to my surroundings.

Me: (yawning) What are you doing here?

Lihle: Noma asked me to fetch you. You're an hour late.

I latch on my lip while my furrow deepens.

Me: Late for what?

I mumble stretching my stiff muscles.

Lihle: (giggling) For church you dummy.

My eye popped out their sockets before I jump out of bed.

Me: Shit! How was Noma when you left?

She giggles.

Lihle: Pretty much pissed. You can feel the fury raiding from her from afar.

I'm running around like a headless chicken trying to locate my uniform.

Me: Have you seen my uniform?

I mentally scold myself. How will she know where it is because she doesn't stay here.

Lihle: Living room on the couch.

I rush there and pick it up before running back. I throw it on without lotioning.



Me: Don't look at me like that because if I start counting the number of times you wore your clothes without lotioning your skin I will lost count.

She laughs raising her hands in surrender. She glares at me as I place the doek on my head and try to tie it. Slipping on my flip-flops, my heels look ashy and dry but I don't care because I will be barefooted the whole service.

Lihle: At least comb your hair.

Me: I'm not going to a fashion show but church. Who will know I didn't comb my hair? It's not like they will take off the doek and see what's beneath it. Asambe.

I pick up my phone from the pedestal and throw it against the wall when I find missed calls from Tyson. The man doesn't know how to give up and his irritating me. If his not on the bakery every day his blowing up my phone. I thought I made it clear the last time I saw him which was on Friday that I want nothing to do with him. He comes and goes in the bakery every

single day and sometimes lives a big fat tip for the baker who made scrumptious cakes

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muffins and cupcakes which is me. I know his trying to soften me up but I will never give that man the time of the day. My mother enjoys his company because of the money he throws around. If she only knew the reason his our regular customer is because of me she wouldn't be smiling at him like that like his her long lost son.

Lihle: Haibo dade aren't you going to lock up?

Me: You have my mother's keys lock the door.

I mutter walking to the gate. She laughs shaking her head and locks the door then stumble towards me.

Lihle: You've been distancing yourself lately what's going on?

I knew this conversion was going to come out any day. Ignoring her meant I won't be dealing with her and her relationship

issues. Sometimes I feel like a third party on their relationship because she involves me in everything. If they are fighting she will expect me to be the mediator and if they are happy she will expect me to understand that whatever the fight was it's water under the bridge while I'm still stuck on the hating part. She involves me in everything and I got tired of always being the villain who comes to her rescue when she needs it for her to go back there. I don't know why doesn't she become single like me. Single life is the best because I don't have to worry about offending any one's feelings and dealing with the problems of umjolo. I'm having the time of my life in singleville and I don't want anyone disrupting that.

Me: I assume since it's exam time I should give you the space to study.

I lying through my teeth. She cracks a smile.

Lihle: Ain't you the sweetest.

I fake a smile nodding.

Me: So what have I been missing? What's up?

I divert the conversation away from me. I hate being on the spotlight. We pick up our pace as we see my mother waiting for us outside the church.

Me: That look means she will have me for dinner.

She giggles.

Lihle: Thulani dropped a bombshell on me recently.

I shouldn't have asked but would be mean of me.

Me: Ngiyaxolisa.

I mumble to my mother. She clicks her tongue and slip of her shoes and walk inside the church. We follow suit.

Me: What did he say?

I whisper to her.

Lihle: He said he has a calling.

I stop dead on my tracks and frown at her.

Me: Huh?

Lihle: A calling Swazi.

Me: I heard that but what kind of calling is it? Whose calling him?

She bites her lips to stifle her laughter as we walk further in the church. The members are singing and doing Iskhalanga in the front. The flames of the white candle are not settled due to the wind of their movement.

Lihle: The ancestral kind of calling.

My jaw drops to the floor?

Me: You mean he has abaphansi, abaphezulu, abaphakathi nabasecaleni?

She nods laughing. Clap one, I arrest my case. No wonder I didn't like him. He can see beyond me and he can see my lazy ancestors.

Me: When did he discover that?

Lihle: It's a recent thing but he has always known that.

I clap again gaining the attention of the people around. My mother gives me the evil eye. I shift my eyes to the front and start singing. The songs dies down as runners of Iskhalanga kneel on the floor and we follow suit, bowing our heads. The

prayer starts and for once in my life I'm not listening to people asking God to bless them with cars and wives while others are asking for husband's. I used to laugh at their prayers because God had important request to attend too not their silly ones until my mother saw me one day and she yelled at me through the whole journey back home. My prayers are always short because I'm not trying to outshine everyone like Mam'Rose. That woman can pray and sometimes the pastor has to chirp in and cut her short. She prays like she's seeing the heaven gate opening for her and God is peaking through the clouds calling to her. Like right now she's crying while praying and if someone doesn't start a song right now we will be forced to listen to her until she has enough.

Voice: Swazi.

I knew Satan was on earth. Who could be disturbing me when I'm having a one on one conversion with God without being silly.

Voice: Nomaswazi.

I flip my eyes open and search for the voice. Someone lightly taps my thigh. I shift my head to the side and find Noma kneeling next to me. When did she get here?

Ma: Khipha ingoma.

She murmurs through gritted teeth whispering. Haibo ngivelelwe yini na?

Me: Ma?

I whisper back.

Ma: Khipha ingoma.

This woman knows I'm not a solo artist like her. I don't have her beautiful voice so why she is embarrassing me like this? She knows I'm a backup singer and I have been one my whole life.

Ma: Khipha ingoma wena.



She smacks my head. My brain sends a message to my mouth and the songs slips out of my lips. There's only one song that comes to mind and it's.

Me: (yelling) Sister Bettina

The whole church gasp while Mam'Rose finally cease with the crying. Sister Bettina has been blasting through the speakers of Keletso the whole night so they should know it's in stored in my head. It's been on repeat and I sang it until I fell asleep. They should cut me some slack because I didn't do it on purpose. My window is close to her stop nonsense and I can hear everything happening on the other side.

Ma: Awu nkosi yami idimoni lidlala ngengani yami.

She cries out next to me. Lihle is dead with laughter on my right hand side while the whole congregation are looking at me like I'm those Jews that killed Jesus on the cross.

Ma: May the church please prayer for us. Demons have taken over my daughter making her to sing such demonic songs.

She shifts her eyes to the pastors and continues to weep. I thought that's Mam'Rose's job.

Ma: Pray for me my pastor's. My only child is being used by MaNdlovu's pets. I knew it when I saw her this morning dragging her feet that it wasn't my Swazi. My daughter wouldn't have tried to escape church.

Haibo this woman! How can she throw me under the bus like this? Isn't she suppose to shield me because she gave me life? I'll rather trust a rock than Nomathemba. There's a reason I was late today. The lord didn't wanted me to come to church.

**YVONNE**

It's been months since he walked out on me and broke our engagement. I thought by now he would have come back and tell me he wasn't thinking straight but those not the case. He moved out to a penthouse I didn't even know he owns. I'm starting to wonder what else was he hiding from me if he could such information from me his fiancée. The whole break up didn't sit well with me. I've been crying and drinking myself to oblivion and if I'm sober I'm on the move stalking him. I want to know whose the skank that replaced me. He can't move on with his life and be happy while I'm miserable. He broke me to the core when he left me and it's hard to pick back the pieces and mend myself back together. Hearing him say I should go back to school was just a slap in the face. A whole insult. I'm too old to be going back to school and mingle and rub shoulders with the democracy children. The image alone makes me cringe everytime it crosses my mind. He promised me the good life and that's what he will give me. He can't live me after I gave up everything just be with him and also gave him a child. Which men in his brain does he think will want me after hearing I have a child? My thoughts are disturbed by the heavy

footsteps approaching the living room. I have been deep in my thoughts that I didn't hear the gate opening and the car driving in.

Scarlet: (smiling) Mommy.

I jump to my feet and open my arms wide for her. She drops everything she had on the floor and run to my embrace. Tears fill my eyes. I haven't seen my child in weeks because I wasn't in a state to be around her.

Me: Hey sweetheart.

Tyson: Yvonne.

I nod at him and fix my undivided attention on my baby.

Tyson: You're drunk.

He spits.

Me: Don't act like you care.

I snap at him. He arches his brow.

Tyson: Princess why don't you take your stuff upstairs. Mommy and I have to talk.

She breaks free from my embrace and picks up her things before running to the stairs.

Tyson: No running Scarlett.

Scarlet: Yes daddy.

We watch her disappear before he fixes his gaze back to me.

Tyson: Don't you ever speak to me like that especially in front of my daughter.

He firmly muttered. I snort rolling my eyes and drag my feet to the kitchen after picking up my glass of wine and pour myself another one. His hot on my heels.

Me: You don't get to tell me what to do after you broke our engagement. How can you be selfish?

Tyson: I'm the one whose selfish?

He enquirers furrowing his eyebrows.

Me: Yes you're.

I scream at him before taking a sip of my wine. I burp and point an accusing finger at him.

Me: You're selfish for living your best life after you promised me heaven and earth. You're selfish for wanting to move on with someone whose not me after everything I've done for you.

I endured had labor pains because of your baby and that still counts as nothing this you. Do you know how hard that is?

Tyson: I never asked you to do any of those things.

I gasped shocked while tears discard my eyes. I chuckle bitterly and wipe them with the back of my hand then gown the remaining contents in my glass and fill it up again.

Me: Did I ever meant anything to you? Surely there's a piece of your heart that still beats for me.

Tyson: That's the thing Yvonne, it never skipped a beat around you

He turns on his heels and walks out of the room.

Tyson: I'm taking my daughter with me.

I pick up the bottle of wine and rush to him.

Me: You're not taking my child away. She just got here and I haven't seen her in weeks.

Tyson: Whose fault is it?

He calmly muttered slipping his hands in pockets. I bite my quivering lip and drink straight from the bottle.

Tyson: Scarlet take your stuff we are going.

He yells standing on the stairs.

Me: Why are you doing this? Can't you see that you're hurting me. This me your Yvonne. The mother of your child.

Tyson: I'm aware of that but I can't subject myself to stay with someone I don't love.



Me: But I love you.

I blurt out crying.

Me: I love you so much and it hurts. Please let's sort out our differences and put everything behind us so we can start afresh. Please my love.

I plead stumbling towards him and stand on tip toes and attack him with a kiss. He scrunch up his nose and pushes me off him.

Tyson: What the hell are you doing?

Me: Rekindling our love.

I place the bottle on the stairs and drops to my knees.

Me: Make me forget please. Use me anyhow you want.

I seductively muttered rising my hands to his belt. He yanks my hands off him with a disgust look plastered on his face.

Me: (crying) Please just make the pain disappear.

He shakes his head and ascend the stairs. I burst into tears.

Me: If you don't love me I again it's fine because I still love you. I will hotspot you with my own love so we can be together again.

I yell after him. He ignores me and marches to Scarlets bedroom. A few minutes later they walk out with her bags again. Scarlet sadly looks at me.

Tyson: Mommy is not okay princess. We will visit her some other time.

Tears stream down her small cheeks causing mine to also fall. She bends down on front of me and engulf me in her embrace and whisper.

Scarlet: I love you mommy.

Me: I love you too baby.

I whisper back and plant a kiss on her cheek. Tyson grips her hand and they padded to the door. I bring my knees up and bury my face on them and just cry.

### ***NOMASWAZI***

Here am I kneeling in front of the white candle while my dramatic mother is next to me and the pastors are on top of our heads praying for us. I'm tempted to open one eye and peak just to see everyone's facial expression. I'm not deep connect to my spiritual self and that is why I'm not settling in church. If I had a deep connection I know I would be rolling on the floor crying while praying. My mother expects me to be just like her because she can connect to God through her singing

while Lihle connects with him through praying. We are not the same as people and God himself knows that. I believe he knows how we both connect to each other but I just haven't found that connection yet. One of the pastors start grunting causing me to flip my eyes open. He walks around the members and picks up the match box before he set it alight and throw three burning sticks in his mouth. He grunts and growls again but he doesn't stop with the game of throwing stick in his mouth. I'm watching in fascination instead of closing my eyes and praying. I sometimes wonder how does having idlozi in you feel. I know if I had one all my great grandchildren and grandchildren would be rich by now. I would have been that working ancestor and not demand anything from them. I sometimes just ask myself if they do have a brain where they lie because they make ridiculous demands and they know they left you not working. I just hope the only ancestor who will visit me is my mother because if any from my paternal home comes forward I will straight tell them I don't know your son and I also don't know him or her the ancestor so he/she go to someone who knows them. It's not that I don't believe in them but they also expect too much from us.

My little debate is cut short when I feel a hand gripping my shoulders. I rise to my feet when I see pastor Isaac standing in

front of me growling and grunting. My eyes are already suching an escape route. I was so deep in my head that I didn't hear his dlozi waking up.

Isaac: Itibopho!

He exclaims and place his shoulder. He starts spinning me around. He hold my shoulders for balance and keeps spinning me around. I latch my lip filling myself getting dizzy. He grunts and continues to spin me around. I'm dragging my feet trying to maintain my balance. He raise his hand and smack hand on my stomach. I whimper softly. Was he suppose to smack me that hard? Imagine if I had something before coming to church I would have been emptying everything on the floor right now. He shake my shoulders and spins me around again

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growling.

My cheeks are bouncing on the own on my face. He makes a sound like crying person and move to smack my shoulders. My arms automatically rise to block the slap. He ignores me and moves to shake me. I'm moving back and forth like autumn

wind on the trees. If it was any other day I would have been laughing my ass off but I can attest to that it's not funny. My eyes move around the room searching for someone whose laughing. I glare at Lihle who stifle her laughter. What is she laughing at? Our friendship is over. I'm not going to have another Judas Iscariot in my corner. Noma did that earlier on and she was my only hope.

The slaps are getting too much for me. I'm blocking them dropping to my knees but the man doesn't stop. He goes down with me and slap my back. I'm whimpering like a dying dog and bringing my chest to his face. Where is the gate master so he can take me straight to hell for bringing my boobs on his face? Haibo is he blind or what? He ignores my advances and goes straight for my head. The doek flies out of my head before I can comprehend what's going. I shrink my head to my shoulders and kneels on the floor trying to locate my doek. I spot far away from us and I crawl to it, knocking off the candle in the process. He moves with me slapping my back and I'm blocking my head with my hands so that people cannot see the tsunami in my head. Just as I was about to grab it someone kicks it to the other side forcing me to move in that direction. I thought the man would have seen the pandemic I'm in but he hasn't stopped smacking my back. Everywhere I go he moves with me

like a magnet. The doek move again but this time to the door. I bet they are kicking it on purpose as they run away from us. I give up and just sit on floor and block my face. Lihle is laughing her ass off. He grunts and stops slapping me and moves to target his next victim. I shift my gaze to Lihle.

Me: My doek.

The bitch can't hear anything because she's laughing. The laughter dies in her mouth as she becomes the next victim. I grin shifting my undivided attention on them. It's my turn to laugh now. He slaps her on her back causing her to kneel. The slaps keeps flying and I'm laughing my ass off as she rolls on the floor like a snake. Her doek also comes out reminding me why I was on the floor on the first place. Just as I try to navigate my way on the floor trying to locate it, I feel a hand on gripping me on my shoulders. It's pastor Isaac again. He helps me up to my feet and starts the process all over again. I'm blocking the slaps and search for an escape route this time. I'm tired of being subjected to the GBV and suffering in silence.

Me: Iyoooh! Inwele zami.

I cry out. I should have listened to Lihle when she adviced me to comb my hair. Throw me in a river full of crocodiles so they can feast on me. I'm never coming back to church again. They have embarrassed me enough.

18

TYSON

Spending time with my daughter has become my favorite thing to do. Little Miss Jones has me wrapped up on her little finger and she's not aware of that. She palms her forehead and shakes her head.

Scarlet: No daddy that piece doesn't go there.

She scowls me and snatches it from my grip. We are playing puzzles and Miss Jones thinks she's miss know it all.

Me: Oh I thought that was the pig.

She giggles.

Scarlet: It's a duck daddy.



I chuckle as she picks up another piece.

Me: What is that?

Scarlet: It's an elephant.

My heart swirled with pride knowing I birthed the country next genius.

Me: Hungry?

She nods. I leap up to my feet and make my way to the kitchen. I open the fridge and take out ingredients to make a sandwich. She makes her way to the kitchen and drags the barstool.

Scarlet: Need help?

I throw my head back and roar with laughter.

Me: Where did you hear that?

Scarlet: Auntie Nancy always asks grandma that.

I smile shaking my head and place everything back on the fridge before I take out meat and put in the microwave to defrost.

Me: How about you become my assistant.

Her eyes lit up.

Scarlet: As an assistant chief?

I grin nodding and make my way to the door. I pull out the aprons and make my way back to her. I bend down and adjust it around her before I tie it tightly so it can fit her. I throw my own on and open the tap so we can wash our hands.

Scarlet: Daddy can you please take a picture. I want to show mommy that I can cook too.

Her voice is laced with sadness. I nod and take out my phone. I sigh disappointedly when I find no missed calls or text messages from Swazi. That woman is driving me to the brink of my own psychiatric ward. I fire her a text.

\*\*\*\*Me: Give me one short to prove myself.\*\*\*

I wait for the response but it doesn't come.

Scarlet: Daddy.

I rise my eyes to her.

Me: Sorry princess something took over daddy's mind. Are you ready?

She nods and place her hands on her waist posing. I chuckle. I got my hands full on this little diva. The sound of someone clapping her hands diverts my attention from my daughter to the intruder.

Yvonne: How nice.

She slurs on her words leaning on the door frame, drunk as fuck. I place my phone on top the counter and shift my gaze to Scarlet.

Me: Baby why don't you pick up the puzzle pieces and go to your room. We will continue cooking after mommy has left.

Yvonne: I'm not going anywhere. I thought I wouldn't know where you live?

She chuckles.

Yvonne: Who doesn't know Tyson Jones these days?

She murmurs stumbling in. She trips on her own two feet and falls on the floor.

Scarlet: Mommy?

She runs to her aid and wraps her hands around her. Yvonne yanks her tiny hands from her and pushes her away. She cries out when her back hits the counter before she falls. I clench my jaws and rush to her side. Tears stream down her tiny face causing my blood to boil.

Yvonne: Don't touch me you traitor. I gave birth to you not him. How can you choose him over me?

She slurs on her words raising up to her feet. I pick Scarlet up and make my way to her room. Placing her on top of the bed, I untie the apron and wipe the tears from her eyes.

Me: I'm sorry. Mommy is not well princess.

Scarlet: Please don't make me live with her. I don't want to.

She throws herself on my arms. I frown.

Me: Has she done this before while I was away?

She nod sniffing.

Scarlet: She used to snap at me and apologize later on.

My nostrils flare while my hands tremble.

Me: Take a nap baby. Daddy is rushing to the pharmacy to get you an ointment for your back.

I place a kiss on her cheek and storm out of the room. I find Yvonne puking on my kitchen. I scrunch my nose in disgust and navigate my way to my phone. He picks the call on the second ring.

Me: Come watch Scarlet for me. I have something to take off.

Oliver: Rogue that.

I slip the phone in my pocket and stride to the bitch. I grip her hair and drag her to the garage after taking the keys. She screams, thrashing around but I ignore her.

Yvonne: You're hurting me Tyson.

She tries to yank my hand from her hair but I grip harder and open the backseat and throw her in before jogging to my side and lock the doors.

Yvonne: Let me out.

She screams banging the door and window. I ignore her. Just as I open the garage, Oliver drives in and parks the car across the street. I honk and speed off while he drives in.

Yvonne: Where are you taking me?

I switch on the radio and rise the volume to shut her out. She bites her quivering lip and starts crying. Oh she better save those tears because she will need them. By the time I'm done with her she will think twice of hurting my daughter. No one messes with my child. She should have not intruded us.

ZOBUHLE

It's been hours sitting in this office and the woman doesn't give up. She's so nosy and annoys me to the core. I don't know why she chose to be poking her nose in people's business as a career. She drags her sigh before picking up the remote and adjust the aircon.

Therapist: Isn't there anything you want to share with me?

I shake my and fix my gaze on her.



Therapist: You know you're making my job difficult if you sit there without saying a word.

I lean back on the chair and ignore her as the cool hair from the aircon. It's 33° outside and I become lazy when it's hot. I don't know what she expects me to say differently from our last session. I've shared all I need to share.

Therapist: You know you're not the only affected by this. They're people around you who also get affected by this.

I snort rolling my eyes. She's been preaching that since the first time we started with this sessions.

Therapist: Your attitude says you don't care about the others around you. You know Zozo I'm picking up this nice bubbly woman from you but you're hiding her away. I get it experience shapes us to be who we are now but don't you think you've built enough walls around you? How are we suppose to break them down if you keep building another layers on top of those one's that are already there?

I drop my eyes fiddling with my fingers. It's not that I don't want to talk but the fear of the unknown has placed me on mute. I don't trust anyone after what happened to me and opening up to someone else is hard. I forgot who am I before everything. I forgot how the sound of my own laughter is like. My voice without yelling or snapping at anyone sounds like. I forgot how being happy feels like. I'm always angry at the anger sometimes overpowers my better judgement.

Therapist: Not everyone is out to hurt you. There are genuine people who loves you. Who wish to see you smile and engage yourself in a conversation with them. Sitting here everyday and staring at me won't change anything. I will keep asking you questions even though you don't want to talk because at the end of the day it's my job to do so. I'm going to give you a simple task when you arrive at home. Just smile and greet everyone and tell me on our next session how did it make you feel and how did that person who was around you in that moment make you feel.

I'm on my feet bolting for the door.

Therapist: Learn to apply please and thank you on small gestures they give you.

I have already had enough with her lecture. Mike opens the door when I approach and I jump on the backseat and sink in back on the chair before I close my eyes. He closes his door and buckles up before he starts the car.

Me: Mike pass...

I trial off and take a huge breath.

Me: Can you please pass by any closeby restaurant. I'm finished.

He fixes the view mirror and frowns staring at me.

Me: (snapping) What?

Mike: Are you okay?

Me: Why wouldn't I be okay?

He latches on bottom lip and drives with one hand while the other one is on the open window.

Mike: You just said please in your sentence.

I roll my eyes.

Me: So what's the big deal about that?

I snap.

Mike: That's because you never used that word before.

He snaps back. Argh! I blame that woman. She's already messing up with my mind. I lost my appetite.

Me: Forget the restaurant just take me home.

He shrugs and changes the gear before speeding off the highway. I take my phone and text my mother.

\*\*\*Me: The session has ended.\*\*\*

She calls immediately after I sent the text.

Thandeka: Hey

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how was the session?

Me: The same it was last week.

Thandeka: There ain't any changes?

Me: No!

She heavily sighs on the end of the line.

Thandeka: Baby remember you're doing this to help yourself too. You're not doing it for us or because we forced you.

She cooed softly.

Me: But you guys did force me.

Thandeka: You know he wants only the best for you. He means well.

Me: His just nosy just like that therapist. I don't know how many times do I have to tell you that I'm okay. I don't want to take about it so why are you guys pushing it?

I feel eyes burning on my skin as I yell on top of my own voice. I move my eyes to the view mirror and find Mike gawking at me.

Me: (shouting) What are you looking at?

He shake his head and divert his eyes to the road. I click my this tongue and hang up on her while she's still talking. My phone chimes immediately and I ignore it. A text follows.

\*\*\*Thandeka: That was rude of you to just disconnect the call like that. Just think about what I said. \*\*\*

The car finally halts on the driveway. I throw the door open and storm inside after slamming it. Walking into the kitchen, I find Ade busy on his laptop. He sighs and saves his last document before he collects the papers scattered on the table and jumps to his feet as I stumble towards the cabinet to take out a glass. Filling it with water, I watch him pick everything he was using and lives the room without greeting me or acknowledging my presence. I frown and gulp the water down before I follow him to his study. Throwing the door open, I barge in without knocking. He raises his head and gawks at me.

Me: Why didn't you greet me?

Ade: Knock.

Me: Am I that annoying to you that you suddenly feel the need to escape the room when I walk in?

Ade: Go back and knock.

Me: I...

He interjects.

Ade: Go back and knock.

He murmurs and drops his eyes to his laptop and smacks his lips shut.

Me: I'm talking to you Adesola.

Ade: And I'm ignoring you on purpose. Go back and knock.



I click my tongue and storm to the door and bang it. He chuckles shaking his head and rise up to his feet and make his way towards me.

Ade: Until you learn to address people with respect you're forbidden to enter this room. I'm done licking your ass and begging you to acknowledge me what am I to you. You're free to walk out of that front gate and never coming back here again. I'm letting you go for my own peace of mind and sanity. Wherever place you choice to be from now on here the divorce papers will reach you and I will make sure of that.

Air gets knocked out of my lungs. I stagger widening my eyes.

Me: What?

He moves back to the door and slams it on my face. I'm shocked to even move from my spot. What the hell just happened

***NARRATOR***

The speeding car finally comes to an halt. Unbuckling his seatbelt, Tyson opens the glove compartment and takes out his gun before he steps out of the car. He opens the backseat and drags the crying woman to the quiet forest. The only thing audible are the birds chirping in and the bushes moving due to the wind. Yvonne screams trying to break free from his grip but her screams are only heard the nature surrounding the forest and them only. No close by human can hear her. She thrash around and cry all she wasn't because nobody will her hear. She's just wasting her tears and voice.

Yvonne: Let me go.

The man ignores her and continues her dragging her to God knows where. She's been with this man for years and have seen all his sides but this one is a new one. He has never dragged her to an quiet forest before. She was expecting to feel excruciating

pain inflicted on her body while he beats her to a pulp. Tyson throws her on the ground and cocks his gun. Yvonne eyes widen.

Yvonne: Please don't do this.

Tyson: You have been pushing me for far too long. I choose to ignore you but you keep pushing and pushing. I didn't want to retaliate because I'm trying to be a better man for someone else. I don't want her to find me with some of the habits I usually do but you keep poking and poking me.

Her lips quiver while tears spring out of her eyes. It stung like a bitch to hear him declaring his love for another woman in front of her. What was so special about this woman that he would want to change just for her? She felt herself burning in rage, in desperate need to see this woman that took everything away from her. He was willing to kill for her.

Yvonne: I'm begging you to spare my life. Think about our daughter.

Tyson: The world will be a better place without you. Scarlet will be better off without you cause you're useless anyways.

Yvonne: Please don't do this Tyson. This is me the mother of your only child. I'm your Yvonne.

She murmurs crawling towards him and kneel in front of him. The alcohol has suddenly left her body, living her to be sober minded. Never in her life she imagined she will be facing death in the hands of the man she loves. Her fiancé and the father of her child. Questions filled Yvonne's head. What really happened to them? They used to be so in love with each other and they were inseparable or was that all in her mind? The man scoffed.

Tyson: Any last words.

Her heart picked up speed. Didn't the love they shared all those years mattered to him like they did to her?

Yvonne: I'm sorry.

She raised her hand and closed her mouth to muffle the sob threatening to escape her mouth.

Yvonne: I'm sorry for everything.

Tyson: Your fake apology won't help you. I'm giving you three second to pray for your sins.

She shook her head as the mucus run down her face.

Yvonne: I'm begging you Tyson. I will leave if that's what you want and I will never bother you again. You can raise Scarlet on your own but please just spare my life. I will go back home and you will never hear from me. I won't call, text and visit you guys. I will back off and let give Scarlet the life you think she deserves. You won't have to deal with me anymore. Please I will go back home.

She pleaded wrapping her arms around his legs. Tyson yanked her hands off him chewing his bottom lip. He was tempting to

take her offer but what if the woman comes back again to bother them?

Tyson: How will I know if you're not lying?

Yvonne: I swear on Scarlet's life that I'm telling the truth.

He thinned his eyes trying to locate any deception seeping out of her mouth but he found none. She was telling the truth but isn't it funny that all it took for her to back off was being held at gun point by him in the middle of nowhere. If he knew this early on he would have tried it long time ago.

Tyson: You will live for now.

She released her breath sniffing. God that was so close. Her life just flashed right through her eyes.

Tyson: You're living on borrowed time. I want you to pack your shit and the fuck out of this country today.

Yvonne: Can I please say goodbye to my daughter?

She muttered sniffing. The man scowled her.

Tyson: Absolutely not.

Yvonne: Please. This is the only time I will see her and I want her to know that I didn't leave because of I didn't want her but because circumstances are forcing me.

Tyson: You will not tell my daughter that shit.

He hissed placing his gun on safe mode the shoved it on his waist.

Yvonne: OK I won't tell that but I just want to say goodbye. The next time she sees me I will be a better version of myself.

Tyson: You have until night time to skip the country. I will be personally buy you a ticket and drive you to the airport just to make sure you board that flight. You will have only 30 minutes with her. Not more or less than that. If you try anything funny I promise you Yvonne I will blow your fucken brain off.

Yvonne: Thank you!

She exclaimed in relief.

Tyson: Don't thank me just yet. I didn't do this for you hut for me daughter so don't get it twisted. Get the fuck up and let's go.

He turned on his heels and marched to the car. Yvonne wipes her face with the back of her hand and leaps up to her feet running after him.

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Still too shocked about what just happened, Zozo pushed the study door open and barged in again without knocking. She found the man busy on that laptop and she fought the urge to pick it up and smash it on the floor. She stands on the other side of his desk, seething wanting his attention but the man didn't give her one.

Zozo: What do you mean by that?

Her tongue finally loosen up causing her to find her voice. Silence is what she gets in return. The sound of the keyboard being tapped at ruffled up her furthers a bit. Her nostrils flare while she bangs the table.

Zozo: I'm talking to you Adesola.

Silence.. She clenched her jaws and slammed the laptop shut while he still typing on it. He raised his eyes at her and dropped them back to the device on top of his desk where his fingers are

closed on too. He pulled them out and pushed the chair backwards before he leaps up to his feet. He makes his way to the cabinet and filled the glass with ice tubes and made his way back to his chair. He takes out his shirt and pours the ice tubes on it and closed it then placed it on his throbbing fingers and sat back on his chair. The woman in front of her didn't matter because whatever she will say now she will have to communicate it with his lawyer. He was damn serious when he said he was done licking her ass.

Zozo: Aren't you going to answer me?

Ade: I didn't think you're deaf. You heard everything and I don't need to repeat it.

Zozo: So you kicking me out of your house?

Ade: Correct!

He calmly retorts.

Zozo: Where am I suppose to go?

Ade: I don't know Zobuhle. Figure it out.

He muttered waving his hand dismissively. Tears filled her eyes.

Zozo: So you're just going to kick me out just like that? Don't forget you owe me for my identity.

Ade darkly chuckled leaning back on the chair. His heard this threat before and it doesn't scare him anymore.

Ade: If you're about to threaten me with the police please try something else because they don't scare me anymore.

She gulped the thick saliva accumulated her mouth while tears stream down her cheeks. She quickly wiped them off.

Zozo: So you're going to give up on me?

Again the man chuckled. This woman was unbelievable.

Ade: You already gave up on yourself first so who am I?

Zozo: You're my husband God dammit.

She snapped agitated while furiously wiping the tears off. A smile graces Ade's lips. He shakes his head amused.

Ade: It's funny how I have been wanting to hear you acknowledge what am I to you but the first time you do so you just tickles my funny bone. A few days ago I was nothing to you but today just because I have had enough of your bullshit I'm your husband. Isn't that not hypocritical of you?

He calmly muttered moving the shirt this his other hand. His done being played by this woman.

Zozo: I-I-I..

She stuttered not knowing what to say.

Ade: What? Cat got suddenly caught your tongue?

She blinked rapidly trying to stop the tears from falling.

Ade: The world doesn't revolve around you Zobuhle. We are human just like you and have feelings just like you. So why should we tip toe around you? I'm fucken walking on eggshells in my own house because of you.

Zozo: I didn't ask you to let me move in with you. You're the one who picked me up from res and asked me to move in.

Ade: Biggest mistake of my life. I shouldn't have bothered myself.

More tears welled in her eyes. His words were crushing her and breaking her heart.

Zozo: Hurting me is that you men do anyway.

Ade: I'm not you fucken perpetrator.

He hisses dropping the shirt on the floor. This woman was getting on her nerves. He leaped up to his feet and stride towards her.

Ade: You're not going to stand there and accuse me of something I didn't do. I wasn't there that night so why should I be crucified for something I didn't do? You're the most selfish person I've ever met in my life. Everything is fucken about you. What about me? I'm a man and have needs that you can't satisfy. I place those needs aside because I was trying to accommodate you and try to understand that you are not ready but you took advantage of my kindness. You're taking advantage of me as a person because I allowed you and that shit ends now. 5 years I have been tolerating your bullshit and it ends today and right now.

His chest heavier up and down and roared at her. Each word he uttered he towered over her. The lump in Zozo's throat rose and choked her. She swallowed it down trying to stop it from choking her but nothing helped. She has never see this man like this before. His always soft spoken and now he was intimidating ASF! She wished the ground could swallow her. She shrank in her spot scared to even say anything more.

Ade: I promised my ex wife in her grave that the next woman I find after her I will do better. I will treat her better but you keep throwing everything right on my face.

She bit her quivering lip to suppress the sob to escape her mouth.

Ade: Fuck what Adesola wants as long "princess Zobuhle" is okay others don't fucken matter.

He sarcastically muttered causing more tears to stream down her cheeks but the man was not moved by them. He has had enough and seen enough to know the woman is taking advantage of him.

Ade: Close the fucken door on your way out.

He muttered and made his way back to the shirt and picked it up from the floor. She stood there crying watching him as he dispose the ice cubes on the bin then went back to his chair and open his laptop. A knock on the door disturbed Ade from working.

Ade: Come in.

Eunice pushed the door open and paused on her steps seeing Zozo crying.

Ade: Yes Mam'Eunice.

Eunice: Um sir your bags are already moved to the cottage. I have packed everything according to what you asked. Mine has been moved to your room.



Ade: Thank you.

Eunice bowed her head and made her way out.

Ade: Is there anything else Miss Nene?

He muttered arching his eyebrows to immaculate his point. Was he stripping her off his surname? When was the last time she heard someone address her with her maiden name? It sounded so foreign to her own ears.

Ade: If there isn't anything else close the door on your way out.

Tucking her tail between her legs, Zozo stumbled to the door heartbroken. She leaned on the wall for support but her knees failed her. She slide down on the wall as reality sank in on her. The man was fed up with her.

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Tears involuntarily stream down her cheeks as the plane takes off. She was leaving everything behind. Her fiancé, her daughter and her whole life. She looked at the window and silently cried for her loss. She has lost everything in just split seconds and she wanted to die. How can Tyson easily move on with someone else while she was still much in love with him? Who was this woman and what made her better than her? What did she have that she didn't? Those questions swirled in her mind causing her to cry harder. He was leaving her for someone else and they are going to raise her child together. The thought alone killed her. She felt a light tap on her shoulder. Yvonne turned her head and gave the man next to her, her undivided attention.

Passenger: Are you okay ma'am?

Concern laced his voice. He shouldn't have asked her that because she released a heart wrenching sob. Why did love have to hurt so much? What did she do in order to deserve this? She has done everything to keep that man and gave up everything for him and this is what she gets for being a loyal partner and fiancée.

**YVONNE**

The first thing I did when I got home was running straight to my room and lock myself up. I didn't want to talk to anyone especially my mother. I'm too tired and drained to be arguing with her but knowing her she will force me to talk anyway. I place the tissue on the bed after wiping my eyes and lean back on the continental pillows. I don't know how I made it here after I broke down inside the plane. The man sitting next to me was so concerned about me and I really appreciated the gesture. Not many people in an airplane cares about what the other person sitting next to them is. He reminded me my father. Why can't men be like our father's? I know if Tyson was like my father him and I will be still together even now. I always envied the relationship between my parents and that's what I thought I will get when I met him. I thought he was my father and I was my mother while our daughter was me. I wanted us to be just how I grew up but it didn't happen like I have planned.

The door flies open breaking me from my misery. I told the helper that I don't want anyone disturbing me but I know this woman forced her way in. A scowl settles on her face when her eyes lock with mine.

Mom: Wipe that nonsense out of your face. It's been two days already.

She hisses. I quickly pick up the tissue and wipe my face but the tears keep involuntary falling on their own.

Mom: What are you doing here Yvonne?

I bit my lower lips to stop it from quivering. I knew this question was coming especially from her.

Mom: I asked you a question.

She muttered placing her hands on her hips. I sniff back the mucus and open my mouth before she loose it. She hates being ignored.

Me: Tyson broke up with me.

I burst in tears after saying that. Saying it leaves a bitter taste in own mouth. She locks the door and stumbles towards the bed.

Mom: What did I tell you? What have I taught you about life in general?

Me: (sniffing) That I always have to fight for what I believe in.

Mom: Then why are you sitting there crying like a widow?

Me: He doesn't love me mom.

Mom: So what? Most people I know they don't love each other but they are still staying together.

Me: He moved out.

Mom: You're so stupid.

She retorts settling next to my feet.

Mom: How can you let him slip out of your fingers?

The lump in my throat rose while my chest tightens.

Mom: Men do not know what they want because it's in their nature. It's our job as women to guide them. Sitting here and crying yourself into oblivion won't help you. Get up and jump into that shower. I'll pack you bags so long.

Me: (sniffing) What for?

She glares at me like I said the most stupid thing on earth.

Mom: What do you mean for what? You're going back to fight for your man and your family. You can't let someone else take away everything you worked hard for. It took you sweat and tears to raise that empire to what it is today and you just want to walk away just like that without fighting for it?

I blink rapidly to stop the tears from escaping my eyes and shake my head.

Me: I can't go back there.

I softly murmur. She frowns.

Mom: Why the hell not?

Me: I promised him that I will never bother him again. He allowed me to choose between dying or skipping the country and leave everything behind and I chose the latter.

Mom: (shocked) What?

Me: (crying) He held me in gunpoint in the middle of nowhere and made me choose and I chose my life.

She chuckles in disbelief and shakes her head.

Mom: I don't know where I went wrong with you. I have taught everything I need to know about life and you choose to disappoint me time and time again. He was trying to scare you away and it worked like a charm. You literally gave him the platform to bring that woman in your own house on a silver platter.

She yells at me. I cease on my movements shocked by her outburst. I was held in gunpoint which part she didn't hear that?

Mom: You don't think Yvonne. The gun was probably not even loaded and your squirmed like a kitten.

Me: He was going to kill me.



She snorts rolling her eyes.

Mom: That's what you thought he would do. He was never going to kill the mother of his child.

This woman was not with me in that forest when that man looked at me dead in the eyes and placed the gun on my forehead. I could see the hatred brewing in his eyes. Those ocean blue eyes were full of love everytime I looked at them and now the only thing I saw was pure hatred.

Me: Mom can you please just drop it. I'm tired and in desperate need of a nap.

Mom: You're not going to sleep while while your house is being filled by water. It's seeping in, in all angles and the first thing you do is run away. Get up and dust yourself before you fight back. You worked too hard to give up just now. Letting another woman raise your child will be the biggest mistake of your life. You're Scarlet's mother not her. If she wants to play happy family she must give birth with her own child not yours.

She muttered and pulled the blankets off me.

Mom: Get up!

I slowly jump out of the bed and drag myself to the ensuite. I don't have any will power to fight back. I value my life more than anything and that is something my mother doesn't understand. Sometimes it's okay just give up and let go off things and that's what I'm choosing to do. My life matters.

## **ZOBUHLE**

Everyday I toss and turn the whole night but my slumber doesn't come. I feel like I'm carrying the whole world on my shoulders this morning and I feel much worse than I was two days ago. What killed me the most was to find out that he swapped places with our helper Mam'Eunice. His staying in the cottage where she's suppose to be staying while she stays in his

room. The reality is staring right back at me and I'm scared of taking the first step and admit I was wrong and ask for help.

I pick up the remote and lower the volume and toss it next to. I've been sitting in front of the TV reflecting on the conversation we had days ago. His words keep echoing in my own ears

replaying themselves like a broken disk. Was I that selfish that I pushed him away? Ever since I lost the people close to my heart and what my best did to me it's hard for me to trust people easily. Trusting easily is a weakness and it burnt me to the ground. It's hard for me to open up to anyone and just let them in. The walls I have built around myself all these years are crumbling down. His words shook them and left me broken. I thought he won't give up on me like he promised when we first met. He promised to never give up so why is he turning on his word right now? I wipe my face and leap up to my feet. I make my way to his study and for the first time in my life I knock and wait for him to invite me in.

Ade: Come in.

I push the door open and make my way inside. He rises his eyes from his laptop and looks at me.

Me: Morning

He nods his head.

Me: I...

The words get stuck on the roof of my tongue. I swallow and try again but nothing comes out. He arches his brow.

Ade: Is there something I can help you with?

Me: I'm so...

I turned on my heels and rush out of the room. Saying sorry would mean I was wrong and I'm admitting that I was but the fear of the unknown crept on me like a thief at night. The fear of the unknown is what made me to walk out of that study. I rise my head as I hear footstep approaching my way. His cologne fills the room before he can appear.

Ade: I'm hosting poker night for the gents this evening. I would be using the cottage but the space is not enough so please stay in your room.

He turns on his heels and padded to the kitchen. A few minutes later I hear the garage door opening before I hear the sound of the engine. I sink back on the couch and swallow hard. He didn't even invite me to sit in with them.

## ***TYSON***

Nobody told me being a full-time parent is this demanding. I never knew that children are this handful and always demanding your attention. I just dropped her off at school and I'm driving to the bakery. She started school yesterday and I have never seen her that happy before. I don't know why didn't her mother enrol her at school in the first place. I close the door and make my way inside. It's been a while since I have been here. A smirk graces my lips as my eyes locks with hers while my heart skips a beat. She pinches her bridge nose and heavily sigh irritated. She looks so beautiful.

Me: (smiling) Good morning.

Swazis: Morning Mr Jones.

Just hearing her melodic voice makes my cock twitch in my pants. I bite back a groan. Fuck, what is this woman doing to me? The door opens and in walks her mother.

Noma: I don't understand why did I have to buy you a new phone.

She muttered placing her shopping bags on the counter.

Swazi: I accidentally throwed mine on the wall because someone was pestering me.

She spits glaring at me. If looks could kill I would be dead right now. I chuckle and shake my head. This woman is crazy. She throw her own phone because of me.

Noma: Oh Mr Jones I didn't see you there. Excuse my manners.

Me: Morning

Noma: A very good morning indeed. Will you be having the usual?

Me: Yes please.

Noma: Swazi where is his order?

Me: Actually I just got here now so I haven't ordered anything yet.

Swazi: Let me get on it.

Noma: No I will check on it. Stay in the front while I will be on the back.

Swazi: I don't mind.

Noma: No baby you've been working there for months and the heat must be too much for you. I'll take the back for the couple of weeks while you take the front.

She picks up her shopping bags on the counter and makes her way to the back.

Swazi: Great!

She whispers under her breath. I smirk.

Swazi: Is there something I can add on your order?

Me: What will it take you to make you mine?

Swazi: Can we please stick to the task in hand.



Me: You look beautiful.

Swazi: Mr Jones can you.....

I interjects.

Me: Why so formal?

She glares at me causing me to laugh.

Swazi: Tyson can you please stop bothering me.

Me: You know I can't do that.

Swazi: What will it take you make you to stop?

Me: (smiling) Just be my woman and I will atop.

She nods.

Swazi: Okay.

I frown.

Me: Huh?

She leans on the counter and indicates I do so with her finger. I follow suit. A shiver runs down my spine as her hot breath hits my ear.

Swazi: I'll be your woman Mr Jones .

She whispers softly. My lips curve into a smile.

Swazi: But my love ain't mahala babe. Sebenza.

She mumbles biting my neck and moves to the till like she didn't do anything. I'm smiling like a retarded.

Me: Wait! What were the last words to your sentence?

She flashes me a smile and shrugs her shoulder

Swazi: Figure it out.

She retorts and goes at the back. Fuck what does Sebenza mean?

***NARRATOR***

Avoiding relationships have been her thing because they come with a lot of headache she can't handle. The constant fights and unnecessary breakups only for them to make up she finds them to be draining. She just wanted the man off her back when she agreed to be his woman but now his been blowing up her phone since he left the bakery. She's tempted to switch it off and go on with her life but that would be childish of her. She doesn't even know what must he work for but she confidently told him to "Sebenza" for her love. Now thinking about it she laughs at her silliness and shakes her head. She thought that line alone will make him run for the hills but not Tyson Jones. The man couldn't read between the lines that she was just messing with him. She heavily sighs and slips on her slippers and leap up to her feet and pick the phone up from the table. Her parents have been stealing glances at her and she knows if she doesn't answer it someone between the two of them will start asking questions. She closes her bedroom door and answers the phone. This man is disturbing her peace of mind.

Swazi: Hello.

Tyson: Hey beautiful I just wanted to check up on you.

A blush creeps on her cheeks but she force it down. She's not suppose to be blushing but keep telling the man to work for that blush. Isn't that so stupid of her to assume her emotions won't come up when she's being compliment.

Swazi: I'm okay.

Tyson: I hope I didn't disturb you.

Swazi: No I was just watching TV with the folks.

Her subconscious snickers on her behalf. Wasn't she the one who said the man was disturbing her a minute ago?

Swazi: You sound like you're on the road.

Tyson: I'm driving to one of my associates house. His hosting a poker night for us.

Swazi: Okay drive safely.

Tyson: I'll call you before your bedtime.

She giggles.

Swazi: I'll hold you on to that. Behave Mr.

The words slips out of her mouth before she can even grasp them. He chuckles on the end of the line.

Tyson: I surely do so. Good night my love. I love you.

Her heart skips her beat.

Swazi: I can't hear you.

Tyson: I said I love you.

Swazi: A...U...H

She breaks from her speech on purpose. Removing the phone from her ear, she pretends to be looking for a signal.

Swazi: Hello?

Tyson: Babe?

Swazi: Hello? Can you hear me?

Tyson: Yes.

Swazi: Eish network.

She mumbles and disconnects the call and lean on the wall. She mentally face palms at her childishness. That conversation wasn't suppose to end like that but she panicked. She doesn't even know how she will distinguish what she feels and what her mind thinks. They are not in synch with her and that freaks her out. Her heart wants even suppose to be beating abnormally by his mere words. Argh! Why did she even agree to be his woman in the first place? It's a job and half and she's not ready. Tomorrow morning she will break up with him because relationships are not her cup of tea. Her phone beeps in her hands breaking her from her thoughts.

\*\*\*\*Tyson: I hope you have a beautiful night sleep. I might forget to call you later on and I don't want you to label me as a liar before we can even see where our relationship is going. Good night Mrs Jones. My heart only beats for you. I love you❤️\*\*\*\*

She melts like a puddle and toss the phone on top of the bed and follow suit. Isn't he the sweetest though? She lies on the bed smiling like a fool. This man was doing something to her and she didn't like the feeling. She was slowly falling for him



and that was not good. She doesn't like to be controlled by her emotions.

Swazi: Tomorrow I'm breaking up with him.

She murmurs to herself and stares at the ceiling.

Swazi: But on what reason? He surely want a reason and what am I going to say?

She groans and rolls to her stomach. The door opens revealing her mother.

Noma: Swazi.

Swazi: Ma?

Noma: Who are you talking to?

Swazi: Oh I was just singing. There's this new song and I'm trying it out.

She lies through her teeth and sits up.

Noma: Your father is noisy. His the one who sent me here to enquiry about that phone call.

A frown settles on Swazi's face.

Noma: Stephen doesn't want to understand that you're not that little girl anymore.

She shakes her head.

Noma: I'm even embarrassed to ask this but he wants to know if there's someone you're seeing?

Swazi: No! Yes! Angazi!

She retorts throwing her hands in the dramatically  
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confusing her mother in the process.

Noma: Which one is which.

Swazi: There is someone but I'm breaking up with him  
tomorrow.

Noma: Why?

Swazi: I feel like I'm going to be caged in that relationship. I'm  
bored already.

Noma: When did the relationship start?

Swazi: This morning.

Noma throw her head back and cracked up so hard.

Noma: You remind me of your father. That fool didn't know what he wants in life. He loved me today and the next morning he doesn't. He will break up with me then later on we will move on from that then again he will break up with me.

Swazi: So how did you move past that?

Noma: I put my foot down and told him to find himself. I was done with the on and off he was doing. His problem was that he loved his personal space and didn't want to accommodate someone else. He was scared to be hurt but how would you know if someone will hurt you if you keep hurting them first?

Swazi hums nodding. At least now she knows she got the stupidity from her father. She shakes her head and throws herself back on the bed.

Swazi: I met someone and his been courting me for months and I'm not sure how I feel about him. His been patient enough and

I'm just scared he will see there's nothing special about me. I'm just a plus size woman who suffers from a low self-esteem and self confidence.

Noma: Bodying shaming yourself is one of the traits of low self-esteem. There's nothing wrong about you. You're beautiful just the way you are and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. He saw something in you that nobody has seen it before that's why he specifically choose you.

Swazi releases a huge breath.

Swazi: I don't like not being in control of my emotions.

Her mother's lips curve into a smile.

Noma: You sound so cute when frustrated reminding me a 6 year old you.

They both giggle.

Noma: Baby we all can't control that. It's just how it is and learn to accept it. Imagine if we had the control over that do you think we will be where we are today?

Swazi slowly shakes her head.

Noma: Exactly! Just let loose a little and see where this might go. You don't know but he might be your future husband.

Swazi snorts.

Noma: What?

Swazi: You're being weird because most African mother's don't do this.

Noma: (laughing) I made a promise to myself that I won't be like my mother. That woman was so strict and it annoyed me at times, probably why I fell pregnant a month in the relationship

while I was indoors most of the times. I was Mariah carrying Jesus.

Swazi laughed causing her to laugh too.

Noma: May her beautiful soul rest in peace. What am trying to say in all of this grab this opportunity with both hands. You might not know where it might lead you too. Just take that leap of hope and take the shot. Have fun while you're in it because relationship are meant to be fun anyways.

Swazi nodded chewing her bottom lip.

Noma: (smirking) Do I know him?

Swazi: Yep.

Noma: From?

Swazi: Around.

Noma: When are you visiting him?

Swazi's eye bulge out.

Swazi: I did say this is weird.

Noma: (laughing) Take this as a Life Orientation class and I as your teacher. Will you be using condoms or...

Swazi: This conversation is over.

She mumbled interrupting her. Noma cracked up so hard.

Noma: Angisho I'm preparing you.

Swazi: I think ubaba is calling you.



Noma: (laughing) Oh my baby you have a skill of clapping back but the mere topic of sex makes you this uncomfortable. How will you do the deed then if you're so uptight.

Swazi jumps to her feet and stride to the door. She opens it and yells.

Swazi: Baba I think there's something wrong with uMa.

Noma bursted into a fit of laughter. The girl was really uncomfortable and she was having the time of her life teasing her. She thought at some point in her life that her daughter was a lesbian because she has never seen or heard her speak about a man before. She made peace with that and waited for her to come clean not knowing she was just assuming everything. Even if she was playing for the same team as her she wouldn't have minded because what she thought didn't matter. Only Swazi's happiness matters the most.

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His 25 minutes late because he had to find a babysitter at the last minute. He didn't plan on going out this evening but he couldn't reject an invitation to a poker night. It's been a while since he sat with the gents and vented out about his life. Oliver is not around to listen to him. His keeping his eyes on Yvonne just to make sure she's behaving and won't cause trouble for him. He will be back though when he sees that the woman has settled in and won't be coming back. He parks the car on the driveway and makes his way inside. He nods at Mike on the door and proceed to where the voices are coming from.

Tyson: Gents.

Sandile: You're still alive and shit.

He chuckles and lower himself on the chair next to Kagiso after pulling it.

Tyson: A flash wound wouldn't have killed me.

Sandile: I wanted to be the MC at your wedding.

They laughed.

Tyson: Forever an idiot.

Sandile chuckles.

Ade: Drink?

He murmurs offer him a glass of cognac. He nods.

Kagiso:: What the fuck happened on our last meeting?

Ade: That's what I'm trying to find out.

Tyson picked the glass and knocked it down. It will be a secret he will die with it. He phone beeps as he places the glass down.

\*\*\*Swazi: Good night to you too Mr Jones. I was serious about that warning. I will claw any women's eyes you have set on them. Tell them you're off the market.\*\*\*

He smirks biting his bottom.

Kagiso: Someone is blushing.

He teases. Tyson chuckles and hands him the phone. Kagiso reads the message and laughs so hard before passing it on others. They laugh.

Tyson: Well gents I'm off the market.

Kagiso: I think I'm going to like her. She's marking her territory.

Sandile: (chuckling) When are we meeting her?

Tyson: What for?

Ade: (laughing) Are you scared we will snatch her away from you?

He muttered placing the cards in front of them. Tyson snorted and leaps up to his feet.

Tyson: Have you seen how handsome I am?

He brags twirling around. Laughter erupt around the table. He chuckles and sit back on his chair before he picks up a cigar.

Sandile: Konje kuqonywe ishimane.

He muttered causing Kagiso to burst into laughter. Ade's phone on top of the table chimes. He picks it up and makes his way to the kitchen.

Ade: Hello?

Voice: I'm at the airport.

The feminine voice muttered on the end of the line Ade frowns and removes his phone from his ear.

Ade: Who is this?

Voice: Wow I'm offended that you don't even recognise my voice anymore.

Ade: Who the fuck is this?

Voice: It's me Tiwa.

She cheerfully mumbled on the end of the line. Ade's eyes popped out of their sockets. The last time he heard from this woman was when she broke up with him the day his wife died. The day she found out that he was married.

Tiwa: Hello?

He gulped the thick saliva accumulated in his mouth.

Ade: Where did you find my number?

Tiwa: Is that the first thing you're going to ask me? What happened to how are you Tiwa?

Ade: Where did you find my number?

He firmly muttered causing the woman on the end of the line to snort.

Tiwa: Your sister gave it to me.

Ade: It's been years Tiwa what do you want?

The woman swallow hard on the end of the line.

Tiwa: I made a mistake by breaking up with you.

Ade: I'm still the same married man you despise. I'm married now.

Tiwa: Can we please talk about this face to face. This is not something we can discuss over the phone.

She hangs up after that.

Ade: Fuck!

He makes his way back to the others and find them playing.

Ade: Why do women like to complicate our lives?

A frown settles on the faces.

Kagiso: Elaborate.



Ade: I'm going through a divorce phase and my ex decided to show up.

Them: (shocked) Divorce?

They muttered in unison.

Ade: I was still coming to you Kg so you can draw up the papers.

Kagiso: Divorce? Are sure though?

Ade: I'm tired of living like a slave in my own house. I might love her but sometimes love is not enough.

Sandile: True.

Kagiso snorted.

Kagiso: Your opinion doesn't count because what lead you to your divorce is the lack of trust. You didn't trust her even though you knew she wouldn't betray you like that.

Sandile heavily sighed.

Sandile: I fucked up on that part. I sometimes ask myself if she misses me like I do to her.

Kagiso: She doesn't.

Sandile: (frowning) How do you know?

Kagiso: Because I overheard her and Busi speaking over the phone. She met someone.

Sandile's jaw dropped to the floor.

Sandile: What? Who the fuck dared me like that?

Kagiso: (smirking) I don't know and it's still early days.

Sandile clenched his jaws and slammed the cards on the table. Kagiso gulped his glass muffling the laughter threatening to escape his lips. He loved ruffling his best friend furthers but he was not lying on this one. The woman has moved on and forgot about him. He leaps up to his feet.

Tyson: Where are you going?

Sandile: To her house. No fucken man will fuck my wife while I'm still alive. Azasakhe ungjwayela amasimba.

Laughter erupted.

Ade: I've got my own shit to deal with.

He muttered looking at his ringing phone.

Kagiso: Well it looks like we will have to postpone the game.

Them: Yea.

Sandile: Saturday night at my place?

They all nodded and made their way to the door after picking up their keys.

Tyson: (confused) What is the meaning of Sebenza.

Sandile: Sebenza means work or work hard. Why?

Tyson: She said her love ain't mahala and I must Sebenza.

They bursted in laughter as each gets in their respectful cars.

**YVONNE**

I'm trying to cry less as the days progress but some days are worse than the others. My mother is on my case and for the first time in my life I'm not entertaining her. She's leading me to my own doom and I will be on the chopping block should Jones get a whiff that I broke the promise I made to him. I pull the chair and lower myself on it. Its lunch time and my father is home.

Me: Afternoon dad.

Dad: How are you?

I heavily sigh.

Me: I'm getting there. It might take a lot of weeks or months to make me forget but I'm taking each day as it comes.

My mother scoffs and slams the juice on the table, spilling it in the process after pouring one for herself.

Mom: I don't even know why are you entertaining her nonsense.

Me: Mom please not now. Please just don't start.

I plead but my pleas fell on deaf ears.

Mom: That's the reason he left you for someone else. You sound pathetic to my own ears. You think he will want someone as weak and pathetic as you on his side? Of course not.

Me: Can we just drop it. It's in the past now.

Mom: That is why another woman run with your man because you're weak Yvonne. I don't know who taught you such nonsense because I damn know I didn't raise any weakling.

Tears filled my eyes. I thought I was done crying but this woman just knows how to discourage someone else's spirit.

Me: (breaking voice) He doesn't love me.

Mom: (scoffing) What is love? Explain the meaning of that to me.

Tears involuntary falling on my cheeks.

Mom: Crying is what you know best and that's why he left you. You're such a disappointment Yvonne.

Me: If I'm such a disappointment to you why do you still force me to him?

I snap wiping the tears with the back of my hand.

Mom: I don't know where did I really go wrong with you. You're so stupid and weak. Nancy is far much better than you.

My heart drops to the pit of my stomach. It's one thing to hear your mother saying you're stupid but it's another to know she's choosing your sister over you.

Mom: Nancy wouldn't have allowed Tyson to walk all over her head like you did. You gave that man a child and moved across the world just to be with him, giving up your career, your friends and family for him and he discards you like dirty sink water. He's been chewing you for free of charge and you smiled and let him get away with a lot.

Me: (snapping) If you prefer Nancy so much than me then why don't you become her biological mother?

Dad: Enough



I ignore him and shift my burning eyes back to the woman who birthed me.

Me: I bet she wouldn't want you to become her mother because you stole from her mother. I'm not like you mom and I will never will be. I choose to let go when the situation gets tough for me. I'm not going to force someone to love me like you did on dad. You literally forced yourself down on his throat just to spite someone else. You knew he didn't love you but you went ahead and fell pregnant, trapping him with a baby.

I seeth out burning in rage. I'm sick and tired of hearing her saying I'm stupid and being told what to do. I'm not a robot; I've got feelings too. She leaps up to her feet and lean on the table then slap me so hard. I gaps shocked while tears spring out of my eyes.

Dad: Enough!

He roared banging the table

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silencing us.

Dad: I'm sick and tired of you hearing you two bickering like two year olds.

He shift his gaze on me.

Dad: Is that how you speak to your mother?

I drop my head to my lap and continue to cry silently.

Dad: And you who gave you the right to slap my own child in front of me?

Mom: She...

Dad: I'm still talking.

He firmly muttered, silence her. She smacks her lips shut and folds her arms across her chest sulking like a toddler.

Dad: You keep feeding her nonsense and pushing her back to that man's arms. You heard her that he doesn't love her so should my daughter compromise her happiness for him? His the one who doesn't want her so why should Yvonne be misery?

Mom: (snapping) Because his the right man for her. Where will she finds a man like him in this day and age?

Dad: She will look for one even if his a garden boy. Her happiness matters most not yours.

Mom: No child of mine will fall in love with a garden boy. That's an insult to my own womb. Why can't it be your other daughter who falls in love with a peasant?

Me: Mom

I caution her but she only glares at me.

Mom: Remove that though from that stupid head of yours  
Yvonne.

Me: Stop saying I'm stupid.

I yell out.

Me: If I happen to fall in love with a garden it's not something  
you can prevent and it's not up to you mother.

Mom: Over my dead body!

She screams out.

Dad: Oh that could be arranged.

Both my eyes and my mother's widen. Oh my goodness what am I hearing and witnessing? Are my parent really happy or just pretending to be in front of me knowing very well behind close doors they are not. My mother blinks rapidly.

Mom: What are you saying James?

That's my cue. I pick up my plate and jump to my feet.

Dad: Where are you going? Sit down and eat your food.

He muttered ignoring her. I sit back down and place the plate on the table. My dad nods and picks up his cutlery and start eating while my mother keeps stealing glances at him. You could feel the tension radiating from a mile away.

**ADESOLA**

A lot is going through my mind as I walk in through the entrance of the airport. The last time I spoke to this woman was when she found out that I was married. I don't know what changed from then to now because I'm still the same guy that I was and still married. I might be facing divorce in weeks to come but I bet on my last cent she won't wait for me again. Folding my arms across my chest, I stand and browse through with my eyes. She smiles and waves at me before she leaps up to her feet and drag her two luggages and made her way towards me.

Tiwa: Oh my goodness babe I thought you were not coming. I was starting to get worried.

Me: What are you really doing here?

She snorts.

Tiwa: Can you please pretend like you're happy to see me and put me through the 21 question session later on.

She mumbles dropping her luggage on the floor and throws herself in my arms, catching me off guard.

Tiwa: (smiling) You've gained a few kilos. South Africa has been treating you good I see.

She muttered still squashing me in her arms. I break the embrace and slip my hands in my pocket.

Me: What is your game plan? Are you on a vacation or what?

She giggles and shakes her head.

Tiwa: Such a silly man you are. What vacation?

A frown settles on my face.

Me: Then what are you doing here?

Tiwa: I came to visit you. I miss you so my baby and I regret walking away like that on that day. I was just scared and shocked. Not everyday you meet your boyfriend's heavily pregnant wife and she dies on the same day because of unnecessary stress you probably caused her. Guilt is what ate me up and made me to break up with you. I couldn't wipe the imagine I had of her when she looked at us on that restaurant and just cried after seeing you. That picture still haunts me even now.

I gulp the thick saliva accumulated my mouth.

Tiwa: She was innocent and in desperate need of her husband that I took most of the time to myself. You straight up lied to my face and told me you were single knowing very well that you have someone who has your ring and waiting for you at home.

Me: And I will be forever be sorry for that. Circumstances forced me to be that person I was back then but now I'm not the same Ade you know. A lot has changed as the years go by.



She swallows hard.

Tiwa: I understand that.

I shake my head.

Me: I don't think you do. I was willing to make you my second wife because Happiness and I were in an arranged marriage. She was the perfect wife my family choose for me and you were the one who held my heart at that time.

Tiwa: You keep referring me to the past.

Me: That's because you're in the past Tiwa. I made peace with the fact that I will never see you again after that incident. I made peace that I lost someone I love because of the lies I fed you. I didn't know what was I really thinking at that time because Lagos is a small town we were bound to bump into her that time.

Tiwa: (breaking voice) Is there someone else?

Me: There is.

She blinks rapidly to stop the tears from escaping her eyes.

Tiwa: Is it a serious relationship?

Me: We are married.

I arch my eyebrows as tears roll down her cheeks.

Tiwa: You couldn't even wait for me?

I chuckle shaking my head. Why am I attracting emotional blackmailers and manipulators? This is the same shit Zobuhle asked me when I put myself first and filed for divorce. I don't know what was she expecting to happen. I have tolerated her bullshit for years and I'm fed up by always placing her first before me. It's time I become selfish and choose me first. That woman uses everything I do for her to manipulate the situation

and gets away with it because of the love I have for her but not anymore. I'm running with what Ade wants this time and fuck what Zobuhle wants.

Tiwa: Did you hear what I said?

Her voice breaks me from my chain of thoughts. I clear my throat.

Me: No!

Tiwa: I said it was stupid of me to assume that I will find you single. If it was a serious relationship I was willing to work out something with you on the side because I love you but now you're married and I don't want what happened the last time to happen. I feel guilt everyday and I blame myself for that.

She chuckles bitterly and wipe the tears that fell from her eyes.

Tiwa: Everyday I convince myself that I forgot about you but I was lying to myself. Every guy I dated after you I was looking for you in them.

I scoffed.

Me: Is that suppose to make me feel better?

Tiwa: No but it is just to show you how much I love you. I love you so much and it hurts hearing that there's someone else again who has your ring just like last time. That was my dream someday to become Mrs Emeka but yet again someone beat me to it.

She raised her hand and covered her quivering lips. My legs automatically moved on their own and closed the gap between us. Wrapping my arms around her, I place her face on my chest as she cries painfully.

Me: I'm sorry.

Tiwa: I trusted my heart to lead me and that was stupid of me.

Before I could reply a voice I know very well mutters behind me.

Zozo: Isn't this such cosy?

My eyes widen while my whole body freezes. What the fuck is she doing here? And how did she know where I was? Is she following me?

***NARRATOR***

Slowly turning on his heels, Ade gulped the thick saliva accumulated his mouth and broke the embrace. A frown settled on his face.

Ade: What are you doing here?

Zozo: What are you doing here? I didn't know poker could be played in another woman chest in airports.

She sarcastically muttered.

Tiwa: Ade who is this?

She muttered with an attitude sizing Zozo with her eyes. Zozo chuckled and clapped her hands in disbelief.

Zozo: Ade who is this?

She fired back with the same attitude sizing her too.

Ade: So you resorted to following me? Is this how we do things now?

Zozo: You're not about to divert the question away from you. How is she?

She hisses out walking closer towards them.

Tiwa: I would also like to know who this bitch is Ade.

Zozo gasped in shock. Ade stood rooted on his spot shocked to the core. He kept shifting his eyes from one woman to the other whenever one of them is speaking.

Zozo: Did you just call me a bitch wena sfebe?

Tiwa: And she's deaf also.

She dramatically rolled her eyes. Zozo took out her earrings and shoved them on Ade's hands.

Zozo: Say that to my face one more time.

Summoning the courage she had earlier on, Tiwa muttered.

Tiwa: Bitch what are you going to do?

Zozo raised her hand and slapped her so hard. Gasps followed around the airport as the closeby audience join them. Tiwa staggered losing her foot as stars danced in her vision. Before she could recover from her shock, Zozo jumped on her and punched her. She screamed shielding her face.

Zozo: Ungjwayela kabi wena sfebe.



She muttered punching her. Tiwa screamed falling on the floor. Ade snapped out of his daze and rushed to them as the security came running to stop them. Zozo got on top of her punching her. Tiwa pushed her off her and punched her back. Blood seeped out Zozo's mouth as she bit her tongue so hard. She wiped her mouth and tried to jump on her but Ade held her waist

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stopping her from moving while the security does the same to Tiwa.

Ade: What the fuck Zobuhle?

He yelled out as the woman thrashed around in his arms trying to escape his grip.

Zozo: Let me go wena. I want to deal with that trash. She doesn't know me.

Tiwa: Who are you calling trash?

Zozo: Ngikhuluma nawe wena doti.

She clicked her tongue and attempt to jump on her again but the grip on her waist was too tight.

Security: This is an airport not a boxing ring.

He roared at them but neither of the both woman paid attention to him. They were baying blood and wanted each others blood.

Ade: I'm so sorry about this.

Security: Take your affairs outside the airport and sort them out.

He muttered through gritted teeth. Another security jogged their way.

Security 2: The police are on their way.

Ade: We were just leaving man there was no need to call the police. I'll sort it out.

He scooped Zozo and marched to the exit point with her. Tiwa's heart shuttered. She cried in the security's arms as they walk away.

Tiwa: Ade.

She yelled after them.

Zozo: Fusek Satan.

She yelled back. Oh she badly wanted to jump on her bones and whoop her ass but the man was not giving her the chance to escape.

Zozo: Put me down Adesola I'm not done with her. I want to teach her a lesson she will never forget in her life.

Ade dropped her on his feet and blocked her path.

Ade: Are you fucken insane?

He roared at her.

Zozo: Maybe I am.

Ade: You could go to jail for assault.

Zozo: You will bail me out before I can even step my foot in a holding cell.

She calmly muttered irking Ade to the core. His nostrils flared. Her attitude was rubbing him off the wrong way.

Ade: I've had enough of your stinking attitude.

Zozo: As long you're still entertaining bitches this attitude is here to last. Get used to it.

The security team walked towards them with Tiwa behind them.

Security 1: Bafo you forgot about this one.

Zozo quickly turned to them.

Zozo: Forgot who? He didn't forget her.

Ade: Zobuhle

He warned but the woman ignoring him.

Security 1: She says she's with him and his her boyfriend.

Zozo throw her head back and bursted in laughter catching the people around her off guard. Ade heart thudded in his ribcage. He knew the sound of the laughter could only mean one thing. One of her personalities has taken over.

Tiwa: (breaking voice) Ade who is this?

Ziyanda: Who do you think I am bitch? I'm the wife you moron.

Her hoarse voice yelled out.

Ade: Fuck!

He swore under his breath. Now it was confirmed that Zobuhle was in a deep slumber and Ziyanda was on the front. He knew he need to get her out of her cause Ziyanda can cause a havoc if they don't leave now.

Security: You will have to take her with you.

Ziyanda: Take who? She's not get inside my car.

Tiwa: Are you his advocate? Why are you speaking on his behalf?

Ziyanda: You have a loud mouth.

She muttered slowly walking towards her and stood in front of them. Ade rushed to her and held her hand.

Ade: Let's go.

Ziyanda yanked the hand off her and run behind the securities in a speed of lightning and jumped on her. Tiwa fell on the tar road on her back and screamed. Ade and the security tried to seperate them as a fight broke out. Ziyanda kicked her stomach knocking the air off her lungs. Tiwa screamed and held her leg. She sank her teeth on her leg causing Ziyanda to yelp. Tiwa aimed on her knee and elbowed it. A groan slipped out of Ziyanda's lips. She elbowed Tiwa on her face, cracking her

teeth. Blood oozed on Tiwa's lips. The two woman rolled on the floor, wrestling each other. Tiwa sank her nails in Zozo's eyes. Zobuhle hissed closing her eyes giving Tiwa the advantage to get of top of her. Tiwa slapped Zozo as the temporary blindness affected her eyes. She continued slapping. Zozo opened her eyes and bumped her forehead on hers so hard. Tiwa grunted giving the advantage back to Zozo to flip them over. She was now on top of her. They didn't care about the audients in their presence. They wanted to tear each other up.

Security 1: Man you better stop your women.

Ade: Can't you see that I'm trying?

He seethed out frustrated. This situation was getting out of control and he needs to diffuse it before one of them lands in jail. The camera were probably recording everything and he knew he had to pay a filthy amount to however is responsible for them to wipe the footage before cops could get here. He tossed Ziyanda on his shoulder and marched to the car. Mike stepped out of the car after seeing them approaching and open the door for them.



Ade: Kedu ihe m na-ema na-akwu gi ugwo ma o buru na i hapu ya waltz na mpaghara argha? {What am I fucking paying you for if you just let her waltz in a war zone?}

He hissed out closing the door after shoving the crazy woman inside. Ziyanda yelled and banged the door but the two men ignored her. She defeatedly gave up and sank back on the chair and closed her eyes. Her head was pounding so much it felt like it would split into halves. She bit her lip and heavily sigh. Something told her to follow the man after seeing him and his friends driving out of their driveway. She doesn't know why she did that in the first place but her gut feeling told her to do so and she couldn't ignore it. She flipped her eyes open at the sound of the voice of her driver.

Mike: O di ka o chefuru na oru m bu ichu ya gburugburu. Abu m onye okwo ugbo ala ya Ade abughi onye na-elekota ya. O bu onye toro eto ma mara ihe o na-eme. {You seem to forget that my job is to drive her around. I'm her driver Ade not her babysitter. She's a grown adult and knows what she's doing.}

Ade: Ihe nkiri ahu. Lekota ya anya. {The footage. Take care of it.}

Ade clicked his tongue and attempt to step inside the car. Mike made his way back inside the airport. Zozo frowned and wiped her face as the blood kept gushing out. Judging by the mild headache she had she knew one of them took over from her and she was praying it was not Ziyanda. That woman is more deadly and more dangerous to all of her personalities combined. Zozo knew if she's the one who took over that mean she might have killed Tiwa. Her hands started to tremble while her anxiety picked up.

Zozo: Oh my God.

Her heart thudded on her ribcage.

Ade: What?

He enquired annoyed causing her to panic more. Her eyes popped out of their sockets while her breath hitched on her throat. She rolled down the window fighting for her breath.

Ade: Fuck Zobuhle breathe.

Tears spring out of her eyes while she gasped, desperate to fill her lungs the air they needed. Ade opened the door and rushed to her side. He pulled her out of the car after opening. Zozo fell on her knees gasping.

Ade: Breathe woman.

She gasped some more. Mike made his way back to them.

Ade: Breathe dammit.

Mike: Ha na-acho nnukwu ego iji hichapu ihe nkiri ahu. Ndi nchekwa na achokwa ihe ga emechi egbugbere ono ha. {They are demanding a lot of money to wipe that footage. The securities are also demanding something to keep their lips sealed.}

Ade: Ego abughi nsogbu. I maara ihe I ga ga-eme. {Money is not an issue. You know what to do.}

Mike nodded and shift his eyes to Zozo.

Mike: Breathe Jackie Chan.

She opened her mouth to mutter something to him but her breath shortened.

Ade: Don't speak just breathe.

She looked at him through teary eyes. She was sure she was dying.

Tiwa limped towards them and cleared her throat. Ade shifted his eyes briefly to her.

Ade: (yelling) What?

Tiwa dropped her eyes to her feet and fiddle with her hands as tears stream down her cheeks. Her face was swollen matching Zozo's. They really did a number on each other's faces.

Tiwa: I don't have anywhere to go and you the only person I know around here.

Zozo greedily fed her lungs the air she needed and gasped out.

Zozo: You should have thought about that before you left the Bundu's and came looking for a married man. Sies where is your pride?

She muttered wiping the tears off her face. She was ready to give up and die but seeing this woman just brought her back. Mike chuckled and shook her head. Wasn't she dying a few minutes ago?

Ade: I'll book you in a hotel for the time being.

Zozo: With whose money? Where did she think she will stay? No money of mine will sponsor you girlfriend. She must go to the embassy, shelter or the streets.

Ade bit back a smirk threatening to form on his lips. Was that jealousy he was picking up from her? If he knew all it took for the woman to claim him was to bring another in her presence he would have longed done that.

Zozo: Pay for her hotel room Adesola and you will know me.

She threatened him leaping to her feet.

Zozo: I'm sick and tired of letting fear cloud my better judgement. I'm sorry for how I was treating you. I was just scared that there is nothing special about me. I'm just a girl with a lot of baggage and lot of issues I need to face. My demons are bigger than anyone's else and they are dragging me down each time I try to take a step forward and try something else.

She stumbled towards him. Her heart thudded harder on her ribcage as fear clouds her again but she was not going to let it win. She has lived in fear for years. For how long?

Zozo: I'm tired.

She softly whispered and closed the gap between them before she brushed her lips on his. Ade's eyes widen while his heart skips a beat. Was this really happening or was he dreaming? Because god dammit the dream was so beautiful and he didn't want it to end.

**ADESOLA**

My mind is still trying to comprehend what is going on when she bites my lip and heavily sigh. Before I could kiss her back she's roughly pulled out of my lips.

Tiwa: Who the hell do you think you're kissing my man like that?

Zozo: Emeke ukhuze lonondindwa wakho ngaphambi kokuthi ngisule lomgwaqo ngobuso bakhe. {Emeka reprimand this bitch of yours before I wipe this road with her face.}

She attempts to jump on her again but I hold her back.

Ade: Tiwa leave.

She widens her eyes while tears spring out of her eyes.



Tiwa: (breaking voice) I na-ario m ka hapu Adesola?

Me: Akpoghi m gi ebe a. I biara n'onwe gi. Kedu ihe turu anya ihu n'ezie? {I didn't invite you here. You came on your own. What did you expect to find really? }

Tiwa: Ano m na-tu anya ka ihoro m nihi na m horokwara gi. Etinyere m ndu m n'aka gi. {I was expecting you to choose me because I chose you too. I put my life on hold of you.}

Me: A sighi m gi mee nke ahu. I mere n'onwe gi, yabu etinyela m uta. {I didn't ask you to do that. You did that on your own so don't put the blame on me.}

She covers her swollen face and burst into tears.

Zozo: That should teach you to never go for married men. His married nana and he won't leave me for you.

She sasses and grab my hand and drag me to the car.

Zozo: You're entertaining bitches now Emeka?

My heart skips a beat.

Me: We are following each other now Miss Nene.

She snorts.

Zozo: Don't ever call me that again. I'm Mrs Emeka from now on.

My heart thudded harder on my ribcage as she gets inside the car. She rolls down the window.

Zozo: Aren't you getting in or you still want to entertain her again? Please save the poor girl the embarrassment because I will kill her this time.

Mike laughs on the driver's seat. He raises his hands in surrender as I glare at him. I shake my head and step inside the car.

Zozo: Can we pass at the pharmacy or the hospital I need something for my face.

Mike laughs harder.

Mike: That's what you get for being Mike Tyson on people.

She smiles rolling her eyes.

Zozo: Why thank you kind sir.

She sarcastically muttered. My mind is still playing that scene where she kissed me and I'm still trying to convince myself that I was not dreaming. She places her head on shoulder and heavily sighs.

Zozo: I know we have a long road ahead of us but I want us to try.

I furrow my eyebrows.

Zozo: I want to give you a chance. Being selfish doesn't help one in life and it showed me how much I need you. I'm sorry for being selfish and inconsidering of how you felt. The I word ended the minute I step my foot inside that airport and saw you with that woman in your arms. Right now we are a team. The Emeka's.

She attempts cheering. I chuckle.

Me: So all it took for you to acknowledge that was to see me with another woman?

She nods.

Me: You should have told me sooner I would have done that.

She quickly moves her head from my shoulder and glare at me.

Zozo: Don't you dare. I swear I will make you life miserable for the rest of it from wherever I am. Whether it's prison or the cemetery.

She threatens causing me to laugh. She giggle and places her head back on my shoulder.

Zozo: I called my therapist earlier on and I told her I want to start therapy all over again. She must take me as a new patient because I want to start it afresh. I want to start my life afresh and rebuild it to where I want it to be.

Me: That's good. Now tell me what the hell happened in there?

Zozo: You were in the front row so why are you asking?

I shake my head.

Me: I'm not talking about the fight but the kiss.

Zozo: What about it?

Me: You kissed me. Weren't you the one who said you will never fall for me?

I tease her. She snorts.

Me: Are you falling for me Zobuhle?

Zozo: Don't flatter yourself. You're not all that.

I laugh and she giggles then moves her head and locks her eyes with mine.

Zozo: I was in denial with what I felt. I already fell and deep.

My eyes move to her lips and she wipes them with her tongue. She follows my eyes and closes the gap between us. I place my forehead on hers and look at her eyes.

Me: Please tell me I'm not dreaming.

Zozo: You're not.

She whispers showering me with kisses on my neck. I grunt.

Me: Fuck not here baby.

Mike clears his throat.

Zozo: Close your eyes Mike.

Mike and I burst in laughter. She smiles as I cup her face and lock my lips with hers. She moans and move to straddle me. A mischievous smirks graces her lips as cock grows under her.

Mike: Okay kids there are adults in the car save that for later. I don't want to be traumatized.

Laughter filled the car as he speeds on the highway.

***SIX WEEKS LATER***

***NOMASWAZI***

I'm running like a headless chicken in my bedroom trying to pack my overnight bag. Today I'm finally visiting his house and to say I'm nervous is understatement. I don't know why did I even agree to this nonsense in the first place but I decided to



take my mother's advice and take that leap of blind faith. I gave him half of my heart because the other half is reserved for disappointments. I close the bag and look at myself in the mirror for the last time. The glow I have on my face is evidence enough that I'm happy. The relationship has been flowing really good like a water on a stream. My phone beeps on top of the bag. I rush to it.

\*\*\*Ty: I'm outside.\*\*\*

I smile and text him back.

\*\*\*Me: I'm coming.\*\*\*

I shove it on my pocket then take my bag and walk out of the room. The man expect me to call him with pet names but I'm still very much shy around him. He started from being the annoying Mlungu to Tyson and now his Ty. Maybe as we progress I'll eventually find a cute pet name I can give him. My mother wiggles her eyebrows when I walk in the living room. I cast my eyes on the floor and blush.

Me: Okay I'm going.

Baba: Where are you going?

I shift my gaze to my mother.

Ma: Lihle's. Her mother asked me to let her keep her company because she's going home for a few days.

I arch my eyebrows. There's no love lost between my best friend and my mother but she uses her as an escape goat.

Baba: I will drop you off.

My eyes widen behind my glasses. Noma better talk to her man because his an enemy of progress right now.

Ma: No baba there's no need. I'll accompany her and drop her myself just to make sure she's really there.

She winks at me. I mentally giggle. He sighs.

Baba: I don't like this.

Me: I'll be fine baba.

I mutter and place a kiss on his cheek. He frowns.

Baba: Why does it look like you're going there for a whole year?  
What's in that bag?

I'm done being her daughter! Somebody came and take this father of mine away from me because I'm not opening my bag and showing him what I packed in there because he will faint. Today is the day I'm unlocking them thighs and I bought a new set of underwears just to go with the occasion.

Ma: Steven yeka ingani ihambe. You're making her late.

Baba: (frowning) I really don't like this.

I roll my eyes and stumble to the door as my phone rings for the 5th time. I'm close to closing the calendar and this father of mine is still treating me like I'm a baby. I'm a grown woman whose about to be chewed by a white nigga.

Ma: Use a condom please. I'm still young to be called someone's grandmother.

I choke on my spit and hysterically cough. She laughs and close the gate behind me.

Me: Ma?

Ma: Yini? { What?}

She smirks.

Ma: Ngiqinisile njalo Nomaswazi. { I'm serious.}

Somebody throw me in a river full of crocodiles so they can feast at me. My parents are the weirdest parents I have ever met in my life. I shake my head and walk away from her, leaving her still laughing. Butterflies fill my stomach as I walk towards the car. He parked it three houses away from mine and that give MaNdlovu the opportunity to peak through the window. I smile and wave at her just to let her know I'm seeing her. I know by the end of today my name would be on her list. I need to buy myself a sheep and black salt to get rid of the dark cloud and bad luck hovering me. My ancestors are lazy and they don't deserve a goat from me. They haven't done anything for me for them to get that goat. My eyes locks with his as I take my calculated steps to the car. He smiles and steps out causing my stomach to flip. He takes the bag from me and throws it on the backseat. He shift his gaze back to me and mutters.

Ty: Hey gorgeous.

I'm blushing like a fool. One thing about him is that he doesn't fail on the complimenting department. My love language is full on that department and I'm still yet to learn some of his love languages. He hovers over me and pins me on the car before he

attacks me with a kiss. I stand on my tiptoes and cup his face and hungrily kiss too. The world slowly vanishes and just leaves the the two of us. I forgot about my noisy neighbours and focus on his lips.

Voice: Usuhamba uqabula abantu emigwaqeni manje  
Nomaswazi? { You go around kissing people on the streets now  
Nomaswazi?}

Her voice breaks out our moment. I pant out and break the kiss. He groans. I knew the only reason she was on that window was to be noisy.

Me: Sawubona MaNdlovu.

I fake a smile. She squints her eyes and shake her head then walk away. I roll my eyes and shift my eyes to him.

Ty: I missed you.

Again a blush rushes to my cheeks. He chuckles.

Ty: Aren't you going to say it back?

Me: Can we go?

He laughs and nod. I'm still shy to say other things and I'm lucky he understands me. He opens the door for me and buckles my seatbelt. Look at me smiling like a baby who just got out of the candy store. The small gestures just melts my heart. His such a gentleman who choose a psycho to be his woman. I pity him sometimes because he picked a thorn in a garden full of roses. Reality slowly sinks in to me as the car speeds off my street that I'm really doing this. My throat dries out while my sweat runs down my spine. I roll down the window and stick my head out. I'm internally freaking out. I don't even know why did I agree to this in the first place. He clips his hand on my mine and frowns.

Ty: You're sweating and shaking. Are you okay?

Me: I'm just feeling hot.

I lie through my teeth. My pregnant hormones are getting the better of me. I want to jump out of this car and run to the opposite direction it is going. I could feel my baby tossing in my stomach. My poor intestines are probably feeling my anxiety and they turned that to a baby. He parks the car on the side of the road and kills the engine. I'm fighting the urge to bolt out like Usion bolt and run home to hide my freaking out self.

Ty: Baby you're not okay.

Glad you noticed. I pick up the bottle of water and open the cap and gulp it down in one go to calm myself.

Me: I'm fine.

Ty: You sure?

I flash him a smile nodding. He brings my face towards his and pecks my lips before he starts the car. I'm silently crying for my stupidity. I should have made another excuse to not visit him this weekend but no I confidently smiled and said I will see him



later on. I'm going to spend the whole weekend with this man and I know I'm going to be uncomfortable the whole time. I turn on the radio to kill the silence that is awkward on my side. His talkative in general but I guess he could tell something was wrong with me.

Ty: You can still change your mind if you don't want this.

His voice brings me out of my daze.

Me: No!

I flinch at how high pitched out my voice sounded.

Ty: That's it!

Again he parks the car on the side of the road and turns to me. White people don't care about the cost of petrol that's why he keeps parking this car on the road.

Ty: What's going on?

Me: With?

Ty: With you. You're not the bubble person I know.

That happens when you make a stupid decision in your life just to spite someone for only it comes back to spite you.

Me: Nothing is wrong. The heat is just getting on me.

Ty: Lies. Baby the little time I spent in your house made me to know you like the back of my hand. My Swazi is a talker a sassier, the queen of clap backs and funny too.

I snort rolling my eyes.

Me: Nothing is wrong. Just drive please.

Ty: I'm not a psychic you know?

I nod before bursting in laughter. He chews on his bottom lip knitting his eyebrows.

Ty: Care to share the joke?

Me: (laughing) I'm sorry but my mind just ran wild. I just imagined you as a psychic or a sangoma.

He chuckles and shake his head. I'm laughing at the image I have in my mind. I don't even know why do I even entertain my thoughts sometimes because they will get me in trouble someday. I cease my laughter when I feel his eyes on me.

Me: What?

Ty: You're just beautiful.

My heart melts like puddle. It should be illegal to be blushing like this.

Ty: That's the woman I know.

I playfully roll my eyes. He shakes his head and starts the car. I sigh and shove my anxiety down. I will deal with it later. I'm just going to let myself be on this moment and there's nothing that's going to ruin this weekend for me.

Ty: Welcome home.

He mutters picking up the remote on the glove compartment and opens the gate. I'm watching in awe as the beautiful gigantic house comes to view. I resist the urge to roll my eyes as they set on the trees lined up. Why am I not surprised by that. Whites and nature.

Me: It's beautiful.

Ty: I know.

I snort. He chuckles and steps out of the car. He opens my door and holds my hand, helping me out of the car.

Me: Why such a big house though?

Ty: My baby mama knew the pant house so I had to move somewhere she won't find me easily plus Scarlet wanted a house with a pool.

I nod and stumble towards the door. I'm being forward but who the hell cares? This is my man's house and if I leave without exploring this mansion I'm selling my soul to the devil.

Ty: (chuckling) Do you even know where you're going?

Me: No but I will figure it out along the way.

He laughs and close the door after retrieving my back. He opens the door and places the key on top of the counter. He attempts to switch on the light.

Ty: There's no power. I fucken hate load shedding.

He mumbles going through the drawers and takes out lamps and torches. His eyes are on me as I move to the lounge and pick up the photos lined up. His house is a open plan and I sometimes hate those.

Ty: That's Scarlet when she was just a year old.

Me: She was an ugly baby.

He cracks up so hard. I place the photo and move to another one. My lips curl into a smile when I finally notice it's just his daughter and no sign of the baby mama. His phone rings.

Ty: Baby it's Oliver and I need to take this call. Why don't you move to the pool. I have a surprise for you.

He pecks my lips and walks away answering the call.

Ty: Oliver talk to me.

I wonder where that fool is. I kind of miss his shades. I pick up the torch and open the sliding door leading to the pool and search for the surprise. I cease on my movements as my eyes set on the electric fence. I tiptoe back on the house and find him still on the phone. I rush back outside and drag the chair to the fence. I've always wanted to try out how does the fence feel between my fingers. Is it the normal cheap fence I know or it's way better than the one I know. My finger slip in the wires and they feel so thick between them. Call me weird or anything but I'm just an inquisitive person who always wants to know if they really work to prevent the thieves or they are just for decorations. My fingers get electrocuted causing my body to fly out of the chair to the pool. My eyes are out of their sockets while my mind is still trying to understand what happened. I drag my numb self out of the pool and lay on the deck. Footsteps approach my way.

Ty: Babe the electricity is back.

He frown stopping dead on his tracks. Now that explains why I'm lying here drench with each cell on my body on its feet even my hair.

Ty: Are you okay?

No I'm not okay. The fence really works. I thought it was only installed to chase away thieves.



***NOMASWAZI***

His white ass just had to wrap me up with a blanket instead of coming with reinforcements. I know my mother would have come with a broom, mop and whoop me back to my senses. He just wrapped me with a bloody blanket and scoop me up all the way to the bathroom because I needed a bath and I might catch a cold. I didn't want to talk about what happened to me and he didn't pester me about it. I'm shocked to the core. I don't know what the hell was I also thinking. It must have been my curiosity that got the better out of me. I did say I'm weird and always want to try something else. He opens the bathroom door and place me on my feet.

Ty: Should I run you a bath or you will take a shower?

Me: Bath please.

I manage to mutter through my chattering teeth. I swear to God after what happened I'm never going to test something else. I'm going to force down my curiosity and shove it at the back of my mind. I nearly died and that's what has been going through my mind. A little notification would have been nice but instead I got electrocuted.

Ty: What really happened out there?

Me: Can we please just drop it. I don't want to talk about it.

I'm not about to tell him about what I did cause I know I might get a lecture. Sometimes people turn to forget not all of us are the same. There's a part of me that still want to be a kid and be unmatured and childish at times and then there's the logical part of me that forces me to act my age and be matured. I don't know where the immature part comes from but when the bell rings and I have to answer it and let loose just once in a lifetime. I sometimes think my brain didn't fully grow to the adult stage. Half of it is left behind on being a child. He wraps his arms and my waist and tilt my chin to the side.

Ty: Shout if you need anything.

I slowly nod. He cups my face and capture my lips with his. I sigh and welcome his lips. My anxiety has me trembling again. I have this fear of me messing things up without even trying them. I know this relationship won't last because I might mess it up by just being me and I'm shit scared. Ty might seem understanding for now but for how long will he keep taking everything?

Ty: You're shaking again.

He muttered in between kisses.

Me: I'm fine.

I breath out and wrap my arms around his waist. He plants soft kisses on my neck and blows out air softly after biting my skin. I curl my toes and moan. He grunts in approval then move his mouth from my neck. I whimper at the lose of contact. I nearly

roll on the floor in laughter as his bloodshot and small eyes set on mine.

Ty: There's plenty time for that. Right now you need to get out of this clothes.

Me: My clothes are not the only thing wet.

I blurt out then widen my eyed before slapping my hand on my mouth. I know I didn't just say that. He smirks at me then closes the gap between us again. I step back as the sinister smile creeps on his lips. He chuckles and move with me with each step I take. I feel like a prey running away from it's predator. He places his hands on either side of the wall, caging me on it.

Ty: Is it? How wet are we?

He arches his accumulated eyebrow to emphasise his point. My heart skips a beat while my juice continue to fill my panties. I have never been this horny in my entire life. I think what I

needed was just to be close to a man and receive those endless kisses to wake up the sleeping tiger.

Me: Dripping.

I softly whisper. I blame my hormones for this answer. Once the fog is cleared out I'm going to die in embarrassment. His breath hitches on his throat.

Ty: Fuck I want you so bad but I can't have you right now.

Me: Then have me.

Looking at me being fearless like a lioness. Noma would so proud of me. He place his head on the crook of my neck and shakes his head. He better not deny me my right because I will jump on his bones. I came here with a mission to unlock them thighs and his not about to deny me that because I will make his life miserable for the rest of the remaining ones.

Ty: You need to eat first.

Me: I'm not hungry.

I protest causing my stomach to growl in that moment. Great!

Ty: Still not hungry?

He teases.

Me: It's not mine.

He nods laughing.

Me: I swear it's not mine.

Ty: I believe you.

He assures me still smiling. I huff out and push him out of the way and make my way towards the tub. I unwrap the blanket

around me then drop it to the floor. His eyes are on my every move I make. I take out my top and stand in front of him half naked. I have a mind of pushing down the skirt to my knees then just stand there and wait for him but my subconscious doesn't want to let me.

He marches towards me and bends to his knees. He poops the button open the drops the skirt to my knees. I bite my lip as his hand brushes over my wet panties. He pulls my thighs apart then move my underwear to the side and just stare at my vagina. I blush and try to close my knees shut but he pinches my thighs. I yelp and keep them open. I'm trying to read his face but I can't find anything.

Me: Ty.

Ty: You're beautiful.

I know the compliment is not for me but for that mini heaven his about to feast on later on but I'll take the compliment. I'm smiling like a fool. Love is a weapon if you don't use it right and it should be an illegal thing.

He brings his face close to my pussy and sniff at it. I hold my breath and stand still while my vagina continues to pulse out. I swear to god if he continues being like this I might ride his face. He coats his finger with his saliva then swipe it on my clit. I shudder spilling more juices. If he continues like this I might cum without even tasting the real thing. He rises his eyes to me then pinch my clit. I sink my teeth in between my lips and involuntary open my thighs and pull down my underwear. A smirk graces his lips as he helps me out of it. Of course that would make him happy because I'm complying without even being asked.

Salt is killing me people and I need to quench my thirst first before I go back to my normal self. I nearly scream in frustration as he phones chimes in his pocket. Remind me again who the hell made that device? He/she should be sued because the stupid device has no timing. He lets it ring but the caller is persistent giving him no choice but to attend to it.

Ty: Sorry baby but I have to take this. It's Minnie's mother it might have to do with Scarlet.



He mumbles jumping to his feet then walks out of the bathroom to answer the call. Unclipping my bra off, I slip in the tub and close my eyes. That ugly baby of his is a cock blocker.

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I'm in high spirit after my bath. I make my way to the kitchen to look for him and found him placing the wine bottle on the table.

Ty: Just in time for dinner. Take a seat baby.

I smile and thank him after he opens the chair for me. I'm resisting the urge to take out my phone and take a picture so I can brag to my mother about this. Not many men do this for their women. And if Lihle was still my friend she would have been the one who gets these pictures but the girl went MIA on me again. I don't know what her problem is and I'm not about to look for her and ask her to lay it on the time. My time is

limited from now on and if she wanted to be in my life she would have made means to do so.

Me: What are we having?

I'm literally bouncing on the heel of my steps as he places the dish in front of me.

Ty: My favourite.

He plants a kiss on my cheek then makes his way to his chair.

Ty: Seafood with white wine.

Me: Thank you.

I mumble after receiving the glass and excitedly open the lid. A frown settles on my face as my eyes set on shells.

Ty: It's a three course meal and for our starters we are having oysters.

He picks up one and opens it. I scrunch up my nose in disgust as he throws the slimy item in his mouth.

Ty: Try it.

I blink rapidly and pick one. Throwing in the item in my mouth, I resist the urge to gag.

Ty: Not so bad huh?

I slowly nod forcing down the gag bubbling in my throat. He sips on his wine and pick another. My intestine keeps twisting and turning causing my stomach to churn as I mirror his movements.

Me: Tast..

I swallow the gag.

Me: Taste real good.

I mutter faking a smile while tears blur my vision. His blue eyes that I haven't noticed before lit up causing him to flash me a smile.

Ty: I knew you will love it.

He wipes his mouth with the napkin and fills his glass again.

Ty: More wine?

Me: Yes please.

He pours some and hand me the glass. I gulp it down to wash away the food stuck in my throat.

Ty: Woah!

He exclaims in shock. I hand him the glass back.

Me: Another one please.

He sceptically picks up the glass and fills it again.

Me: What's the main course?

Ty: (smiling) I'll be right back.

He picks up the plates and walks to the kitchen. I swallow down the bile rising in my throat and sip on the wine to force it down. He returns with the dishes and place one in front of me. I'm hoping for rice and fish this time. My eyes popped out of their sockets as I pull the lid off.

Ty: It's a baby octopus.

He proudly mutters then pulls off the lid on his plate.

Ty: Crab.

Thixo Onofefe! I don't care whether it's a shark dolphin or mermaid. What did I get myself into? Where's the rice, the gravy, chicken curry, chicken stew or better yet beef stew? That crab looks like it could jump on me and murder me at this moment. I look at my plate then shift my eyes to his and silently cried. I should have eaten at home if I knew this is what I would be having for dinner. My intestines are boycotting on me as I shove the food in my mouth. He chewing his food with no care in the world. The only sound audible is the sound of him chewing like his stepping on a cockroach. Next time I'm bringing my lunch box angeke. I'm praying he doesn't utter a word but I don't always get what I want.

Ty: That was Scarlet earlier on wanting me to read her bed time story.

I don't care even if it was Jesus himself. I'm facing a dilemma here with my plate and his seeing it as time to make a conversion with me.

Ty: I don't trust anyone with my daughter but she forced her way into that sleep over. I know next week she will be the one inviting her friends over for that nonsense and I have to host them.

Must be nice being a white kid. Black children don't have that privilege. Our mothers are too paranoid and too cautious. Everything to them is a risk. I drop my eyes to my plate and nearly scream. What have I been doing all along if my plate is still this full? This thing has fucken 8 legs and I managed to eat only one. All along I thought I was on my last leg. I swear to God I'm going to clean my stomach on Monday when I arrive at home even though I hate doing so. There's no way in hell I'm going to let this stay in my stomach. Pushing the plate away, I pick up the napkin and wipe my mouth then pick up my glass.

Me: I'm full.

Ty: But you only ate one baby. Try to eat more cause you will need the energy.

He wickedly winks at me. I'll rather be energy less if there's a word that say so in the world than eating this nonsense. This thing has eight legs and he expects me to eat all of them.

Me: I had a sandwich before I came here. I didn't know you will cook up a feast all for me.

I lie through my teeth.

Ty: It's okay my love. I'll place them in the fridge then we can have them for lunch tomorrow.

Jizas come back and take your child before I murder him. Whose man is he? Lunch with who anyway? Fusek! I'm ending this relationship right here and right now. For that nonsense he just spewed his not getting the coochie.



***NOMASWAZI***

Who was I kidding when I said he won't get the coochie? The man didn't even initiate it or show any signs of touching me but my horny self did. My insecurities rose up the minute I had to take off my clothes. His head tilt to the side, and I feel like he could see right through me, my clothes, body, mind and soul. What does he see in me anyways? A plus size woman who got ignored by many men and got bullied as such a tender age for that. Low self confidence and low self-esteem has been my best friend my whole life and it won't start now just because he sees something nobody has seen before. My weight doesn't determine my worth, or my opinion especially the opinions of people who don't know me but I can't help out to voice out the question that has been going through my mind all along.

Me: What are you seeing in me?

I softly whisper feeling anxious all of a sudden as his eyes stare right back at my soul. A smile curve on his lips.

Ty: Do you really want to know?

I nod. He cages my face in the palm of his hands.

Ty: I see more than you know.

He whispers causing a shiver to run down my spine. I rapidly blink to stop the tears from falling and lean forward. I meet his lips halfway, his hands gently squeeze my face causing me to shut my eyes and shut out any negative thought going through my mind. I shove every little insecurity I have on the back of my head and just focus on his lips. His fingertips gliding over my skin sent out jolts of electricity through me. Was my body suddenly sensual than usual or more sensitive or was it the electricity from earlier on? I laid down and pull him with me. He held me in place and deepen our kiss while his right hand moved to my nape, the other one slowly running through my body in a teasing manner. I push him away as he lifts up my top and guard his hands down my body. I become more and more self conscious about his hands when they glide over my belly rolls. I break the kiss and push him away from me. I tuck back

my breast in my bra and pull down my top. His eyebrows knit together.

Ty: Did I do something wrong?

Me: No!

I firmly muttered and leap up to my feet.

Me: I don't want you to regret this. I don't want you to see how ugly my body is. Feel free to walk away right here and right now before the disgusting feature comes alive in your face.

I breath out and drop my eyes to my feet, not wanting to see the disgusting look on his face. I can't believe I nearly gave him all of my heart. I feel so stupid and naive. There's no way him out of all people could go for the likes of me. We are from two different worlds and even if our worlds were adjacent to each other I don't think mine will have fall on the category. I mean look at me and look at him. I bet women are lined up outside his premises just to get his attention.

Ty: (frowning) Disgusted by what?

Me: Me Tyson.

I dramatically throw my hands in the air and heavily sighed.

Me: Just look at me and look at yourself. Who are we fooling to think this will work?

Ty: Baby.

I shake my head and chuckle.

Me: I don't want you to wake up tomorrow and think you made a mistake by being with me. I know there will be times were we will have make appearance in public and I don't want to ruin your image.

His frown deepens.

Ty: What the fuck are you on about?

Me: I'm talking about this relationship.

Ty: What about it?

Me: I don't want to be a burden to you. It's best we call it quits before one of us gets hurt and I surely know that would be me.

I shakily muttered and swallow the lump in my throat. God I feel so stupid for thinking I also might have a chance in love. I was so stupid to think that I also deserve to be happy.

Ty: Where is this coming from all of a sudden?

They came from the insecurities running down my head.

Me: I'm saving you the public humiliation and being shunned.

Ty: Did I say I want to be saved?

He breathes out in rage. I gulp. Are we having our first fight?

Ty: I don't know where those thoughts come from but I want you to remove them in that head of yours at this minute.

His chest bounced up and down as he commands me.

Me: I don't know if you're blind or what Tyson.

I whisper under my breath causing his nostrils to flare.

Ty: I didn't catch that.

He hisses at me like a snake. That's because I didn't throw it you moron. I bite back my smart retort.

Me: Look at me Tyson.

I yell out.

Ty: That's what I'm doing right now.

Me: Do you want to be seen with a woman with stretch marks on her waist. A woman who has belly rolls like she just gave birth.

I mutter rolling my top to my stomach and point out each of my imperfection. I shouldn't have came here.

Me: And this?

Ty: Love handles.

My heart drops to the pit of my stomach. I knew he was too good to be true. He stumbles towards me.

Ty: They are called love handles for a reason, don't you think?

His flashes me a smile before he wraps his hands on my waist.

Ty: You wouldn't be my Swazi if you didn't have any of those imperfections.

He bends down and place a kiss on each place I point out earlier on.

Ty: All of this is mine and I love you just the way you are. If I wanted somebody else I would have looked for her but my heart and eyes and caged in you.

I smile through the tears. He cups my face and wipes my tears.

Ty: I love the handles though.



He chuckles as I playful roll my eyes.

Ty: You're one beautiful woman and never doubt yourself on that.

Looking at me grinning like Cheshire cat. Wasn't I the one who was ready to walk away a minute ago? I vuma the men's skills shame. They know just to use their tongues. His tongue is smooth like a babies behind.

Ty: Every inch of you is beautiful baby.

He mumbles and locks his lips on mine. I stand on my tiptoes and kiss him back with so much confidence that his all mine. He picks me up and lays me on the bed and nestle himself between my thighs. I balance myself with my elbows and help him take out his T-shirt. He returns the favour and throws my clothes all over the room, leaving me in my damp underwear. My hands explore his naked body, his chest, broad shoulders and his back. He feels so good against my hands. I pool out more juices and lock my legs on him when he presses his hard on. I'm eagerly

volunteering for this. The last time I did was when I was back in high school, giving in on peer pressure. I wanted to experience the sex all my peers were talking about but instead all I got was a very painful experience. The guy humped on me the whole night not caring if I was enjoy or what. I was in pain for the whole time and I laid there and let him do as he pleased because I didn't want to be mocked by him and his friends. The hours were terribly moving slow and they felt like a death penalty I needed to escape. I endured everything he gave me on that night because I also wanted to have something to tell the circle of friends Lihle introduced me to.

He palms my left breast and pinches my nipple. Multiple hisses escape my lips as he keeps repeating the action from one breast to the other until he wraps his tongue around them. My hands automatically go to his head and shove him further to them

moaning. My breath hitches in my throat when he moves the underwear to the side and touch my wet flesh. Gasping, I fist the blankets beside me as his fingers rub and flick on my sensitive bundle of nerves. He parts my folds and kisses my lips when I whimper. When his fingers dip inside me sensationally, I knew I'm a gone girl.

Me: Ty

I scream out and grab his arm. He moves to my ear and whisper.

Ty: Shhh! It's okay, I don't want my neighbours think I'm slaughtering you.

Did this man just shush me? How can I do that when his rocking me like that? Another jolt of pleasure sent me buckling upward and scream like a dying goat. Maybe I should take his advice and shush my mouth because I do sound like I'm being slaughtered but I can't.

Ty: Does it feel good?

I nod biting my lip. He presses harder and I scream.

Ty: Words baby.

Me: Good God Tyson it feels so good.

I breathily muttered unsure what was happening. It was like having your freedom back after being grounded by your parents. My body has never felt so much alive like it is now.

Me: Wait!

I cry out when he repeats the action and nibble on my neck this time.

Ty: Do you really want me to?

He huskily muttered causing my core to clench, my climax sends away. I stiffen when I feel his cock on my entrance. That was his fingers all along? My body was lost to me that I couldn't even hear the sound his his pants dropping and differentiate between his fingers and girths.

Ty: Scream my name.

He commands as he enters me and I obey, rolling my eyes to the back of my head and scream his name.

Me: Tyson.

My body trembles as I cum again. He grunts and slid in and out of me and I cling on him.

Ty: Open your eyes.

I flip them open and lock them with his. The pain of him claiming my body was just as sweet as the pleasure he was offering. I lost the ability to make a sound as he sank deeper.

Ty: So warm

He exclaims caressing my body. My mouth gape, my core clenched uncontrollably. He groans, sitting back to hold me behind my knees and widen my legs.

Ty: So perfect.

With each declaration he sank deeper and deeper. My hoarse voice sag to the climax, losing the count of how many times my body gave out to the pleasure.

Me: Don't stop.

I breath out. He chuckles.

Ty: I didn't plan too.

He lowers his chest to mine and buries himself in me.

Ty: Are you tired?

He asks pulling out, slowly and torturously. I shake my head unable to speak and he slams into me. I gap widening my eyes

before I shut them. My head falls to the side and nails dug into the mattress.

Ty: Good! I need you to cum a few more times. We have the whole night.

He growls out picking up his pace. I'm too numb to even scream. I take back my words when I said he won't have the coochie. He can have it from Sunday to Sunday as long he does this to me. Noma come get your child back before she dies from so much pleasure.

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I'm trying by all means to sleep but my empty stomach doesn't want to let me. The man beside me is snoring like his life depends on it. I don't know how can he sleep while I'm hungry. The food we had earlier on doesn't even count as food in my books. I just wonder what the hell was going through his mind

when he chose his menu. He at least should have thought asking me if I like seafood or not. What would he have done if I was allergic to it? Slowly I release his hands on me then slip out of the bed. I tiptoe to the door and rush to the kitchen after opening it. Pulling the fridge open, I'm met by organic food in containers. I'll take anything at this point as long it's that nonsense I had earlier on. I can't believe I'm about to invade someone's fridge butt naked but who the hell cares? White are nudists anyway. Just as I pull the container from the fridge the sound of his footsteps makes its way to my ears. I close the fridge and wait for him to appear. He flicks on the lamp and yawns, rubbing his eyes.

Ty: Babe

Me: I came to drink water.

I blurt out lying through my teeth.

Ty: Come to bed.



He stretches out his hand for me, living me with no choice but to clip mine on his and let him lead him back to the bedroom.

Ty: I love you.

He declares claiming my mouth with a kiss.

Me: I love you too.

I manage to breath out in between the kiss. He breaks it and pecks me one more time.

Ty: Let's sleep I have a busy day planned for us tomorrow.

He yawns out. I nod and jump on the bed after him. He holds my shoulders and lightly squeeze them before he throws his leg on top of mine and close his eyes. I shift my eyes to the ceiling and stare at it, counting the hours till the next morning. I promised myself that I won't be eating like I'm at my house. I don't want to give him a bad impression on my first visit. Phela first impression lasts longer and besides his grocery needs to last the whole month. My stomach growls as he throws his leg on top of mine and sigh in his sleep. Let me just suffer in silence, I close my eyes and wait for my slumber to take over.

**TYSON**

The noise coming from downstairs woke up from my slumber. I slowly unwrap my hands on her waist and jump out of the bed. Squinting my eyes, I search for my boxers on the floor and slip them on after locating them. I slip my hand under the pillow and slowly pick up my gun making sure I don't wake the queen up. I hold my breath as she mumbles something I can't make out in her sleep. Bending down, I peck her lips then padded to the door. I cock the gun and pull it open. Tiptoeing downstairs, I'm crossing my fingers that the intruder is only one person. I would die if anything can happen to the woman sleeping upstairs. Judging by the structure of the body my intruder is a man. His bloody eating my food with no care in the world. I place the gun on his hand.

Me: Who the fuck are you and who sent you?

Voice: Can't a man eat in peace in this house?

Me: (shocked) The fuck Oliver!

I move the gun from his hand and stumbled towards the light and flick them on.

Oliver: Tadda.

He shoves another spoon in his mouth while my jaw drops to the floor.

Oliver: Tadda sounds girlish. Surprise will do.

I shake my head and make way towards him and pull the chair before I lower myself opposite him. I place the gun on top of the table.

Me: When did you get here? And why the fuck didn't you tell me?

Oliver: It wouldn't have been a surprise if I told you.

I shake my head again. His a lost cause this one.

Oliver: Took the first flight this evening because there was nothing to report. Yvonne seems to accept her situation and I got tired of following her around.

Me: It's fucken 3am Oliver I could have blown your brains out.

Oliver: It wouldn't have gotten to that point.

He waves his hand dismissively. Remind me again why I'm still this idiot best friend?

Me: You're in my house in the wee hours of the morning off course it would have gotten to that.

Oliver: You worry to much my friend.

His not taking everything I say seriously. I leap up to my feet and snatch the plate from him and dump it in the sink.

Me: Go and eat at your house.

Oliver: (frowning) What's the fun in that?

Me: I have a guest and I don't want you near he...

His eyes lit up as he interrupts me.

Oliver: Who is she? Do I know her?

He fires the questions at once.

Me: (smirking) I'm not telling you shit.

He chuckles.

Oliver: I'm guessing it's someone I know.

He jumps to his feet and sprint out of the room.

Oliver: I don't need you to tell me who is she but I'll find out of myself.

He yells on the side of the room causing me to run after him.

Oliver: Once I get upstairs you can't stop me.

He mumbles ascending the stairs. I'm hot on his heels. He pulls the door and freezes on the entrance.

Swazi: Ty

Me: I'm here baby.

Swazi: The aircon can you please switch off. I'm feeling cold.

Me: Of course baby.

I push the fool out of the room and make my way to my side of the bed and open the drawer. I take out the remote and switch off the aircon.

Me: Better?

She fixes her pillow and nods before drifting back to her slumber. I pull the blankets to her head and place a kiss on her forehead and padded to the door. The fool is still frozen on my door step. I drag him to the corridors.

Oliver: Is that?

I smirk nodding.

Oliver: Shit! When? How?

I chuckle.

Me: One question at a time.

Oliver: Fuck shortbase is your woman?

I smile like a retard.

Me: Best believe it bro she's all mine.

Oliver: Shit I need a recap of what happened while I was away.

I gawk at him. He raises his hand in surrender.

Oliver: What? I need to be on the loop.

Me: You sound like those gossiping mongers right now.



Oliver: I don't fucken care.

A mischievous glint flicks in his eyes and I brace myself.

Oliver: So did you hit it? How was it?

I chuckle before smirking.

Me: I ain't telling you shit.

Oliver: Come on man we are friends.

I shake my head and turn on my heels.

Oliver: Pussy must be good abi.

I roar in laughter.

Me: Better than anything you have ever tasted my boy.

I mutter whistling and shut the door behind me. Padding to the couch, I turn it to face the bed and watch her sleep. She's a vision of hedonistic beauty, a sin I want to slake my desires with. Her thick thighs are encased in black velour, and the rest of her is bare to me at last. She leans her shoulders back against the pillow as I drink her in. The dark patch of curls over her sex, the silvery stretch marks decorating her hips and soft stomach, her luscious curves and heavy

full breasts with peaked nipples. She sighs in her sleep and turn to sleep on her stomach causing the blanket to reveal her smooth tone skin and her butt. My breath hitches in my throat while the blood rushes straight to my cock, waking it up from it's slumber. I grunt closing my eyes.

Me: Easy boy. We have the whole weekend with her and we can't tire her now because she might not return. We don't want to be seem like a sex minioc.

I mumble leaping up to my feet and cover her with the sheet and make my way back to my chair and just watch her sleep. I'm trying to come to terms that she's really here in my house

as my woman. She's really here in my bed, sleeping naked. I chuckle and lean back on the chair. She's fucken here and naked all for me. Fuck! How did I get so lucky?

## **ZOBUHLE**

Being in this place feels so foreign to me. I don't know how many times I have I convinced my mind that I'm in the right place it's just that it's been so long and it feels like I'm in the wrong place. The stares I got upon my arrival at the supermarket are the stares of pity I recieved I hate them. It's been 5 years already and they should stop looking at me like that. I know what happened to my family and boyfriend is a tragedy anyone could have faced but why are they still giving me the looks? It makes me feel some type of way that maybe something is really wrong with me but I know it's not. People may move with times but not village people. These old people can make you relive that agonizing day you're so desperate to forget. I haven't thought about that day they broke the news to me in years but as soon I got here; I felt each and everyone's piercing gaze on me. I felt the lose, the pain, the heart

wrenching sobs that escaped my mouth on that particular day and the endless questions and tears that never stop flowing in my eyes. I felt like the old Zobuhle who was so lost in her pain. I didn't get any better when Mandla's mother made me feel like the devil's agent. Her blazing eyes were enough reminder that I was back to where it all started and as much as the years go by the woman will still hate me from what happened to her son. She never liked me anyway so her stares didn't bother me much.

Me: There's an off-ramp after the hump please take it.

He tears his gaze from the road and nod at me on the view mirror before he shifts them back on the road. I wipe my palm on my dress and place my trembling hands on my lap. I could feel my heart pounding harder on my ribcage as we approach my destination.

Mike: Where are we going again?

Me: The cemetery.

He quickly whips his head to the mirror and thinned his eyes.

Me: It's something I have to do.

Mike: Does your hus...

I interject.

Me: No he doesn't know and he doesn't have to know. You will not tell him. Park at the entrance I will walk from there.

He chuckles.

Mike: I don't take orders from you. You don't pay my salary.

I smirk.

Me: Technically Micheal my husband is your boss which makes me his wife your boss also. So when I say jump you should start asking how high.

I sass at him emphasizing on the wife part. Dammit I didn't know it felt this good to call someone else your husband. I should have done this sooner. He parks the car on the entrance.

Me: Wait here I'm coming back.

Not waiting for his response, I step out of the car and collect my breath. My phone chimes in my hand as I walk further in graveyard. I roll my eyes when I see the caller ID. I should have known his Nigerian ass won't be loyal to me like his loyal to my husband.

Ade: The fuck are you doing in the cemetery?

That's the first thing he mutters when I answer the call. No greeting or anything. I have a lot to teach this man.

Me: Hello baby and how are you doing today?

I sarcastically mumble.

Ade: Don't patronise me Zobuhle.

He spits out. I heavily sigh.

Me: Look it's something I need to do in order for to me move on.

Ade: In the cemetery? Are you practising witchcraft in day broad light now? No juju can work on me.

I crack up so hard.

Me: Let me call you back when I'm done practising witchcraft. You're disturbing me.

I hang up shaking my head and switch off the phone. He was sulking the whole day yesterday when I had to live and he wanted to accompany me but I wanted to do this alone. I owe it to myself to get better and him. Our relationship has improved to what it once was and everytime he initiates sex I always sings the same boring song that I'm not ready. It feels like I'm betraying Mandla and I don't want to feel like that anyone. The guy was the love of my life and it's time I let him go. His gone and his never coming back. I have someone who loves me just like I love him but I'm pulling back from him. He waited 5 long years for me to be with him and it's time he gets his wife fully. I want to give myself to him mind, body and soul. The few blowjobs here and there are not quite enough for him but he doesn't complain. At the back of my head I know his getting it from someone else and I remind myself everytime that I have no right to be angry at him because I'm the one denying him his rights. Everyone thinks it's everything to do with the rape but my therapist thinks otherwise. I'm just carrying the spirit of the dead with me and it's time I let it go. My heart skips a bit when I stand on top of his grave. I swallow hard and release my breath. I had a whole speech rehearsed for this but not a single word from that speech comes to mind right now.



Me: Hey

This looks harder than I thought.

Me: I meet someone and his good to me. We are married to cut the story short.

I crouch on th grave and pick out the weeds surrounding it.

Me: His been good to me for years now but I have always pushed him away because I felt like I was betraying you. I didn't want to love him the same way I loved you.

A lump forms in my throat.

Me: We meet under different circumstances but there's never a day where he treated me like shit.

I chuckle as tears roll down my cheeks.

Me: Sometimes I see your traits in him and that scares me. His love is genuine just like yours was and I'm scared to give him my heart for only him to leave me just like you did.

The pain chokes me causing for more tears to gush down.

Me: I don't want what happened to you also happen to him. I know life is unpredictable and anything can happen but I'm scared of the after effects of that. I'm trying to work on myself and work on my marriage with him but I sometimes feel like I don't deserve him. His pure and I'm just this damaged person who is poor.

I wipe the tears that escaped my eye and sniff.

Me: I've been pushing him away because I have been carrying you all along with me and I don't want that anymore for me. We had our whole life planned and it didn't happen the way we planned. We always talked about getting married and having kids after I graduated but they took you away from me before

all of that can happen. I'm asking you from the bottom of my heart to let me go just like I'm letting you go.

I choke on the tears.

Me: It's a very difficult request to ask from someone you love but it has to be done. You're no longer alive and I can't wait for you forever. Life moves on and I have to move on with it.

Carrying your spirit with me has been pushing every guy that approached me on this 5 years upon your absence but he stuck around and endured everything I threw at him. He's been patiently waiting for me and it's time I return the same courtesy he's giving me. I'm scared that I might love him more than I loved you. I don't know whether that's a good thing or a bad thing. Please just show me any sign so I would know how do you feel about this. I didn't want to move on with him without speaking to you first because that would have been disrespectful and it would have caused the aggressive me to show up again. I've been fighting each guy to look my way and you know that's not me. I'm a coward by nature but I have been doing that for the past five years of my life and I don't want that for myself anyone. I'm tired of fighting and feeling pity for myself. Unforeseen occurrences happened and nobody could have predicted what would have happened in the past

but I know I can change my future. It's looking so bright and it would be stupid of me not to take that blind leap of faith in love again. It would be stupid of me to wait for you knowing you're not coming back again.

I sniff back the tears and mucus.

Me: Please just show me any sign that you atleast acknowledge my request or show up in my dreams so you can guide me through a ceremony if there's one to cleanse myself and break the spiritual tie I have with you. (crying) You're dead Mandla and you can't keep fighting every man coming close to me through me. Stop being selfish and let me live my life. You left me and what are you expecting me to do without you? You choose to leave on your own and you can't drag me along with you.

I'm screaming on top of my lungs and crying at the same time. I laughed my lungs out when my therapist told me I'm carrying the spirit of the dead inside me. I was sure that she was losing her mind because what she was saying was absurd and unbelievable but the signs were already there. At first I was convinced that I was hating all men because of the rape but

that was not the case. Mandla was fighting tooth and nails through me on each guy who court me. The violence, rude attitude and many more other things I could count was his doings all along. The pattern was familiar and has been there from the beginning but I was too blind to see it. The old Zobuhle I know and grew up as is a very shy and soft spoken person. No matter how much you upset her she would have never yelled at you because she doesn't have that yelling voice in her. Reflecting on my childhood and now I knew she might have a point because I was not there when Mandla was buried and even when I was discharged from the hospital I didn't have the courage to face him in his grave. They robbed me a chance to say goodbye to him and I didn't want us to meet again in this place. If my therapist didn't insist on those one on one sessions I would have been blind even now. If she didn't insist on annoying me each time I met her for our sessions I wouldn't have known that my problems are beyond what I thought were. If Ade didn't force me to go back to therapy I could have been screaming at him right now and made his life miserable until kingdom comes. I owe that man my life.

Heavy rain breaks me from my thoughts. I shudder and continue picking up weeds.

Me: Rest in eternal peace my love and continue looking out for me. Until we meet again.

I leap up to my feet and dust my hands on my dress and march back to the car. I bump to Mike on my way.

Mike: Thank God.

Me: I wasn't gone for long.

I protest and open the backseat and slide in. He shakes his head and close the door before jogging to his side. Instead of driving off he picks up his phone from the dashboard and makes a call.

Mike: Yes she's here.

I roll my eyes and lean on the window.

Mike: Hold on.

He shoves the phone in my hand.

Mike: He wants to talk to you.

I sigh and pick up the phone.

Me: Hey

Ade: Don't make me regret giving you this freedom. When you get back I'm chaining you to the bedpost for life.

I giggle.

Me: Chile! You're dramatic.

He chortles on the end of the line.

Me: I needed to talk to him.

Silence is what I get. I know he knows who I am talking about.

Me: Babe?

Ade: Did it work?

Me: I don't know but I asked for him for a sign and it started to rain cats and dogs.

Ade: Come home so we can talk.

Me: Okay.

Ade: I love you

I smile.

Me: Me too



I tease him.

Ade: You too what? I'm not your friend Zobuhle.

I laugh shaking my head. It's so easy to tease him and he hasn't picked that up.

Me: I love you too and my phone caught the rain.

Looking at me sounding like a gold digger! But if I don't exploit him who will? The man can buy a private jet without a blink of an eye when he wants to and it would be stupid of me not to exploit that.

Ade: That's more like it. Whose you too? You are full of shit woman.

I burst into laughter as he disconnects the call.

Mike: We are here.

I frown and look out of the window and indeed the car is parked outside my house.

Mike: I need to fuel the car so behave.

I giggle handing him his phone and step out of the car.

Me: Thanks for the vote of confidence.

I mumble under my breath. Just as I close the door a voice I never wanted to hear even in my nightmare yells my name. I could my stomach twisting and churning on me while bile rises from the pit of my stomach and fills my mouth. I turn to give her my undivided attention with my face already scrunch up in disgust. I can't help it. God will just have to forgive me on this one but I loathe this woman passion. There stood the woman who almost shuttered my dreams with her last born I assume. The poor child is so dirty and barefooted following behind her in the rain.

Uthando: So it's true that you're back.

She sizes me up with her eyes and stops them on the rock on my finger and her eyes immediately change to anger. Farrah God I should start practising to twerk for that man. His the one who insisted I wear my ring all the time and I didn't see this necessity for it until that day at the airport. After that encounter with that bitch I turned my room upside down looking for it and I started to wear it to show people I'm off the market and would it be an evil thing to love that look on her face?

Uthando: I see you're married.

I nod.

Uthando: Didn't it cross your mind to invite me in your wedding like your best friend?

I'm rolling on the floor with laughter. Whose best friend?  
Bathong this girl is delusional. Let me clap once on her  
behalf. Her eyebrows knit up.

Me: Sorry I have a phobia of laughing when people are talking  
shit.

I mutters waving my hand dismissively. Her breath accumulates  
while her chest bounces up and down.

Uthando: You think you're better wena just because you're  
wearing that ring in your finger.

She hisses not caring about the child crying beside her while the  
rain keeps assaulting them.

Me: Point of correction bitch I damn know well I'm better. I  
don't think I just know so.

I clap back matching her voice.

Me: You problem is that you think I'm that size 42 Zobuhle who didn't know how to fight for herself. You see Uthando life threw me in the deepest shit I never thought I would survive but with God grace I'm still standing in front of the pathetic, back stabbing witch I once called a friend. What you did to me never broke me but made me stronger. The depression just made me stronger than ever.

My therapist would be so happy to hear me standing up for myself and not self loathing myself. I also can't believe the once chubby me has grown a backbone. Depression really sucked me up. I was once a size 42 when growing up but now I'm a size 28 and I really love myself better than I was before. I should really slaughter a chicken for depression and celebrate it because I never give in to those sinister thoughts of ending my life. Her snorts breaks me out of my thoughts.

Uthando: I just wonder who did you serve the damage pussy too in order for him to marry you?

Again I'm laughing my lungs out and wipe the imaginary tear.

Me: I see you're still so pathetic and jealous. Even if I did secure the bag by opening my legs baby girl it's not your vagina that I'm using but mine so why are you concerned? Should I get you Vaseline so I can soothe the wound?

I clap back. She rises her hand to slap me but I hold the hand and twist it.

Me: Try that shit with me on more time ngizokubonisa unyoko.

She squirms and screams so more. I will slap that bitchness out of her faster than the Gautrain she doesn't know me.

Me: I will clean these streets with your face mina. Ungjwayela amasimba wena.

Voice: Really Zobuhle?

I shift my eyes to locate the voice. When did he get here?  
Didn't he say he was going to fuel the car?

Me: Don't look at me like that she started it.

He pinches his bridge nose and sigh defeatedly.

Mike: Let her go.

I shrug my shoulders and release her. She clutches her arm in her chest and grips her daughter with the other hand and sprint out of my yard, leaving me in stitches. That's the way to deal with trash.

**YVONNE**

My mother's goal is to drive me to the next mental asylum to be admitted. If I working or anything I would have long moved out but sadly I have no penny in my bank account. I hate depending on my parents especially at this age. Sitting at home and flipp through the channels is another thing driving me insane. If someone would have told me I would be down and out someday I would have laughed my lungs out. My sister walks in just as I scroll down the channels.

Nancy: Hey sis

I sigh nodding.

Nancy: What's with the sombre mood?

Me: I'm bored to death. If I stay one more day in this house I swear I would lose my mind.



She giggles.

Nancy: Mommy dearest driving you to insanity?

Me: You have no idea.

She laughs.

Nancy: Actually I do have an idea. Your mother is ....

She trails off.

Nancy: The devil's agent. No offence though.

Me: None taken.

Nancy: So what are you planning to do with your life?

Me: I don't know yet what I'm going to do.

I release a breath.

Me: A part of me still want to fight for my family and another part of me just wants to let things be.

Nancy: Yvonne?

She screeches causing me to flinch.

Me: What?

Nancy: I thought you were over him.

Me: That's what I also thought but I was just fooling myself. I love that man with everything in me. Everytime I think about him my heart just bleeds. I have never loved like that before.

She shakes her head defeated.

Nancy: I don't know what's your obsession with this guy. You're a very beautiful, smart woman and any man would be so lucky to have you as their girlfriend or wife.

Me: I don't want any man but him. There can never be another Tyson. There's one only of him and sadly he hates my guts.

Nancy: That should tell you that his over you. You were doing so great this few past weeks what changed?

Me: I think loneliness is slowly creeping in on me. I have known him my whole life and I would be difficult for me to move from that.

Nancy: How would you know if you don't try? There will come a time where Scarlett will need you and he won't be able to stop that. All you have to do is be patient with yourself and stop thinking about him because I know he's not thinking about you

as we speak. Stop giving people who don't give a shit about you so much room in your life. Let's hit the club this evening so you can let loose. Just to get your groove back.

Voice: You're not about to turn my daughter to another version of you Nancy.

Nancy and I both roll our eyes in unison.

Nancy: That's my cue.

Mom: What's this nonsense I'm hearing that you want to drag Yvonne to the club?

Nancy leaps up to her feet and place a kiss on my cheek.

Nancy: Hit me up if you're game.

She mumbles ignoring the fuming woman.

Mom: I'm talking to you Nancy.

I jump to my feet and accompany her to the door.

Me: I'm definitely game. I don't want to spend another evening with that grump woman. You would swear she doesn't have a man in her life.

We burst in laughter.

Nancy: Don't let her hear what you're saying because she will say I'm corrupting you.

I roll my eyes.

Me: I didn't know there's a school for corruption.

She playfully shoves my shoulder and slide in her car. She honks once and speeds off the driveway. I sigh and padded back inside.

Mom: You're...

I rise my hand interrupting her.

Me: Not now mother.

I make my way to the lounge and pick up my phone the ascend the stairs while she's screaming my name on top of her lungs. I don't have time for her tantrums. I need to choose an outfit for later. Nancy is right about one thing. Tyson is not thinking about me so why should I bother my brain and think about him? Pulling the closet door, I search for the perfect dress that will describe the evening. Bold and fierce would be my theme tonight. Not to slutty and desperate but definitely screams fuck me. I'm opening this legs baby for the lucky guy who will sweep me off my feet.

## ***NOMASWAZI***

Flipping my eyes open, I nearly scream as I lock them to a set of blue ones staring at me. Doesn't he know a heart attack is something that kills people? I'm too young to die from a heart attack. Imagine my enemies in hell or heaven asking me what was the cause of my death and I would say heart attack. They would roll on the floor in laughter for eternity. Who dies from such a thing?

Ty: I didn't mean to startle you.

Me: You scared me.

I murmur calming my abnormal heart rate.

Ty: I'm sorry.

Me: It's okay but please don't do it again.

When is he living the room? My bladder is full and I can't be parading butt naked in front of him. I know he already saw a lot last night but I'm still uncomfortable.

Ty: Just that I still can't believe you're here.

Me: Well best believe it cause I'm not going anywhere. I'm here for life and I will continue annoying you.

He chuckles. It's a miracle I manage to sleep last night. I was sure I going to be awake the whole night until morning but my stomach behaved.

Ty: I don't think there's a day where you will annoy me.

Doesn't this man know my name is Nomaswazi? Of course I live to annoy people.



Ty: I brought you breakfast.

My stomach churns as he peels the lid off. Please be not those creatures. I would scream my lungs out if I see them. I seriously don't understand how his mind works. I'm Black and I don't eat such food but he saw it as the best meal to feed me on our first real date.

Me: Brunch?

Ty: (frowning) What did you think it would be?

Me: Sea creatures.

His frown deepens.

Ty: Huh?

I giggle nervously and wave my hand off.

Me: I'm just being silly. Thank you my love.

I try to pick up the tray but he holds tightly on the end of it. Confusion swirl in my eyes as I rise them to him.

Ty: Allow me.

He picks up the cutlery and start dicing the food to small pieces. He scoops it up and blows it before place it in between my lips. I automatically open my mouth and allow him to feed me. My morning breath can go to hell for now because I'm being Princess Diana for a day. I'm resisting the urge to jump out of this bed and scream Mama I Made It. Who would have thought the whole me would be fed breakfast by a white man nogal? My ancestors really deserve seven goats for this one. It shows that they are not sleeping but working. Mandlovu's witchcraft won't work on me now because I'm not in her league. I'm a brand bitch. He places the glass on the tray after I chunked down the juice.

Me: Thank you.

He flashes me a smile and shakes his head.

Ty: You don't have to thank me . It's my job as your man.

If I was shades lighter I would be beet red like a tomato. My cheeks are probably asking themselves why am I hurting them so early in the morning. He heavily sighs.

Ty: I've got a meeting my love and I'm sorry I won't be able to join you on your shopping sprees.

Me: (frowning) Shopping?

Ty: Yes. I was going to take you out for shopping and we can have lunch later on unless you don't want to.

Me: I don't understand the shopping part. It's not like I need new clothes or anything.

Ty: I didn't say you needed new clothes. I'm sorry if I offended you but I thought that's what all women like and love.

Me: Well not me. I hate shopping but it would be stupid of me to turn down that offer.

He chuckles shaking his head and picks up the tray and padded to the door. I jump out of the bed and sprint to the bathroom. Flushing the toilet after my business

I stare at my reflection in the mirror. Where was I? Oh, yes the scream. I jump up and down screaming. The door bust open as I'm screaming. In comes Tyson with a gun in his hands. I freeze on my spot. My brain sends a message to my hands and they automatically rise up.

Ty: What's going?

He mutters opening the shower door and peeking through. He closes it and open the cabinets, searching for something.

Ty: Are you hurt?

Like a robot, I shaking my head. He looks behind the door and makes his way towards me. He scans me with his eyes and engulf me in his arms.

Ty: I heard you screaming and I thought you were hurt. I thought someone might have broke in and was hurting you.

Did this guy forget about the security fence surrounding his house? I for one know that shit works very well so who would be stupid to jump that and break in? He breaks the embrace and shakes me. I snap out of my frozen state and narrow my eye at him.

Ty: You got lost in you head.

I'm still trying to come to terms that he has a gun. This man is dangerous and he can blow my head off when he wants too. Lord what have I got myself into? I must trade careful around

him if I still want to see my 30th birthday. Concern flashes in his eyes as I smack my lips shut.

Ty: Talk to me.

I shift my eyes to the gun then back to him. He follows my line of sight and cuss under his breath.

Ty: Fuck I tend to forget that you're not Yvonne.

I know he didn't just compare me to his ex.

Me: Is that a bad thing?

Ty: No baby. It means you're pure and I would like you to remain like that.

I nod turn on my heels and padded to the cabinet to look for a toothbrush. I don't know whether is paranoi or what but I feel

like everything I'm going to do from now on will be compare to his ex.

Ty: Babe?

I fake a smile and turn to him.

Me: I'm okay.

I lie through my teeth. I deeply hurt I won't lie. If I knew he was looking for his ex in me then I wouldn't have bothered myself and my heart. A lonely tear roll down my cheek as I open the toothpaste lid. My happiness was short-lived. At least I would have the memory stored in my head and heart even though he fed me shitty food last night.

**TYSON**

I've been observing her since that little incident in the bathroom and I can safely say she's a bit distant. I don't know what changed from that moment but I'm definitely sure she's not the same woman she was yesterday. There's something bothering her and she refuses to let me in. Ain't relationship suppose to be a two way street? All about trust and letting each other in so you can know your partner better.

Swazi: All done.

She cheerfully muttered snapping me out of my daze.

Me: Babe you know I love you right?

She nods.



Me: Trust me to be your man. I can see something is bothering to but you keeps saying you're fine even though you're not. Bottling up your feelings is not good at all. There will come a time whereby everything you have been bottling in will want to be let out and you will explode.

Swazi: (frowning) I'm well aware of that.

I leap up to my feet and round the counter. Wrapping my arms around her waist, I peck her lips.

Me: I can see you're battling with your mind.

Swazi: I promise you I'm okay.

Me: I didn't say you're not okay but I can see doubt written all over you.

She heavily sighs and unwrap my around her. She throws the dishcloth in the sink then lean on it.

Swazi: It's something silly.

Me: If it's bothering you then it's not silly.

Swazi: Seriously Ty just let it go.

Me: I promised myself that the next woman that comes after Yvonne I will do better than how I did on her. I promised myself that I will consider her feelings more than anything.

She forces her lips to stretch into a smile.

Swazi: You worry too much. If I could let you inside my head you won't survive. There's a lot of doubt, insecurities and the list goes on. I just felt like you're looking for your baby mama in me.

TF?

Me: That's ridiculous.

She nervously giggles while her eyes run around the whole room.

Swazi: I did say it's silly.

Me: Look at me.

She shakes her head still refusing to maintain eye contact.

Me: Baby look at me.

She raises her head and lock her glossy eyes with mine. Am I missing something?

Me: We are in relationship and I don't want you think anyone is superior than the other. If you don't like something let me know so I won't repeat it. You feelings matters too.

I close the gap between us and cup her face.

Me: Let me in, inside your fears and insecurities.

A tear escape her eye.

Me: Let me in.

Swazi: I just feel like you're wasting your time with me.

Me: Why do you feel like that?

Tears fill her eyes before they stream down.

Me: Swazi.

She sucks in a deep breath.

Swazi: You said sometimes you forget that I'm not Yvonne.

What does Yvonne has to do with this? Oh, hell no she better have not contacted my woman or else I'm going to burn her alive if she knows what's good for her.

Swazi: I just felt like you're looking for her in me.

The medal for best idiot in the planet goes to me. I can't believe my own woman is crying because of me. I fucken made her cry unaware.

Swazi: I can't be your ex Tyson and if you're looking for her in me then you're looking at wrong place.

Me: Baby I never said I'm looking for another Yvonne.

Swazi: You didn't have to but you're actions were saying so. I can't be someone I'm not just to please you. If I'm not good enough for you just let me go before we go deeper.

Me: I'm sorry if I made you feel like that. I don't need another her because I would be self sabotaging myself. There are many women out there, different shapes and sizes. I'm talking about mixed races and one race but my eyes got captured by the short woman who wears glasses and works at Noma's bakery.

A blush creeps up on her lips. I chuckle.

Me: I choose you because when I looked at your eyes I saw my future. I saw the mother of my kids even though I'm not so sure lately.

Her eyebrows furrow.

Swazi: Why?

Me: Because you once let a child cry herself to sleep just because you were teaching her how to console herself.

She cracks up so hard. I smile shaking my head at the memory.

Swazi: You saw how terrorising she was and I had to come up with a plan.

I chortle.

Me: That scene left me scared of how you're going to handle our kids.

She laughs.

Swazi: You're just exaggerating.

Me: I know Oliver would agree with me.

Swazi: Okay let's just agree to disagree then.

Me: Fine but all I'm saying baby is that I chose you because I fell for you. I did weird shit just I can see your voice and see your beautiful smile.

She playfully rolls her eyes blushing.

Swazi: Just like when you got shot on purpose.

Me: See?

Swazi: I still haven't punished you for that. I did say you're a criminal.

I laugh.

Me: Your criminal.

Swazi: Khethile-Khethile I have no choice.



We both burst into laughter.

Swazi: I don't want to get involve in your shady deals Tyson. I don't even want to know what you do because the gun speaks volumes. That was the last time you involve me in your nonsense. I don't care how much you're dying or what but please don't involve me.

She firmly muttered. Did she just raised her voice and ordered me? Fuck, that a huge turn on. That's how Mrs Jones handles matters. I smirk.

Swazi: What?

Me: I'm resisting the urge to bend you on this counter and have my way with you until you tell me all your insecurities while screaming.

Swazi: (blushing) Ty

I smirk and pin her on the sink. Her breath accumulates.

Me: That was fucken sexy baby and it's a huge turn on.

She giggles. Music to my ears.

Me: You're special and unique. You're beautiful inside and out and don't let insecurities make your doubt my love for you.

She nods.

Me: Give me a kiss.

She pecks my lips and innocently bats her eyelashes.

Me: I didn't say peck my lips. I said kiss me.

Swazi: You're forbidden from getting kisses from me.

She pushes me aside and makes her way out of the room. I frown and follow her.

Me: Why am I forbidden?

Swazi: Because you fed me sea creatures last night and for that my love no kisses, no touching and no cookie for you.

My eyes widen.

Me: What?

She's kidding right? She wouldn't do that to me after tasting the forbidden fruit.

**ZOBUHLE**

I packed my belongings and boarded a flight back home this morning. I didn't know I would be home sick so soon but I didn't see any reason for me to stay back at home because what I did what I had to do. I don't know whether Mandla heard me on the other side or what but that's not going to stop me from living my best life. Mike looked at me like a madwoman when I told him we were living but what can I say I miss my Igbo man. Everytime I think about him my stomach flips and gets filled with butterflies.

Me: Can you drive a little bit faster Mike.

Mike: You out of all people know how Joburg traffic is.

He retorts and moves with the queue of cars in front of us. I blow out a sigh and lean on the window. Two days without that man and I feel like I'm losing my mind. If it was up to me I would have caused an accident by overtaking and ignoring the robots. Don't look at me like that because I can't help it. I'm giddy and I just want to get home and see my man.

Mike: You look like a kid who just got her Christmas clothes.

I snort.

Me: Thank you for noticing.

I sarcastically mumble. He chuckles

Mike: What got you so hyped up?

Me: Just want to get home that's all.

Mike: You mean you just want to get home and see Ade. You know his yours right.

He teases smirking at me. I blush and cast my eyes on the window.

Me: I don't know what you're talking about.

Mike: Is it?

Me: Yep.

I pop the P and innocently smile at him.

Mike: If you say so but I definitely know he also missing you too.

My eyes widen. I jump on the seat and lean forward.

Me: Really? Did he tell you that?

He burst into laughter.

Mike: Didn't you say you're not rushing me to get to him?

If I was light in skin I would have been too shades lighter.

Me: Shut up!

He laughs and shakes his head. I smile rolling my eyes and lean back on the armrest. Finally the traffic moves and I'm crossing my fingers we don't come across another one.

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I'm already annoyed as the car finally parks in the driveway. I swear Mike was driving slow on purpose. I jump out of the car already fishing for my house keys and rush inside.

Mike: Your bags.

He yells after me.

Me: Came with them.

I yell back and pick up my pace. I can hear his hyena laughter behind me but I ignore it. Throwing the door open, the first

thing that welcomes me is music blasting very loud. The butterflies in my stomach returns as I hear his voice singing along to the music.

♪♪ There goes my baby

(Ooh girl, look at you)

You don't know how, good, it

Feels to call you my girl

There goes my baby

Loving everything you do

Ooh girl, look at you ♪♪

I smile and lean on the door frame and watch as his muscles flex as he flips what's inside the pan. His in his shorts

barefooted and no shirt on. I lick my lips and continue watching. He turns off the stove and turns to the table. He pauses on his steps and lock his eyes on mine. My knees wobbly while my heart skips a beat.

Ade: How long have you been standing there?



I shudder at his husky voice. Farrah God please do not lead me into temptations. Has his voice been like this or is my inner whore come to the front to play? His eyebrows queck up and I automatically dart my tongue out and wet my dry lips.

Ade: Zobuhle.

Jizas Christ is that drool escaping on my lips? He chuckles and shakes his head and places the pan back of the stove after dishing up the eggs on his plate. He stumbles towards my way. take a step back causing him to smirk.

Ade: Listen to that.

I cause on my steps and listen to the song playing.

♪♪ Bet you ain't know that I be checking you out

When you be putting your heels on

I swear your body's so perfect, baby

How you work it, baby yeah  
I love the way that you be poking it out  
Girl, give me something to feel on  
So please believe we gone be twerking it out  
By the end of the night, baby

I've been waiting all day to wrap my hands  
Around your waist and kiss your face  
Wouldn't trade this feeling for nothing  
Not even for a minute  
And I'll sit here long as it takes  
To get you all alone  
But as soon as you come walking my way  
You gon' hear me say

There goes my baby  
(there she goes, there she goes, there she ..)  
(Ooh girl look at you)

You don't know how good it feels,  
To call you my girl (you don't know)  
There goes my baby,  
(There she goes, there she goes no, no, no)  
Loving everything you do  
Ooh girl, look at you 🎵🎵

Ade: I have been waiting two days to do this.

His breath fans my face. My heart pounds in my chest as he cages my face with his palms and smashes his cold lips on mine. I drop my bag and stand on my tiptoes and kiss him back. I wrap my legs on his waist as he scoops me up and pins me on the wall. My clothes fly around the room while I'm busy moaning while my inner hoe is singing Wagcina Nini Ukubona Indoda Inqunu. I can't believe I'm about to have my first time with this man in the kitchen. Where is his romantic bone?

***NARRATOR***

Mike placed the bags on the floor and made his way to the kitchen. He quickly changed his direction after seeing the two love birds in the kitchen. He closed the door behind him and locked it then slipped in the car in the driveway and speed of the premises, giving them the time they need. He knows Ade will text him or call if he needs anything. Finally his boss was also getting the love he deserves. He was so happy on his behalf and prayed nothing will come between them.

Ade glided his hand to her nipples and pinched them. She gasped and arched her back for more. He repeated the action before guiding the nipple in his mouth. Zozo threw her head back on the wall and moaned out.

Ade: I love you

He mumbled while sucking hard on her boob. He pulled away with a pop. Zozo bat her eyelashes and gulped hard as the man runs his eyes on her. He looked up at her and smiled. Ade

started to leave kisses in her neck all the way to jaw and slammed his lips on hers, kissing her hungrily. He slid a finger in between their bodies and rubbed her pussy flesh with two fingers. Zozo shrieked in his mouth and tensed up.

Ade: Relax.

He whispered breaking the kiss. She nodded and closed her eyes pushing every thought at the back of her head. This man was her husband. Her Ade and he will never hurt her.

Zozo: Ummmh!

She moaned out, throwing her back some more at the feeling causing his lips to curve into a smirk. He parted her pussy lips and entered a finger inside her and watched her whimper. He brought his mouth to her ear and whispered.

Ade: Be a big girl baby and take those fingers.

She shuddered nodding. He pulled the fingers out and she flipped her eyes open and glared at him. He chuckled and sucked his fingers and entered it inside her. Zozo stilled her back on the wall, she was becoming a moaning mess. Ade started to pump the two finger in and out of her. He curled his fingers.

Zozo: Oh god!

She moaned loudly and clutched Ade's arms tightly and sink her nails in them. He smirked.

Ade: How does it feel?

Zozo: Ohh!

She gasped when he gave her a hard thrust from his fingers.

Ade: I want an answer.

He snarled.

Zozo: Soooooo goood!

She slareed out drunk in euphoria. He chuckled. Removing his fingers from her heat, Zozo bit her lip hard to stop herself from whining. He stumbled to the counter and pushed everything to the floor with his hand while the other one still holding her in place. His entire breakfast scattered on the floor with the dishes. He placed her on the counter and widely open her thighs. Licking his lips, Ade bent down to kiss her wet slit. Zozo bit her fingers in lust. He flicked his tongue in her core, the sound of Ade's tongue licking her juices echoed.

Zozo: Ade.

She shivered in pleasure.

Ade: Mmmh?

The sound vibrated to her core causing more juices to spill out of her. She didn't know what to do with herself. The pleasure was too much for her, she was sure she was high without even smoking any drug. Was this sex all about? If this is what it's all about she wanted to do it everyday. She has deprived her body something so nice and now she understood the people who always gloat about how good sex is. She didn't even realise when he removed his boxers, he placed the tip of his cock on her throbbing pussy and rubbed it. She moaned and widely opened her legs more. His tip got covered with her wetness.

Ade: You like that sweetheart?

He grunted. Zozo vigorously nodded her head.

Zozo: More please.

In one thrust Ade entered inside her.

Zozo: Oh!



She cried out both in pain and pleasure. He pulled her towards him kissed her neck as he picked up his pace.

Zozo: Oh my.

She groaned, her nails stretching the counter. He went hard causing her lips to form an O shape.

Zozo: Oh  
god!

She exclaimed, Ade's balls hit her pussy as he fucked her harder.

Ade: Fuck

He grunted sinking in deep in her. He promised himself that their first time would be a love making but he couldn't help it but fuck her so hard for the years his been waiting on her. The woman was starved him and she didn't deserve any mercy from

him. Next she does shit like this she will think twice before starved him what's belongs to him. Zozo's stomach churned, a weird feeling was taking over her. He linked his forehead with hers and locked his eyes on hers.

Ade: Let it out sweetheart don't hold back.

Zozo wrapped her legs around his waist tightly. A knot formed in her stomach, her eyes rolled back. Ade saw her getting close and went faster.

Ade: Cum sweetheart.

He cooed.

Zozo: Adesola

She screamed.

Ade: That's my name baby.

He growled as his body shivered on in intensive pleasure and released his seed inside her. Zozo's body shook from the orgasm, squirting. Ade held her tight as they came down from their high.

Ade: (smirking) Would you look at that. Someone is a squirter.

He teases pulling out. A whimper escaped her lips before she snorted.

Zozo: Don't even think about gloating about that.

She threatened pointing an accusing finger at him. He laughed and raised his hand in surrender.

Zozo: Help me up and stop looking at me like that.

Ade: (amused) Like what?

Zozo: Like you just want to fuck me right now.

He roared in laughter.

Ade: I never said that.

He muttered in between his laughter, protesting.

Zozo: You didn't have to say out loud because your third leg is standing on.

She dropped her eyes to the organ that just gave her a delicious orgasm and pointed it with her eye making Ade to laugh harder.

Ade: I wouldn't mind for a second round.

Zozo: Nope you've crippled me.

She mumbled pushing him away from her and attempt to jump the counter but her legs failed her. She closed her eyes waiting for the impact on falling face first but it doesn't come.

Ade: Still wanting me far away from you?

His breath fanned her face. She shivered opening her eyes and find herself in her arms.

Zozo: A round of applause to my night and shining armour.

She sarcastically muttered rolling her eyes in the process. Ade chuckled and dropped her to the floor. She screamed.

Zozo: What the hell?

He smirked and shrugged his shoulders. Oh, how much he loved to toy with her and ruffle up her furthers.

Zozo: You can be an ass sometimes.

She clicked her tongue rubbing her butt.

Ade: You love me like that.

He turned on his heels and dragged his wobbly legs out of the kitchen. Zozo bit her lip seeing his firm butt while his cock dangled side to side as we walks out of the room.

Ade: I can feel your eyes on me.

He muttered not pausing on his steps. Zozo snorted.

Zozo: You're not all that you know. I've seen better.

He smirked

Ade: Right.

He hold the rails and went up the stairs to look for a towel while Zozo lied on the floor and pinched herself. She just got fucked after years and loved each minute of it. Their love and hate relationship was yet to blossom to something even more. His footsteps broke her out of her thoughts. She watched him from her spot and darted her tongue to wet her lips. The man was oozing confidence and nostalgic ego from his steps alone. That killer smile he just flashed her made her clit throb.

He dropped to his knees and place the towel besides her. Parting her legs, Ade played with her sensitive clit. Zozo's breath hitched in her throat. He increased the pace of his fingers over clit. Zozo parted her lips in pleasure but the man pulled away from her. Ade stifle the laughter bubbling at the back of his throat. If looks could kill he would be died right now.

Ade: What?

He innocently muttered loving the feeling of seeing her vulnerable and needy of him. Zozo clicked her tongue fuming. How dare he acts so innocent like he didn't do anything? Zozo got up from her laying position and gripped his cock ceasing his laughter. Ade hissed as she squeezed the veiny popping organ.

Ade: What are...

His words dead down in his throat as she brought the tip in her mouth and licked it.

Ade: Babe?

He thinned his eyes begging her. She feign innocence just like he did a minute ago.

Ade: Please.

She giggled shaking her head and took him in her mouth.

Ade: Fuck

His whole body shivered at the feeling of his manhood in her sassy mouth. He held her hair and buried his entire cock in her



mouth and fucked her. Tears seeped out of Zozo's eyes as she gagged. He pulled out of her mouth and brought his fingers in her cheeks and wipe the tears that escaped her eyes.

Ade: So beautiful.

She blushed. He ran his tatted finger in her lips.

Ade: So precious.

He kissed her lips staring into her eyes. There was no fear or doubt in them. The only thing he could see was lust. Zozo climbed on top of him and guided his cock in her slit. They both moaned as he stretched her walls. Goddamit the woman was a freak and Ade loved that she could match up her appetite. He looked at her through hooded eyes as she bounces up and down on him, moaning. She was a definition of beauty he has never come across before. He loved the fact that she keeps him on his toes and doesn't know what to expect from her. The adrenaline rush that runs through him every time he sets his eyes on her cannot be matched with anyone he has ever dated before. Was this woman truly his happily ever after? His

soulmate because he knows he was hers. Her movements become sloppy while her boobs jiggled due to the impact.

He flipped them and she laid her on her back. He brought her knees to her chest and furiously slammed on her, tapping her g-spot. Her body shook forcing a scream out of her orgasm washed over her. He grunted sinking deeper and deeper into her, chasing his own destination. He balled tightened before he groaned out like a dying patient, releasing everything he had in him. He pulled out and laid besides her on the floor panting.

Zozo: I need a wheelchair.

He bursted in laughter as they both try to catch their breath.

Ade: You're just exaggerating everything.

She giggled yawning. Her exhaustion was slowly kicking in on her. Ade jumped to his feet and scoop her up and padded to the nearest bedroom and place her on the bed. He went back to the kitchen and picked up his shorts and fired at text to all

his employees giving them a day off. Today is all about him and his wife with no helper involved. He looked at her sprawled out in the bed and placed the phone on the pedestal and crawled on the bed.

Ade: You will be the death of me.

He pulled her to his chest and kissed her parted lips before closing his eyes.

***NOMASWAZI***

Ty dropped me off at the mall and rushed to his meeting. He said Oliver might be the one picking me up if his meeting prolongs. I didn't know he was back in town. The last time I asked about him was that he was away on business and he switched the topic to something else. I think I'm finally get the hang of everything. From his business and his lifestyle. The man lives a very fast and dangerous life and I don't think I would survive if anything happens to him. I know if it someone else they would have packed their bags and never looked back or give him the time of the day to explain himself but who am I to judge him? It's his way of living and his way of feeding his family. I found him already in too deep in his shady dealing and I choose to turn a blind eye on it as long he doesn't involve me in it. The man has already accepted me the way I am the least I could do is support him and guide him should he need help from me but I doubt it will come to that.

Voice: Oh, that would look good on you.

I turn and find the a packer smiling at me. I smile back and run my hand on the fabric of the dress.

Me: You think?

Lady: I know so. Try it and let's see.

I nod and make my way to the fitting room and place the dress on the hanger and dump my bag on the floor. My heart thuddes in my ribcage as I throw the dress on. It's a Tulle Damas cocktail dress with a wrap style, Sweetheart Bodce and Detachable Cap sleeves. A beaded waist completes the look. I walk out of the fitting room and stand in front of the mirror to show her. She squeals in excitement.

Lady: You know the best part is that you can pick Champagne, Blush

Navy, Capri, Royal and Sangria.

I frown.

Me: What is that?

She rolls her eyes.

Lady: Colours you can choose from.

I nod and try to pull the dress to my knees. She slaps my hand away.

Lady: Stop doing that.

Me: I can't help it. It's too short.

Lady: That's the whole point of a cocktail dress. All of them are meant to be short and loose so you can party easily. You can wear it as a party dress or to even a function.

She slaps my hand again as I pull the dress. I sigh defeat and shift my eyes to the mirror. I must say though I do look and feel good in it.

Lady: Wait here I think I have other dresses that will fit you perfectly.

Me: Dresses?

She sprints out without replying to me. I shake my head and stumble back to the fitting room. She has turned this whole shopping to her's and it looks like I don't have a choice. A knock comes from the door before six dresses are thrown on the door. My eyes widened.

Lady: Try them on.

She muttered living no room for argument. I slip out of the dress and hang it on the hanger before throwing another dress on. She bangs the door.

Lady: Come out already.

She impatiently yells on the other side of the door.

Me: Just a second.

I yell back and squeeze the dress on. I collect my breath and walk out. She chews her bottom lip.

Me: It's short and too tight. I can't breathe in this.

Lady: You need a bigger size.

Kill me already. What is this woman with short dresses? Can't she see the kiss-kiss in me. Imagine ruining a beautiful dress with my kiss-kiss

Lady: Fit the others while I look for your size.

She ushers me back in the room. I chuckle and shake my head. She's so bossy and mean. I bet she will get a commission for



torturing me. I pick the next dress and try it on. It's a Lowime Emerald Green Long Thigh revealing gown.

Lady: Found it.

I walk out and stare at her. Her lips curve into a smile.

Me: I feel beautiful in this.

Lady: You are beautiful.

Me: Can you look for something similar to this without the slit?

Lady: Absolutely not! You're taking the dress as it is.

Me: Your choice of dresses are either too short or have a slit something I don't go for .

Lady: That's the best part because you're changing your look and wardrobe. Coming up with something different and awe stricken. Something that will make a statement and turn every head to look at you. Try the Sheath Emerald Green sleeves dress.

She pushes me back to the room and close the door after me . I groan and do as she says. I guess a little change of clothes won't kill anyone.

I nearly choked on my spit when I saw the price at the counter. The cashier laughed at me when I complained and said what did I expect from a high class boutique? I thought that was the cheapest and affordable boutique in town. I'm shaking in my boots waiting for Ty to call me and tell me to take back the clothes to the store. Honestly the amount is heathy ridiculous and something I wouldn't pay. Their fabrics and style is what lure me to get inside. I should have went to Mr Price instead of spending so much money and coming out of the store with only three shopping bags. I know I would have gotten more than 10 dresses there and probably less than R100 because they are on sale. I jump startled as my phone rings in bag. My heart pounds in my ribcage as my eyes set on the caller. I let it ring until it

stops but he calls again immediately. I release a shaky breath and answer it.

Me: I know it's a ridiculous amount and I will pay you back each sent. The lady at the store forced me to buy them.

I blurt out. He chuckles.

Ty: Babe relax. I didn't call you for that.

Me: Oh! So you're not mad at me?

Ty: Of course not my love. I just wanted to hear if you're having a good time and are you ready to go to the spa?

Me: The spa?

Ty: I booked you in for a full body massage. Unfortunately I can't take you there but Oliver is already on his way. Look baby I got to go. I love you.

He hangs up before I could reply. I stare at the phone until the screen turns off before everything sinks in. I clench my jaws and place my hand on my mouth to muffle the scream bubbling on the back of my throat. Where have this man been all my life?

Oliver: Shortbase.

I turn and find him standing behind me. Where did he come from.

Me: Looking good stranger.

I tease causing him to laugh.

Oliver: I've been out of town for a couple of weeks and I come back to find you and Tyson like sick puppies.

I shift my eyes away from him blushing.

Oliver: Ready to for your massage?

I nod as he stumbles towards and take the bags from my hands.

Me: Can you pass any near drive thru. I'm finished.

Oliver: Got you.

He opens the backseat for me after shoved my bags in the boot and jogs to the driver's seat. The car speeds out of the parking lot while I'm texting back and forth with my man.

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I lick my fingers and wipe them with the serviette before stepping out of the car. My eyes are zooming out the building and I quickly shift them back to Oliver.

Me: Are you sure we are in the right building?

He chuckles and stumbles to the entrance. I groan and follow behind. My legs and feet are killing me from parading on those heels that woman forced on me at the boutique. The receptionist flashes a smile at us as we walk in.

Receptionist: Welcome to Tory's Spa. How can I help you?

Oliver: She has an appointment under the name Mrs Jones.

I quickly whip my head to him and frown.

Receptionist: Oh yes Mrs Jones they are already waiting for you.

I murmur a small thank you and skip the room with Oliver on my heels.

Me: Since when am I Mrs Jones? Am I missing something?

Oliver: Ask your man that.

A blush creeps on my cheeks. I feel like a teenager all over again and I love this feeling. Everytime he says I'm your man or someone else says your man to me it really confirms that his truly mine.

Voice: Oliver.

The feminine voice cheerfully muttered. The man beside me curses under his breath and turn to face the voice.

Oliver: Tory.

Tory: My goodness where have you been hiding your...

She mutters enveloping him in a bone crushing hug. I place my hand on my face smiling like a retard. He has a secret lover and he didn't tell me? His is going to get it. Oliver quickly pushes her off as she goes for the kiss.

Oliver: Been busy.

He rudely interrupted her. My frown deepens.

Oliver: Instead of trying to flirt with me why don't you hook up my girl with a massage she desperately needs.

To say I'm embarrassed would be understood. Haibo what's got his panties twisted? I flash the poor girl a smile as she shifts her gaze to me.

Tory: Girlfriend?

She spat bitterly making me to arch my brow.

Oliver: None of your business. Do I have to take her somewhere else because I definitely know your competitors won't be poking their nose in their clients business.

She gulps and fakes a smile.



Tory: This way please.

We follow behind her.

Me: Why are you being mean to the poor girl?

I whisper to Oliver. He ignores me, focusing on the task in hand.

Me: Come on give her a chance who knows you might like her.

I tease nudging his shoulders.

Oliver: You mean him.

He spits out confusing the hell out of me.

Me: What?

Oliver: His a he not a she.

Again he spits out venom lacing his tongue. Say what now? I quickly shift my eyes to Tory then back at Oliver and burst into fit of laughter when it finally clicks.

Me: Wait! She is a what?

He furiously glares at me causing me to laugh more on his expense.

Me: I thought she was a woman.

Oliver: His a man fucken dressed like a woman

He hisses. I stifle a giggle.

Me: Doesn't he know...

He interjects.

Oliver: Don't start.

I giggle and raise my hands in surrender.

Tory: The changing room is over there and the lockers in it. Lock up your stuff because people tend to steal from time to time. Change into a gown and go to the third door on your right. A massues will be waiting for you.

I flash him a smile and turn to Oliver.

Oliver: I'll be in the car outside.

He turns on his heels and runs out of the room like his been chased by dogs.

Tory: Men and their stupidity.

He clicks his tongue and disappear in the corridors. I burst into laughter dragging myself to the changing room. I've never seen Oliver so angry and unfortunately about something. Tory just gave me something I could tease him about when he starts getting too big for his boots. I padded to room per instruction after changing.

Massues: Hello my name is Linda and I will be your massues today.

I jump startled by her voice. I didn't see her at the corner placing the oils on the table when I walked in.

Me: Hi, I'm Swazi.

Linda: Nice to meet you Swazi. If you could just take off the gown and wrap up this sheet around your body and lay down for me.

I nod and do as she says. She lowers to the sheet to my butt and smears the oils in my back before massaging it. I moan in delight.

Me: You have magic hands.

She gets giggles.

Linda: I try.

She puts more pressure on my shoulders and I moan out loud.

Me: More please.

She obliges and put more force. I close my eyes and enjoy the soft life. Pecks of dating a loaded guy. A yawn escapes my lips.

Linda: Will waxing be part of the massage?

I nod with my eyes still close.

Linda: Brazilian full wax?

What is this now? The interrogation room? Again I nod as her skillful hands untie the knots in my body. She taps my shoulder as I doze off.

Me: Mmh?

Linda: They forgot to offer you this at the reception.

I flip my eyes open and find a glass and a champagne bottle in front of me.

Me: You can put it on the table so long. Thank you.

She nods and do as instructed. Her magic hands now are no longer on my shoulders but my legs. If she keeps massaging me like this I swear I will doze off. If I knew how soft life is on the

other side I would have done this for myself a long time ago.  
Another tap on my shoulder. What now? I creak one eye open.

Linda: If you can lie on your back and place hands on your head.

I huff and shuffle to the position she wants me in. I make a mental note to visit the spa every month just to spoil myself. It's not like I have any responsibilities because I'm still staying at home with my parents and the only thing I do with my salary is to load my WI-FI then spoil myself with a shopping spree once in a blue moon. The rest of my salary goes to my savings. I haven't even figured out what will I do with it. I suck in a deep breath as Linda places a cold plaster on both my armpits then move to my vagina. I frown closing my legs but she force them apart . I convince my mind that's it's all part of the massage. The first patch of the plaster comes out waking me up from my slumber.

Me: Linda what..

She repeats the same action on my left armpit causing me to scream. When did I rise my knees? And what is she doing in my vagina? I get the answer when she rips the patch off me. I scream jumping off the massaging bed.

Me: Are you out your mind?

She frowns.

Linda: You said you also want the waxing.

Me: I never said that.

I protest.

Linda: Yes you did. Brazilian waxing remember?

Me: What? When did I say that? And what the hell is a Brazilian waxing?



Kill me now there's also Brazilian waxing? I thought it ended on Brazilian hair. Brazil should sue people for using their country to torture people. They are exploiting the poor humble country unlike the one I'm living in.

Linda: Waxing.

She calls out each word like she's calling out spelling test for toddlers. This girl better not give me that attitude after she ripped off my hair without my permission.

Me: Place it back.

Linda: What?

Me: My Somalian pubic hair put it back where you found it. I want it back.

I don't know who gave her the right to wax me without my permission. I recently shaved and a few strays of hair was growing back but she doesn't give her the right to do so. I don't know why do people like to take away my right when it comes to my pubic hair.

Me: What are you waiting for put it back?

She looks at me like I've grown two horns. I click my tongue and take the duck walk out of the room. I halt on my steps and walk back inside and snatch the champagne from the iceberg it was in. She rise her eyebrows.

Me: I'm taking this with me.

I'm done with the so called massage and I want my money back. I knew it was a scam. She doesn't know me this is far from over.

***NOMASWAZI***

I had to take off the remaining patch myself after I stepped inside the locker room. I still can't believe that woman's audacity. I'm resisting the urge to go to the police and file a complaint and also call Ramaphosa and tell him to add another right to my bill of rights because it's incomplete and one is missing. I still have the oil clinging on my body like a second skin and now I regret not taking a shower at the spa.

Oliver: What's your next stop?

Me: I need a shower so we will start at home then you will drive me to my neighborhood.

A frown settles on his face.

Oliver: I thought you were spending the weekend.

Me: I am.

Oliver: Then what are you doing in your neighborhood?

Me: To do my hair and nails.

His frown deepens.

Oliver: Why didn't you do your nails at the spa?

Me: I'm all about supporting local black owned businesses.

He nods and steps on the accelerator. I'm pleased to see the car driving into the premises. My body was starting to sweat and itch because of this nonsense I have on. Stepping out of the car, I collect my bags while Oliver comes with the remaining ones and dump them on the floor before he disappears to the kitchen. I sigh and take my bags upstairs knowing very well his about to invade the fridge. Food is more important than my

shopping bags. I lock the door and padded to the bathroom after stripping naked. I find the mirror with my eyes and stumble towards it. Raising both of my hands, I click my tongue after finding my armpits bald. I don't want to even check down there because I will be angry all over again. The liver of that woman is worse than the snake. I shake my head and step inside the shower to wash away her oils. I thought me and her could be friends because of those magic hands she has but no she had to act like an oppressor on me. Didn't the apartheid era ended 19 or 20 decades ago? Stepping out of the shower, I wrap up a towel around my body and rush to the room as the sound of my ringtone makes it's way to my ears.

Me: Hello?

Ma: Ahh she's alive.

I giggle and sit on the bed.

Me: Sawubona sthandwa sam.

Ma: You're trying to soften me.

I giggle.

Me: Is it working?

Ma: Maybe who knows?

Me: I was just about to call you.

I lie through my teeth.

Ma: Don't even lie to me. We both know you didn't even think about me.

I snort rolling my eyes. She can be dramatic at times.

Me: I was busy.

I defend myself.

Ma: With what that made you to forget your parents?

Me: Shopping and other things. I will stop by the house to check on you.

Ma: We are at the bakery.

Me: Ain't we closed on Saturdays?

Ma: There's an order that came just after you left and I couldn't turn it down.

I fold my lip in between my teeth and chew it.

Me: Do you need help?

Ma: No baby I will manage. Your father is with me so we will be good.

Me: Are you sure? I really don't mind.

Ma: Yes I'm certain. Forget about us and have fun with your man but not too much fun that will make me someone's grandma. I'm still too fresh, young and beautiful to be called a grandmother.

She hangs up after that making me to laugh my lungs out. I shake my head and toss the phone on the bed and leap up to my feet. I pick the bags on the floor and dump the items on the bed. I run my hand on each fabric of each dress then pick up the cocktail dress and the thong I bought. I can't believe I let that woman force me to buy such things. I know I wouldn't even pick this up if I was on my own. Picking up my body lotion, I moisture my skin then slip on my clothes. I bend down and slip on the block heel then catwalk to the bathroom to get a full view of myself on the mirror. I actually look good in this and the only thing missing is some make up and my hair so I can look like the next Miss South Africa. I ignore the fact that the dress is short and walk back in the room. I shove the clothes



back on the bags and pick up my sunglasses and hat. I put everything that was inside my bag on my new clutch bag and make my way downstairs. I hold the rails and take one step at a time like the princess I am but the only thing missing is my prince. His missing out.

Me: I'm ready.

He jaws drops to the floor while the sandwich he had in hand falls back on the plate.

Me: Earth to Oliver.

I mumble waving my hand on his face. He blinks rapidly before gawks at me again. I could feel myself starting to panic. Did I overdress or what? I knew I shouldn't have trusted someone who would do anything to get a commission.

Me: What?

He lips curve into a smile.

Oliver: You look absolutely gorgeous shortbase.

I wipe my imagination brow and smile.

Me: Really?

Oliver: Yes. Wow I'm speechless.

Me: (smiling) Really?

He nods causing me squel. That's what I was going for. I want people to be shocked to the core to the new me. I want to see different emotions running through their eyes before they collect their words and compliment me. And now I'm confidence enough that I will be turning heads and receiving those compliments.

Oliver: Let me finish this so we can go.

He picks up the sandwich and shoves it in his mouth then leaps up to his feet and dump the plate on sink. He collects his items on the table and the can of Coke and makes his way to the door. I confidently follow behind him with my head held up high. I smile loving the sound of my shoes hitting the tiles. I slide inside the car and buckle up. There's a lot going through my mind as we speed off but one thing that keeps coming back in my head is that will Ty's daughter love me or atleast like me like her father? Children tend to act differently when they don't like someone or feel intimidated. It will honestly break my heart if she doesn't like me. I mean what's not to like about me? I'm a very good people and citizen who abides by the law. I don't like church that much and I didn't like school much surely that's something we have in common. I love food and who doesn't? I'm very good at keeping secretes and I know I will keep hers unless her father gives me an orgasm. I will sing like a canary because I'm not a cupboard to hide her secrets. I snap out of my daze as he kills the engine two houses away from my house.

Oliver: Call me when you're done.

Me: I don't have you number.

Oliver: You do but you don't know that.

I go through my contact list as I step out of the car and indeed there's one written Oliver. I click on it and hear his phone ringing. I frown.

Me: When did you...

He interrupts me.

Oliver: Doesn't matter. See you later.

He speeds off before I could give him a piece of my mind. I shake my head and slip on my hat and sunglasses and walk to my destination. Just my luck I find the salon empty.

Me: Hi.

She gasps.

Fikile: Swazi is that you?

I smile nodding.

Fikile: Oh my God you look breathtaking.

I giggle waving my hand off.

Me: Thank you.

She stares at me with her jaw still on the floor while her hands on her waist.

Me: I'm here to do my hair and nails.

Fikile: Okay what will you be doing?

Me: I don't know but I want something sexy but classy. Indian hair or Japanese hair maybe.

She giggled nodding. I don't know the names of the modern day type of hairstyles. I only know box braids, twist hot water, straight back and up only.

Fikile: Take a seat and let's start.

I make myself comfortable on the chair and take off my hat. She chews her inner lip before padding to the hair extensions. I hope she won't make me look like clown because she will know the real me. My butt feels numb and my back is killing me. She didn't give a chance to stretch my muscles after doing my hair. She jumped straight to do my nails.

Fikile: How long or short do you want them?

Me: They are fine they way they are.

Fikile: Are you sure?

Me: Yes.

Fikile: How will you wipe your butt with such long nails?

Me: I'll cross that bridge when I get there.

I wave my hand dismissively. She shrugged her shoulders and continues with her task in hand. We make small talk here and there. It doesn't take long for her to finish her job.

Me: Done?

Fikile: Yep.

I smile and pick up my clutch bag. She laughs as I struggle to open it.

Fikile: This what I'm talking about. With long nails you can't do anything.

I huff annoyed. If she continues laughing like a hyena I might walk out of this salon without paying her.

Fikile: Here let me help.

She's still laughing on my expense and she opens clutch and takes out my wallet.

Me: Keep the change and nice doing business with you.

She nods smiling. I know if it was any other day. I would have demanded my change back even if it was R2. Don't look at me like that because some business people don't gives us their stock when your money is short.

Me: Can you please take a picture of me.



Fikile: Sure but let's go outside. The view is much better than inside.

We make our way outside. She stands on the street while I pose like a model I am. She did my makeup and I know I look dazzling.

Me: Thank you so much.

Fikile: Do tag me along next time when you're going to a function.

She think I'm going to a function? I laugh nodding, promising to hook her up. If she only knows I wouldn't hold my breath if I was her. I kill time by posting my pictures on my WhatsApp status and Facebook then log out. I hold my breath as I send one to Ty then wait for Oliver. He immediately text me back.

\*\*\*Ty: A picture is not enough. I want to see the owner with my own eyes. She's on 🔥🔥. I might need a fire extinguisher to cool her down. You look absolutely breathtaking

my love. I can't wait to get home so I can see what else did you buy.\*\*\*

I blush at his hidden words and text him back.

\*\*\*Me: You have such a dirty mind Mr Jones and to disappoint you I didn't buy anything for you.\*\*\*

I bid Fikile after the car parks outside and rush to it.

Oliver: Woah! Are you guys going out later on?

Me: No why?

Oliver: You keep surprising me today.

I playfully roll my eyes and lean back on the chair.

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Walking inside the bakery, I find the counter empty. I walk back outside and wait for my mother to come to the front. I want her to cease on her movements as I walk in then she will gasp and rush to ask if this is real me. I want to see the excitement radiating from her eyes before she ask me to twirl for her which I will gladly do so. I can't do all of that when she's at the back. She has to see my walking in so she could thin her eyes just to put a face to my name. I peek through the glass and resist the urge to call her. The sun it's on it's peak now and I'm worried my makeup will be ruined if she doesn't oblige. I open the door and the bell rings. I quickly close it and rush to my hiding spot. I'm sure people are looking at me like I've lost my damn mind but who cares? She has to see me from afar and do the dramatic gasp while I smile and place my hand on my chest feigning innocence and wait for her to come down from her high so she could compliment me. She runs out of the kitchen to the front and frowns seeing no customer in. I straighten my spine and catwalk out of my hiding spot and walk inside. She pauses just as she was about to go back to the kitchen and wait for me. I fumble with the door a bit. I flash the million dollar smile Zozibini Tunzi flashed the judges to win Miss Universe in

20 whatever and ignore the smooching sound of my knees. She has to wait for me because she has to see me rocking Nicki Minaj's hairstyle and Cardi B's long nails. She squints her eyes as I summon my Ayanda Ncwane's acting skills. I'm practically singing Nomfundo Moh song Soft Life but the difference is that I'm living it while she's still begging for it.

Me: Hi, I'm Nomaswazi Ngwenya and I'm in a relationship.

Oh, the late Sfiso Ncwane would be so proud of me for quoting his wife's words. Maybe I should hit her up so she could hook me up with the Dube's so I could be next to her when she does another Clientele commercial advert or bet yet she could hook me with the producers of RHOD so I can replace MaKhumalo or LaCanco on the next season. My acting skills cannot be matched and they're only one of me in this entire universe. Why is she looking at me like that? I know it's my first time doing a make over. I'm talking from head to toe and I didn't wear my glasses today. My makeup can't be ruined by glasses. Didn't she hear me when I introduced myself? Let me repeat and a bit louder this time so she can hear me.

Me: Hi, I'm Nomaswazi Ngwenya and I'm in a relationship.

Ma: I know who you are.

Say what now? Why didn't she respond in the first place? SMH!  
Who needs enemies when you have family?

## NOMASWAZI

There's something about jealousy. It surely makes people nasty and that's what I'm picking up from my mother right now. Doesn't she know how gorgeous I am? The first gasp and awe stricken was suppose to slip out of her lips but the woman is looking at me like an alien.

Ma: You look beautiful.

I twirl around in front of her.

Me: Thank you.

She shakes her head causing me to scowl at her. I'm sensing some vibe from her and I don't like it one bit. What is her problem?

Ma: Are you going on a date or what?

Finally the ice is melting.

Me: Oh, I thought I should just visit my two favourite people in the world and pass my day with them.

She thinned her eyes nodding.

Me: Is there something I can help you with?

Ma: No we are almost done. Your dad and I have everything under control.

My roam around the shop before. I shift them back to her and find her narrowing eyes at me.

Ma: When I vote you to be happy I didn't say try to change yourself into something you're not. If the man doesn't love you like the way you are before then that means sthandwa sam he

didn't love you in the first place. No men in the world will ask you change your looks just for him if he really loves you.

Me: Ty doesn't have anything to do with how I look. I decided on my own that since I'm happy and living my best life I should change my style and clothes a bit. I needed to change in order to accommodate my newly found happiness. His not the one who pushed me to change anything. In fact he loved me the way I was before this and I still think he will continue to love me beyond anything should I decide to change again.

She heavily sighs.

Ma: If you say so but no relationship is worth you trying to change yourself. If he doesn't love you he can jump to the nearest cliff and I as your mother will help you heal and forget about you.

Me: I love you ma.

I murmur padding her way and place a kiss on her cheek. She smiles.

Ma: I love you too sthandwa sam and you do look beautiful.

I melt and place another kiss on her cheek. I could feel my eyes get moist with unshed tears but I refuse to let the fall. They will ruin my make-up.

Ma: So how's been your stay at his house been?

I giggle and shake my head. Talk about a gossip monger. I narrate everything to her and by the time I'm done she's in stitches.

Ma: Why didn't you tell him you don't eat seafood?

Me: I thought he was talking about fish and chips not sea creatures.



She burst into fit of laughter.

Ma: I'm just trying to picture this in my head and the pieces I have keep slipping away. They don't want to be a full picture. I can only imagine how wide your marble eyes were when he said he will keep it for tomorrow.

We laugh.

Ma: What were you really going to do if he insisted on those creatures as lunch today?

I crack my skull for the right answer but nothing seems to come to mind.

Me: I really don't know but what I know is that I was going to make a plan. Maybe fake a tummy ache or something.

She laughs and claps once.

Ma: I'm going to cook for you pap with cockroaches on Monday.

My eyes pop out of their sockets. She stifles a giggle.

Ma: Don't look at me like that. You managed to eat creatures so what's different from what he fed you to what I will cooking for you?

Me: Ma please I slept on a empty stomach and I'm traumatized. I need counseling and ukuchatha.

She throws her head back and roar in laughter.

Ma: Ave unehaba ngani yam.

She doesn't understand.

Me: You don't understand Ma. In those seconds I felt like an orphan. I was tempted to ask God what did I do to deserve such pain.

Ma: (laughing) Why would he feed you sea creatures anyway? Doesn't he know we are black or his those black/ white snobs who went to private schools from preschool to high school?

I drop my eyes and fiddle with my hands.

Me: Well his white.

Hey eyes bulge out.

Ma: What?

Me: His white ma and you know him.

Ma: (frowning) Do I?

I nod.

Me: It's Tyson. Mr Jones your favourite customer.

If her eyes when not out of their sockets earlier on now they are while her jaw drops to the floor.

Ma: What?

The door leading to the kitchen swings open and my father stumbles out, covered in flour.

Baba: Swidi lam that's the last batch in the over.

He murmurs wipe off the flour in his clothes and shifts his eyes to me before smiling.

Baba: Oh, I didn't know you had a customer. Sawubona sis.

My mother snorts while I giggle. Doesn't this old man recognise his own daughter?

Me: Yebo baba.

Baba: For a second I thought you were my daughter Nomaswazi. Her voice is just the same as yours.

Ma throws her hands in the air dramatic. I can't hold it anymore. I burst into fit of laughter.

Ma: That's because that's your daughter Steven.

Annoyance laced in her tone.

His eyes comically widen.

Baba: Ngempela? How?

Ma: (annoyed) What do you mean how? She had a makeover.

Baba: A makeover that made her to smear mud on her face.

My mouth hangs open while my mother gasps. He walks towards me and stops a few feet away from me.

Baba: Didn't you know how beautiful you were before this. Now you look ridiculous like those girls in Hillbrow.

My mother and I gasp. Is he indirectly calling me a prostitute?

Ma: Steven.

He sharply glares at her before turn to me.

Baba: This is between my daughter and I.

Ma: You're...

He interjects.

Baba: Stay out of this.

He raises his voice causing my mother to arch her eyebrows.

Baba: I knew that sleepover at Lihle's had something to do with a man.

Me: Baba...

He raises his hand shutting me up before he fishes for his phone in his pocket. I shift my gaze on my mother who shrugged her shoulders.

Baba: Here read this.

He shoves the phone in my hands. A frown emerges on my face.

Me: What is this?

Baba: Read.

I jump startled at his firm voice and drop my eyes to the phone.

Me: 1 Corinthians 6.

What? What does a Bible have to do with my looks?

Me: Baba what...

Baba: Verse 19-20.



He rudely interrupted. What is wrong with this man? I scroll down while my mind is trying to come up with different scenarios of what could this mean?

Me: He asks, Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not on your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

TF?

Baba: There you have it mntanami you have to be married first before you engage yourself in any sexual activities. Sex before marriage is a sin.

Imihlola kaJames! Does this man who I dished out the coochie last night? And he has the audacity to tell me I need to get married first before I have sex again

does he know how good it is for me to not do it again?

Me: Kodwa baba you and ma are not married and you're doing it.

I protest handing him his phone back. From the corner of my eye I can see my mother blushing. The hypocrite clear his throat.

Baba: That is not the point Swazi.

Me: Then what is it?

I challenge folding my arms across my chest. I'm not a five year old right now he can dictate anyhow he wants. I'm a grown ass woman.

Baba: The point is you have to wait for the right time in order for you be allowed to do so.

Me: There's nothing that says I should wait for the right guy in the world.

Again I protest.

Baba: The bible says so.

He retorts. I snort rolling my eyes.

Me: I must have missed Sunday school when I was a kid.

I mumble under my breath. His nostrils flare.

Baba: What was that?

Me: Nothing.

Baba: Thought as much. As your father I'm ordering you to go back to that boy's house and pack your clothes and go back home.

I snicker.

Me: (mumbling) Ty ain't no boy but a man.

Ma: Steven this unnecessary. Swazi is old enough to make her choices.

Baba: I told you to stay out of this.

He reprimands, glaring at her. Haibo! What go his panties twisted?

Me: If I have to wait for my "so called husband" as you say baba. Why did God create sex in the first place if he knew it was a sin? He wanted us to sin so he can punish us.

I clap back getting annoyed. His jaw drops to the floor by my question. If really God was not a sinner why did he create sex in the first place? He knew human beings are likely to follow rules so that's why he created that and that's his way to punish us. And this father of mine wants me to miss out on couple of

orgasm just because I'm sinning against God? I never shame! I'll rather be a sinner of the rest of my life. In fact when I get out of here I'm going to call my man so he can sex me up so good.

Me: Ma I'll call you later.

I mumble placing a kiss on her cheek and stumble to the door. I'm so pissed and if I stay another second in this room I might say something I will regret.

Baba: Where are you going? We are still talking.

I ignore him and fiddle with the door. My mom stumbles my way and opens the door for me.

Ma: Cut the nails please.

She whispers ushering me out.

Baba: Nomaswazi!

He yells after me.

Me: Hai fusek marn!

I yell back and storm out of the shop to the parking lot. I open the door and slam it after I jump in, waking Oliver up from his slumber.

Oliver: What did the poor door do to you?

I glare at him and click my tongue. My phone chimes in my purse. I ignore it and shift my gaze to the window.

Oliver: Ain't you going to answer that?

Me: (snapping) No!

He raises his hands in surrender and brings the engine to life and speeds off the parking lot. My phone rings again pissing me further more. I fish out and click my tongue when I see the caller ID. I knew Stevens was the one calling me but doesn't he get the hint that I don't want to talk to him. His religious self should not be associated with sinners like me if his going to force his religion on me. I hang up on him and place it on top of my thighs. It beeps indicating a text. If I knew he would ruin my day like this I wouldn't have wasted my time by coming here.

\*\*\*Ma: Steven was wrong to be on your business like that but you were also wrong for swearing at him like that. I raise you better than that Swazii\*\*\*

My heart skips a beat while my hands tremble. I gulp the thick saliva accumulated in my mouth and lick my lips. Now it sinks on me that I swore at my father. Oh, I'm really going to hell this time.

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My body is here but my mind is still on what happened earlier on. I've been trying to call my father but his not answering any of my calls. I get that I was wrong but his being childish right now. The least he can do is answering my calls.

Ty: What's on your mind?

His voice breaks me out of my trail of thoughts.

Ty: Something is bothering you. What's going on?

Me: I fought with my father earlier on and I mistakenly swore at him and now his not taking my calls.

Ty: What was the fight about?

Me: He doesn't want to acknowledge that I'm not a little girl anymore.



Ty: Babe there's no father in the world who would want to acknowledge that. I would any guy who looks at my baby girl with lustful eyes.

I heavy sigh.

Me: I know that but I just wish he can see that I sometimes don't need him. I'm capable of making decisions on my own and all I need is support from him.

He brings my palm to his lips and peck it before squeeze it.

Ty: Try to understand that in his eyes you will always be a baby to him no matter how old you are.

I huff out.

Me: I guess you're right.

He smirked.

Ty: I'm always right.

I snort rolling my eyes and pick up my cutlery. At least this time I'm not having creatures for dinner. I applaud him for being the best boyfriend I have ever had so far. His persistent and cares a lot.

Ty: Do you need help?

He mumbles eyeing me as I struggle to hold the cutlery straight and stab the steak and potatoes into pieces.

Me: I got babe.

I fake a smile and shift my eyes back to the task at hand. Footsteps approach our way and minutes later Oliver emerges from the corridors.

Oliver: Family how can you start dinner without me.

Ty: What are you doing here? You're not invited.

Oliver: Then I'm inviting myself.

He makes his way to the kitchen and comes back with his plate and cutlery and makes himself comfortable on the chair opposite mine and start dishing up for himself.

Ty: Remind me why did I give a moron like you keys to my house?

Oliver: That's because you love me. And we are a team.

They chuckle. My frustration grows each minute as the potatoes shift around the whole plate and scattered to the dinning table.

Ty: Babe?

Me: I got it.

I yell out and try to stab the potato by it rolls to the floor. I could feel their eyes on me as I try the second one but it jumps out of the table to Ty's face causing Oliver to roar in laughter. Tears fill my eyes. I'm hungry and at the same time scared of what the outcome will be when I get home. I still have a Fusek lingering over my head that I swore my father with.

Me: Argh!

I slam the cutlery on the table and jump to my feet.

Me: I'm sorry.

Ty: Baby?

Me: I just need a minute to myself.

Not waiting for their response, I march out of the living room and make my way upstairs. I throw myself on the bed and cry. Why did I agree to become an adult? Life was so easy when I was still a kid. My father and I never fought to the point of me swearing at him but sometimes parents are annoying. They keep pushing and pushing you until you snap. I wipe the tears with the back of my hand and disconnect my phone from the charger and call my father. I hold my breath as it rings.

Baba: Yini? (What?)

I flinch at his firm voice.

Me: Ngiyaxolisa baba bengingaqondile. Kushelele ulimi. (I'm sorry dad I didn't mean too. It was a slip up of a tongue. )

Ma: Cut her some slack.

She yells on the end of the line. He heavily sighs.

Baba: We will talk when you get home.

He hangs up after that. I wipe my tears and throw my phone on top of the bed. I feel lighter than before. I know it's enough but it's something. I jump to my feet and make my way to the bathroom as nature calls. Rolling the dress to my waist, I hook my nails on my thong and try to roll it down but they get stuck on the fabric. The first Krrr sound causes me to gasp while I try to pull the demonic nails out of the patterns of the thong. My bladder reminds me of my purpose to the bathroom. I pull harder but the underwear shred into pieces right before my eyes. For the love of God I just bought this underwear this morning and now it's in pieces. A hot liquor runs down my thighs as I'm standing there dumbstruck by what I'm witnessing. I shift my eyes to the floor and find all the liquid I have consumed this evening. Can this day get any worse? And how do people survive with such nails? I thought for once in my life let me live the soft life and be like other kids but it's clear the soft life is not for me.

Me: (screaming) Ty.

I have heard enough. Not even Mandela struggled like I did today.

Me: (screaming) Tyson.

He barges in the bathroom and halts on his steps.

Ty: (alarmed) What's going on?

Me: Where is the nail cutter?

Confusion swirl in his eyes.

Ty: Huh?

Me: Where is the nail cutter? I'm chopping this nonsense off. I can't eat, I can't open the door. I can't pull down my own underwear because of them and now I peed on myself because of them. What the hell was I thinking when I made them?

I yell out throwing my hands out dramatically. I have had enough. Enough is enough!

Me: Soft life yokunuka.

I click my tongue.

## TYSON

My baby left this afternoon before she could meet Scarlett. Her fight with her parents made her restless the whole night. She tossed and turn the whole night even though I exhausted her. Everytime I think about the weekend we had I just blush like a teenager. I don't know what did that woman do to me but I'm officially whipped and I'm not even ashamed to admit it.

Parking the car on the on the driveway, I find my princess waiting for me outside with Minnie and her mother. I chuckle and step out of the car. Opening my arms for her, I crouch down and wait for her to run to my embrace but instead Miss Jones opens her arms for me. I crack up so hard and walk to her embrace. She pats my back causing Minnie's mother and I to laugh.

Me: You're getting old. Is that a grey hair on your head?

I tease her.



Scarlett: What?

She pushes me out of her embrace and runs to the car.

Scarlett: Where daddy?

She bends down inspecting her head on the mirror. I laugh while Minnie and her mother giggle.

Me: Thank you so much for having her. I hope she didn't give you any trouble.

She smiles and waves me off.

M.Mother: It was nothing. Minnie had a lot of fun and Scarlett has been gushing out about being a host for the next sleepover. Scarlett is a very sweet child.

I chuckle and shift my gaze to baby girl with her friend.

Me: She's really a sweet child.

M.Mother: I applaud you for raising that strong independent girl. Not many single parents can do it especially men.

I smile.

Me: I taught myself to take one day at a time. We learn every day even if we are adults.

M.Mother: True! You're really good with her.

Me: Thank you.

M.Mother: Let me not keep you. All her things are in her bag. Her homework just need your signature.

Me: Again thank you so much.

I pick up the bags and make my way to the car and dump everything on the boot. I pick Minnie up and swing her around. She squels giggling.

Minnie: (laughing) I can't breathe.

I chuckle and place her on her feet. She staggers giggling. Slipping my hand in my pocket, I fish out my wallet and bend down to her level.

Me: This a thank you gift

Minnie: Really?

She excitedly muttered taking the R200 note from my hand but her mother snatches it from her hand.

M.Mother: She's too young to have such money.

She scolds me placing her hands on her waist. Mother hen came out to play reminding me of Swazi when she's pissed. I smile and raise my hands in surrender.

Me: Forgive me.

Scarlett: Bye Minnie.

She waves at her stepping inside the car after I open the door for her.

Minnie: Bye Scarlett.

She sadly waves back. I jog to my side and buckle up.

Me: Buckle up.

She does as I say while I start the car. I honk and speed off the driveway.

Me: How was your weekend?

Scarlett: I wish it never ended.

I smile.

Me: Same here my baby.

I mumble under my breath.

Me: What did you guys get up too?

Her eyes lit up before she goes on and on while I zone out. I was looking forward to introducing her to Swazi but I understand she had to attend to her parents first.

Scarlett: Daddy you're not listening.

Her sulking voice snaps me out of my daze.

Me: Sorry my love there's a lot going on my mind.

She huffs and cross her arms on her chest. I chuckle.

Me: Will you forgive daddy if I tell you uncle Oliver is back?

Scarlett: (smiling) Really?

Me: His back baby.

Scarlett: Okay I forgive you.

I chuckle stopping on the robots as they turn red.

Me: Baby you know daddy loves you right?

Scarlett: And I love you too daddy.

My heart melts on those words. I never get tired from hearing such words from her and my woman.

Me: Daddy met someone and I want you to meet her. She's a very good woman and you will love her.

Sadness flashes on her eyes.

Scarlett: Is she replacing mom?

Air gets knocked off my lungs at her question. I didn't know she misses her mother like that. Now I feel guilty for seperating them but it was for the best. I don't want that woman near my child again.

Me: Of course not my love. Nobody can replace your mother.

Scarlett: Won't she be mean to me?

Me: Look at me.

Her eyes lock with mine on the view mirror.

Me: She doesn't have a mean bone in her body. Nobody will treat you badly while uncle Oliver and I are still around okay?

I cooed softly. She nods.

Me: She's a very humble person and you two will get along just fine. Did I tell you that she's a baker?

Her eyes lit up again.

Scarlett: Really?

I nod stepping on the gas.



Me: Her mother owns a bakery and she works there.

Scarlett: Can she teach me how to bake?

I chuckle at her enthusiasm.

Scarlett: Please daddy ask her to teach me how to bake.

Me: You will have to ask for her yourself my love.

Scarlett: Can we call her now and ask her.

I laugh.

Me: Maybe later baby. I'm still driving.

She slumps back on her seat defeated. Children are the most sensitive people especially when it comes to people they don't know. I want my daughter and my woman to get along and by

that I had to had a talk with my daughter first. She's only 6 and the changes can sometimes be confusing for her. I'm not trying to replace Yvonne with Swazi but I hope one day Scarlett forgets about that wicked woman and recognise Swazi as her only mother.

ZOBUHLE

The weekend flew by quickly and our little bubble had to burst. Whoever created Mondays should be sued. The day alone is dreadful and long not to mention that everyone goes back to their regular routine while I have classes from morning until midday. I huff out and drag myself to the bathroom. I'm moving on a snail pace and I know if my husband was here he would have been on my case. The man left me in bed earlier on to rush to God knows where. I smile reminisce the weekend we had. I have never thought I would be so in love with that man.

Ade: Penny for your thoughts.

Butterflies fill my stomach. I turn back and find him leaning on the door frame of the closet. I dump the items I had in my hand

and rush to him and lay my head of his chest. He chuckles and catches me swiftly in his arms.

Ade: Okay I should leave more often if I get this warm hug everyday.

He tease placing a kiss on my forehead.

Me: Where did you disappeared too?

Ade: Just handling work why?

Me: I missed you.

A smirk emerges on his lips.

Ade: If I knew all it took was to fuck you to have you clinging on me I would have done that a long time ago.

I ignore him and hold him tighter, inhaling his intoxicating cologne.

Me: I don't want to go to campus.

His chest vibrates as he chuckles. I clench my thighs as my core tingles. His voice alone makes me weak to my knees. I'm crossing my fingers he agrees and sex me up like we did the whole weekend.

Ade: Unfortunately for you sweetheart you are going.

Argh! He just had to burst my bubble. I break the embrace and walk back to the closet sulking.

Ade: I'm taking you out to dinner this evening.

I ignore him and slip on my shorts.

Ade: Babe?

Again I ignore him and throw on the vest and tuck it inside the shorts then slide my feet on sandals.

Ade: (amused) Are you sulking?

Me: Maybe I am or maybe not. Who know?

I throw my hands in the dramatically and throw on the shirt on top. He stumbles towards me and holds my waist from behind.

Ade: Which one is it?

Judging by the sound of his voice his stifling his laughter.

Me: Mxm leave me alone.

He throws his back and laughs. I click my tongue and unwrap his hands form my waist.

Ade: Wait ...wait...babe?

Me: Mxm shut up my friend.

His annoying hyena laughter echoes in the room.

Me: Mumu.

I pick up my bag and furiously shove everything inside and walk out of the room

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leaving him in stitches. I don't know what happened from then to now but I just know one thing. I'm clingy ASF! Is it a bad thing to want to be in his presence all the time?

YVONNE

I tuck the loose strand of hair behind my ear and giggle.

Luke: I thought you would ditch me.

It's been a couple of days since I went out with my sister to the club. I turned down every guy who hit on me because they seem all too plain and boring for me and until he bought me a drink and winked at me.

Me: Well I'm not that heartless.

Luke: Well tell me about Yvonne.

Me: Sheesh! What do you want to know?

Luke : Everything about the beautiful lady.

I blush and pick up my cup of tea and sip on it before I start introducing myself. This is what I hate on dates. The introduction part feels like I'm in an interview.

Me: Well that's all about me.

Luke: I'm just a simple guy looking for love. I told everything you need to know about me.

Me: Girlfriend or ex wife perhaps?

He shook his head.

Luke: May I ask you something.

Me: Shoot.

Luke: If you broke up with your baby daddy, why are you still wearing that?

I follow his line of gaze and find his eyes on the ring on my finger. I shrug my shoulders.



Me: I guess I'm used to having it on my finger.

Luke: It is really an expensive ring but don't you think you should take it out now since you two are no longer together or is there any chance you guys might mend things?

He arch his eyebrows to emphasize his point.

Me: I doubt.

Luke: Then why are you still wearing the ring, Yvonne?

I suck in a deep breath.

Me: It's just a ring there's no big deal in that.

Luke: Say we decide to pursue this and I as your boyfriend ask you to take it out, will you be able to do so?

What's with the 3rd degree? Is this the interrogation room perhaps?

Me: I feel cornered right now.

Luke: It's a simple yes or no answer. Will you be able to take it out?

Me: I've been wearing this ring for years.

Luke: I'm not asking you how many days or weeks you have been wearing it.

My nostrils flare.

Me: What's your problem?

I yell out gaining eyes from other customers.

Luke: Why are you yell?

His eyebrows furrow as he calmly murmur.

Me: I'm not yelling.

I muttered through gritted teeth, clenching my jaws in the process.

Luke: You are.

He retorts leaning back on his chair.

Me: If I take out this ring will you be replacing it with yours?

I spit out narrowing my eyes at him. He chuckles.

Luke: Marriage is the last thing on my mind right now. I just want to enjoy my relationship first before I tie the knot.

Me: Then clearly you took the wrong girl on a date because I'm not looking for boyfriend and girlfriend kind of thing. I'm looking for a commitment. Someone who I will settle down with.

Luke: How will you settle down with someone you don't know? Relationship have stages, Yvonne. You start by dating first before you involve marriage.

I snort jumping to my feet and pick up my items on the table.

Me: You and I will never work because you're so full of yourself.

Luke: And you're still hanging on to you ex.

He claps back.

Me: People get married everyday to women or men they don't know. There's that thing called love at first sight that you clearly don't understand. And for you information I'm not hanging on my ex.

I turn on my heels and storm out of the coffee shop. I can't believe I wasted my time looking good for that jerk. Who still doing dating on this day and age? My agemates have about three to four kids while I have nothing. I'm too older for that dating nonsense. The next guy has to marry me. I'm not getting any younger.

**WEEKS LATER****YVONNE**

I didn't think at this day and age I would be still at home with my parents. Each passing day is agonizing and I hate it. I thought by now I would be in my own house with my husband and children but instead here am I sitting on a couch feeling sorry for myself. From someone else's view they might say I'm watching the TV but I'm looking through it. It's Scarlet's birthday in a couple of hours and I feel a tug on my chest that for the first time I won't be able to celebrate with her. A mere phone call will be enough but that man made it clear that I must cut all ties with him. I don't understand how does he expect me to do that. I can't just forget the fact that we had a child and move on with my life. I'm not like most women out there who abandon their children just because they can. I care and love that girl. She's the first person to show me that I can be also be a mother so how can I abandon that? Throwing my

legs off the couch, I pick up my phone and call my sister. She answers the call on the 4th ring.

Nancy: Yvonne did you see what time is it?

Her sleepy voice muttered on the end of the line.

Me: I'm sorry to call so late but desperately need your help.

Nancy: What's the matter?

Shuffling in the background indicates she's now wide awake.

Me: Can you please borrow me money. I know you recently gave me something but I used that money to update my CV's.

I chew my bottom lip, lying through my teeth.

Nancy: I thought the money I gave you was enough to cover the costs.

I bite back a snort bubbling down on my throat and roll my eyes.

Me: I had to fix my laptop with the remaining one and now I don't have gas to take me to my interview tomorrow.

Again I lie through my teeth.

Nancy: What? You have an interview tomorrow?

She excitedly chirped on the end of the line.

Me: Yes!

I breathe out.



Nancy: How much do you need?

Me: Just a couple of dollars then I will pay you back with my first salary.

Nancy: Oh sis I'm so excited on your behalf. Finally everything was looking good for you. I'll send the cash now and please let me know how was your interview. Good luck.

Before I could reply she disconnects the call. I sigh and place my phone back on the table but it beeps indicating a message. My lips curve into a smile when my eyes set on the bank notification. I jump to my feet and rush to to my bedroom to retrieve my laptop. Setting it in front of me in the lounge, I book myself a ticket to South Africa. Foolish girl thought I was really looking for a job like she assumed but the only thing I have been doing is saving each cent she gave me. I don't know who told her I need a job in my life. I'm not a working type because I never worked a day in my life. My parents were taking care of me financially before Tyson came along and did the job for them. I'm the type who gets to sit back and home and expects someone else to take care of me not the other way around. I shudder as the image of me in a working environment

crosses my mind. I know I wouldn't survive a day in a 9-5 daily job. I don't know who told my sister that I need a job. The woman kept sending posts to posts for vacancies and I didn't bother myself by applying in any of them. Shutting the laptop, I collect my belongings from table and switch off the TV before padding to my bedroom. My flight is in 5 hours time and I will probably land in South Africa the next day because my flight takes about 10 hours and 42 minutes but it's something I don't mind. I just cannot let my baby have her birthday without me. I don't trust Tyson and his new slut with her. I pull out my suitcase from the closet and start packing while a permanent smirk is on my lips. South Africa here I came and I don't I don't think you're ready for me.

## ***ADESOLA***

Holding her hips in my hands, I curve my back and pick up my pace. She moans and arches her back more.

Me: Shhh! Do you want the entire staff to know what we are up to?

I slap my hand around her mouth to muffle her screams.

Zozo: The music is musking out my screams.

She whispers as I pull out and slam back on her again, chuckling.

Zozo: Please Ade.

She begs although muffled.

Zozo: Please just let me cum dammit.

Frustration laced in her voice makes me chuckle.

Zozo: Please.

She desperately continues to beg.

Me: I don't think you deserve it.

I whisper on her ear pulling out.

Me: You haven't been good.

I slam back chasing my own orgasm. She screams.

Me: That's right baby let them know who you belong to.

I murmur feeling my balls tightening. She clenches on me.

Me: Fuck! Baby don't do that.

She clenches again making my thrusts sloppy. I loudly groan as I spill all I had instored on my balls while she does the same and slide to the floor out of breath.

Me: Fuck you will pay for that.

She giggles and rolls to lay on her side. She looks life a fucken seductress right now but I'm spent. I wouldn't be able to take her for another round even if I wanted.

Zozo: If you only gave me what I wanted in the first place.

I snort and collapse on the couch  
catching my breath.

Zozo: It's the 16th today so what are our plans?

I smile.

Me: Well remember I asked you to buy a birthday present for a 7 year old?

She bats her eyelashes nodding.

Me: It's her birthday today and we are invited.

She groans and jumps to her feet.

Zozo: I'm not in the mood for socialising.

Me: Unfortunately baby we have to go because his father is one of my associates.

Zozo: I don't have a choice do I?

I shake my head amused. She turns on her heels and storms to the bathroom. I chuckle and sink on the couch. I can hear her mumbling something under her breath but that doesn't surprise me anymore. The woman doesn't want to be around a

lot of people lately except for me. I think it all has to do with her hormones. One minute she loves me and wants me in her presence and the other she hates me like passion. It's tug of war between love and hate.

Zozo: I'm done.

Her voice breaks me out of my daze. I smile as my eyes land on the bump growing on her.

Me: Give me a minute to clean up.

I leap up to my feet and stumble to the bathroom. My excitement grows each time I think about in couple bid months to come we will parents. I cannot wait to officially meet the ninja or hold him or her in my arms. I just know it will be love at first sight. I cease on my steps as I find the office empty. My heart thuddes in my ribcage as the worst case scenario plays out in my mind. Picking up my pants and boxers on the floor, I quickly slip them on and slide my feet in my shoes before I rush out of the office to look for her. The blasting music downstairs is the first thing that welcomes me. The dance floor is packed

by multiple bodies grinding on each other erotically. I push them off as I rush to the door.

Bouncer: Boss?

Me: My wife. Did you see her?

I urgently rushed out. He furrows his eyebrows.

Bouncer: I only saw her this morning when you guys came in.

Me: Are you sure she didn't step out of the building?

He shakes his head.

Bouncer: No. I've been here since you came in. The only time I moved was when I went to the bathroom which was three times and my lunch break so I would know if she stepped out and besides Alvin would have said something.



Me: Where is he?

Bouncer: Lunch.

Me: What time did his lunch start?

Bouncer: About an 30 minutes ago. Is everything okay?

Me: Fuck!

I run my palms on my face frustrated.

Me: Everything is not okay. My wife is missing.

I yell out.

Me: Close down those doors and nobody comes in or out until I find her.

I scream at him and turn on my heels. My chest tightness, closing on me. I hold the wall for balance gasping for her. I can't lose her and mostly importantly I can't lose my baby. I didn't get to have a chance to be there for Happiness when she was pregnant and I don't want the same thing happening to her. I have a chance to rewrite my past mistakes on her and I will be damned if anyone hurt any strand of her hair.

NARRATOR

Her eyes lit up in excitement as the waitress places the Shawarma in front of her. Her saliva fills her mouth as her tastebuds come alive. She claps her hands in excitement.

Zozo: Oh, I can kiss your butt right now but you know how your boss is.

She rolls her eyes causing the waitress iter to giggle. She closes her eyes moaning in delight as she takes her first bite.

Zozo: Whoever thought of making this he/she is or was a genius.

The waitress amusedly watched her as she devours the food like it's her last meal.

Waitress: Is it that good?

Zozo cease on her movements with her eyes widen.

Zozo: You haven't tasted this?

The waitress shakes his head.

Zozo: Girl you're missing out.

They both giggle.

Waitress: Let me get back to work.

Zozo snorts.

Zozo: It's the festive season and nobody will notice that you're missing.

Waitress: I ...

She interjects.

Zozo: It's an order. Sit.

She gestures to the chair in front of her. The waitress pulls the chair and takes a seat uncomfortable. Her eyes kept going back and forth looking for anyone who's looking at her.

Zozo: Relax.

The waitress slams back on the chair defeated.

Zozo: I need you to look out for my husband while I snack on this. He says it's unhealthy and has too many spices for the baby.

She snorts.

Zozo: I don't know when did he graduate and become a doctor.

She rolls her eyes causing the waitress to giggle.

Zozo: Then there's a birthday party of one of his associates. His daughter is turning 7 and he invited us. I mean who gives birth on the 16th of December while people are having fun out there? Imagine being cooped up in the maternity ward, screaming your lungs out on that day. Children have no timing shame.

The waitress threw her back burst in laughter.

Ade: Zobuhle.

His angry voice ceases the waitress laughter. The poor girl jumps to her feet.

Zozo: Shit! Busted.

She giggles shoving her food in her mouth and pushes the takeaway to the other side of the table.

Ade: Do you know how worried I was.

He envelopes her in a bone crushing hug, fighting back the tears in the verge of his eyes. Air gets knocked out of Zozo's lungs as she struggled to breathe.

Ade: Don't ever do something like that again.

She nods tears slipping out of her eyes. She has mind telling her to spit the food but she knows she will get it. Ade breaks the hug and cups her face inspecting her.

Ade: You're okay.

He mumbles and crush her in another hug again.

Ade: You're okay.

Zozo: What's going on?

She mouthful muttered breaking the hug causing to frown.

Ade: Why are you crying.

She shakes her head forcing a smile on her lips.

Ade: Zo.

He cooed softly.

Zozo: Mhh!

It came almost a whisper.

Ade: What's in your mouth.

Zozo: Nothing.

She muttered mouthful causing the waitress to stifle her laughter. Ade squints his eyes.

Ade: Open your mouth.

She giggles swallowing.

Ade: You're eating that nonsense ain't you?

She giggled nodding. Ade pinches the bridge of his nose sighing.



Ade: How many times have I told you to stop eating that? Do you know how untidy and dirty that restaurant is you keep feeding my child food from? What if they pour dirty water on their food to draw in customers.

Both women snort at him.

Zozo: You're just exaggerating everything.

Ade: Have you seen dirty the woman at the counter is?

He spat in disgust.

Zozo: Oh well I'm sorry your highness but that's the only thing I crave for.

Ade: Why can't you crave food from clean franchisors like normal women?

Zozo: There's nothing normal about me and I don't care about how unkept and untidy that place is but that's the only thing your baby wants at this moment.

Shaking his head, Ade bites his tongue and turns in his heels.

Ade: It's going to be long fucken 9months.

He mumbled under his breath.

Zozo: Men are pork.

She claps her hands once and turns to her food. The waitress roared in laughter.

Waitress: You mean pigs.

Zozo: Yeah that's what I said. B and D. N and Z. Six and nine shame shit.

She waves her off stuffing her face with food, leaving her in stitches. Oh the unkept and dirty restaurant as her husband calls it makes the best food. Even if their secret recipe is breast milk she will still eat their Shawarma as long her tastebuds come alive everytime she set her eyes on their food.

***TYSON***

I didn't know organising a party for a 7 year old could be this handful. I've been running around from and to the backyard like a headless chicken to make sure everything is in order. I can't believe she's adding another year today. I don't want her to grow up. I want her to stay as a child forever but I know that's just my wish. There are vultures out there and I know I will shoot and kill anyone who lays their eyes on her. I don't think I would accept any boyfriend she brings around. No boy or man will be fit enough for her. Stumbling to the backyard, I find the DJ setting up his equipment far away from the pool. Good. Scarlett runs out of the house.

Scarlet: Daddy has the cake arrived yet?

Me: Not yet my love.

She sighs disappointed.

Me: What is it?

Scarlet: That means aunty Swazi is also not yet. Will she be coming to my party daddy?

Me: Of course she will come my love. I think she's running late.

She smile and claps her hands excited. The first time I introduced them I was a bit sceptical but both of my giggles proved me wrong. They hit on like a house on fire.

Scarlet: Oh I can't wait to show my friends the cake I baked.

I chuckle.

Me: You mean assisted to bake .

She scowls at me.

Scarlet: They don't know that.

I laugh.

Scarlet: And neither are you or aunty Swazi will tell them the truth.

I arch my brow as she points an accusing finger my way. Swazi is rubbing in on this child and I seriously cannot have two of them. One is headache enough.

Me: How old are you again?

She giggles.

Scarlet: 7.

Me: Then stop acting like an adult it doesn't suit you.

She folds her arms across her chest and pouts.

Scarlet: Aunty Swazi says if I want people to take me seriously I have to talk the talk and walk the walk.

What the fuck does that even mean? I chew my bottom and rub my temples.

Me: Adults only.

Scarlet: But I'm an adult too.

She protest stamping her tiny feet on the floor. I chuckle.

Me: Oh yeah. Are you sure about that?

I challenge. She nods.

Me: Oh well that means I'm not needed here and aunty Swazi doesn't have to come with the cake herself.

Tears fill her eyes.

Scarlet: Why?

Me: (amused) Because you're an adult and you don't need supervision from us. You will fetch the cake by yourself and you will pay everyone I hired their money.

I stifle a laugh as her face swirl in different emotions.

Scarlet: (breaking voice) But I don't have any money on me. The piggy bank doesn't have much.

I snort.

Me: Well you will have to apply for a loan in the bank to pay everyone.

Her eyes widen before she starts pacing around panicking.

Scarlet: (crying) But I don't have a job daddy. The bank won't give me such money.

Me: (amused) Then you should find one my love because I also can't help you.

She bats her glossy lashes at me.

Scarlet: Why not? You have money and aunty Swazi also has a job. I know she will loan me money when I need it.

Me: Because you're an adult and adults don't depend on their parents. They wake up everyday by the crack of dawn and go look for a job until the sunset. They only come back home at sunset because that's when people knock off and they repeat the same thing everyday until they get the job.



She burst in tears.

Scarlet: I don't want to be an adult daddy.

She turns on her heels and runs inside the house

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leaving me in stitches.

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I look at the time and heavily sigh. I'm getting agitated and pissed. I don't even know how many times I have tried calling her but she doesn't answer her phone. The party has started and there's no sign of Swazi and the cake. I'm starting to get worried. I know she would have told me if something came up. I buzz the car at the gate and walk outside, thinking it's her but sigh disappointed when the owner steps out of the car. I chuckle as he puts on his sunglasses.

Me: The fuck are you doing here?

Ade: It's a party and I wouldn't miss it for the world.

I chuckle as he stumbles towards me and we bro hug.

Ade: Look at you fat and shit.

He teases smirking.

Me: Look at you glowing and shit. Pussy must be good abi.

He cracks up so hard and raise his middle finger. I laugh.

Me: It's good to see you man.

Ade: It's been a while. I see someone is taking most of your time. We hardly see you in the monthly meetings.

Me: Those meetings waste my time. I'm a family man.

He chuckles.

Ade: I'm also a family man and you don't see me complaining.

I raise my hands in surrender.

Me: Let's just agree to disagree.

He nods.

Ade: Where are my manners? Let me introduce you to my queen.

He padded back to the car and opens the passenger door. A beautiful woman steps out and clings on him like her life

depends on her. I fold my arms and watch amused as the  
stumble towards me.

Woman: Tell your friend I'm hungry.

She attempts to whisper but I heard everything. I laugh  
reminiscing the first time I met my own woman. They will sure  
get along. She blushes embarrassed and drops her eyes to the  
floor.

Ade: You're making my woman shy Jones.

I laugh while he smiles at her.

Ade: Jones this my wife Mrs Adesola Emeka.

The woman and I both snort.

Woman: I'm Zobuhle but please call me Zozo or Zo.

I pick up her hand and narrow my eyes at Ade before I brush my lips on her knuckles. He frowns before his nostrils flare. He snatches her hand from my grip causing me to laugh. Territorial son of a bitch.

Me: Please to meet you Zo. I'm Tyson and welcome to my home.

Zozo: You have a lovely home.

She muttered flashing me a contiguous smile. I smile back.

Me: Thank you. Please do make yourself feel at home.

Zozo: Thank you. Where can we put the gift?

Me: First door on your left inside the house.

She nods and turns to Ade.

Zozo: Babe you will find me inside.

She pecks his lips and padded inside. I smirk.

Me: Babe you will find me inside.

I bat my lashes and mimick her voice. Laughter erupts around us.

Ade: Fuck you!

Before I could reply Scarlet runs to us.

Scarlet: Daddy is the cake finally here?

I swallow hard and shook my head. She nods disappointed. A car drives in as I crouch to her level.

Me: I don't like seeing the sad look on your face my love.

She blinks rapidly as tears welled her eyes.

Scarlet: But I'm not sad.

Me: You are sweetie and it's okay.

Ade: That sad look doesn't look good on such a beautiful princess as you.

She blushed and throws herself on my arms. I chuckle.

Me: That's uncle Ade say hi to him.

She waves shyly at him causing us to laugh.

Scarlet: Daddy?

Me: Mhmm?

Scarlet: (frowning) Why is she wearing a school uniform?

Me: What are you talking about?

The sound of footsteps approaching us makes me jump to my feet. I follow her line of gaze and frown.

Swazi: Happy birthday too you.

She goes on and on and sing for her as she makes her way towards us.

Swazi: Happy birthday sweetie.

Scarlet: Thank you aunty Swazi.



She places a kiss on her cheek then wipes her tears.

Swazi: I'm sorry for running late. There was a woman who barged in the bakery just as I was about to walk out and begged me to bake a cake for her son and I couldn't deny her request because she was crying. Am I forgiven?

She narrows her eyes at me as she mumbles. This would have been avoided if she just picked up her phone and sent me a text or answered my calls. Scarlet nods. I know by now I cannot say anything bad about Swazi on Scarlet. My baby adores her and she's her role model.

Me: I wish you would have called.

Swazi: I lost track of time. You know how am I when I'm in the zone.

Scarlet: Aunty Swazi.

Swazi: Yes my love.

Scarlet: Why are you wearing a school uniform?

She took the words out of my mouth. Swazi smiles.

Swazi: I forgot my speech.

She clear her throat and rolls her hand into a fist and raise it in the air.

Swazi: To the most beautiful girl in the world. Our next president and the future leader of this country. May you lead us to a bright future and become the first woman president of this country. Freedom is really come and you are our saviour.

I frown.

Swazi: I wore this uniform sweetie because you were born on a very special day. The 16th where the youth celebrates their day and freedom.

Me: What does that have to do with her birthday?

Swazi: It's the 16th.

She emphasizes on the last part rolling her eyes.

Me: Yes the 16th of December.

She gasped shocked.

Swazi: What? Kanti which day do people wear their school uniform in South Africa and celebrate youth day?

Ade and I burst into laughter.

Me: 16th of June not December my love.

Swazi: No wonder people looked at me like I've lost my mind at the mall.

She mumbles under her breath.

Swazi: How many 16th in a calendar are celebrated as a public day?

Ade bends down clutching his stomach rolling in laughter and I follow suit. I'm not even mad anymore.

**YVONNE**

My heart thuddes in my ribcage as the car drives to Tyson's home. I'm crossing my fingers and praying he didn't change his address or else I don't know what will I do. My flight got delayed by a whole 2 hours. I thought I would arrive earlier and surprise my baby but I as always I don't get my wish.

Driver: Ma'am we have arrived.

I snap out of my daze and look out of the window and indeed we are parked outside his gate. I swallow hard and release a huge breath. My hands are trembling as I pay the driver and step out of the car with my luggage.

Me: Thank you.

He nods and honk once before he speeds off. I wipe my palms on my jeans then drag my wobbly legs to the buzzer.

Me: You can do this Yvonne. You have equal rights to that child as much as he has. He has no right to separate us.

With that peep talk in mind, I press the buzzer and wait for a response. I press again harder this time when nobody answers my call.

Voice: Hello?

Me: It's me.

Voice: You who?

Me: Me Yvonne.

Voice: Do I know you.

I scoff.

Me: What is the meaning of that? Of course you know me. I'm the mother of your child.

Voice: Lady I think you got the wrong address because I don't know you and I surely don't have any baby mama because I'm gay.

Me: (snapping) Stop messing around you coward and come out and face me.

Silence...

Me: Hello?

Again I'm met by silence. I click my tongue and buzz again. The gate slides open and a man walks. The first thing my eyes set on is the make-up on his face and the long weave on his head.

Man: I don't know who you are but to scream at my gate like that is not so on. Girl a-ah.

Me: Did he put you up to this?

His perfectly drawn eyebrows furrow. Not waiting for his response, I mutter again.

Me: Where is he anyway?

Man: Who?

My nostrils flare. I click my tongue and push him out of the way and stumble inside.

Man: Lady where do you think you're going?

I ignore him and lead my feet to the front door.



Me: (screaming) Tyson Jones come out you coward. Come out and face me like a man you are.

Man: Hey lady.

I sharply turn on my heels to face him and sharply glare at him.

Me: Shut up you fake wannabe woman and call that man for me.

Man: What did you just say?

Me: I said shut up you fake wannabe....

Words dies in my throat as he slaps me so hard. The metallic taste of blood feels my mouth while stars dance in my line of vision.

Man: I don't know who do you think you are to come to my house and insult me like that. This is my house and I want you out right now.

Me: Did you just slap me?

Man: I can do far much worse you don't leave.

Me: I'm not going anywhere.

I retort dragging the chair on the patio and make myself comfortable. He clicks his tongue and storms my way. He grips my wrist and pick up my suitcase on the other hand and drag me to the gate. I thrash around his arms trying to free myself but it's no use his grips is tight.

Me: Put me down this instance. Do you know who I am?

He throws me on the lawn outside and my bags follows suit.

Man: I don't give a fuck who you are but one thing I won't allow is that you come to my house and disrespect me. Get the fuck out of my property before I call the police on you.

He hisses and walks back inside. The gate close after him right in front of my eyes. I click my tongue and jump to my feet. I dust off my clothes and stride back to the gate and bang on it. A car honks behind me forcing me to turn to it. The driver steps out with a frown on his face.

Man: Can I help you lady?

Me: I should be asking you that. This is my baby daddy home.

He chuckles.

Man: You got the wrong address because it's my husband and I living in this property.

My heart skips a beat while my eyes widen.

Me: I-I-I don't understand.

I stutter swallowing the thick saliva accumulated in my mouth.

Man: Who are you looking for?

Me: My fiance.

He snorts rolling his eyes.

Man: Yeah I heard that already.

He waves me off. Rude much?

Man: I'm asking about his name.

Me: Tyson. Tyson Jones.

Man: That's the previous owner. Unfortunately he sold the property to us and we are the sole owners of it.

I gulp.

Me: Do you know where can I find him?

Man: I'm afraid I don't have an answer to that. Excuse me I need to take this call.

He muttered picking up his ringing phone.

Man: My love I'm at the gate.

Tears fill my eyes as I pick up my items and walks to the tar road embarrassed. Joburg is very big city and it my take me time to find him again. Where the hell are you Tyson?

## ***NOMASWAZI***

Happiness is the only word I can describe my life right now. I'm in a point in my life whereby I let stressful things go because I don't have a place to accommodate them anymore. I never thought my relationship with my man can get this far. His proven to me time and time again that he will always have my back and always love me no matter how crazy I am. My parents kicked me out when I came back home that morning and I knew I really fucked up. I thought my mother was on my side but the woman flatly told me she would have done the same thing to her step daughter so she's not getting involved on how I'm being punished by my father. The man didn't speak to me for weeks and I killed me to know I'm the root of our altercation. No matter how much I tried to apologize he will ignore me and dismiss me like he didn't hear my apology. I would cry my eyes out every night because I couldn't bare being in the same space with him but not talk to me. I had to move in with Ty because he was also extra about how unsafe the world is and blah, blah, blah. I know when they come to find out that I'm cohabiting with him they will have me for breakfast, lunch and supper. They are just old school and believe in the old fashion way that

you should live in with a man when you become husband and wife but not on this modern age. Yeyi mjolo is moving fast like a the Durban lights and before I know it they would be another me replacing me. I would pull out my hair and roll on his driveway all the way to the gate on that day.

Me: I will go and change.

I mutter to the two men who are still laughing at my expense. I squint my eyes at him and he quickly gets the message and stop laughing. Good or else he would have known me. He stumbles my way laughing through his eyes and pecks my lips. I roll my eyes playfully and push out of the way.

Ty: Babe?

His hyena laughter follows after he call after me. I ignore him and navigate my way inside. I have embarrassed myself enough and I don't think I will recover soon. Skimping through the closet, I pull out a summer dress and throw it on. The door creaks open just as I slide my feet in my flip flops.

Ty: (amused) Are you mad at me.

Me: Of course I'm mad at you. What kind of man laughs at his own woman?

He laughs again causing me to glare at him.

Ty: I'm sorry baby but that scene was too funny for me to not laugh at.

Picking up my phone

I scoff and try to bypass him on the door but he holds my waist.  
I pout.

Me: I have guests to entertain and a party to attend.

Ty: They can wait. Your man comes first.



He faintly whispers and nibble with my earlobe. I snicker. His hand slide down to my thighs and he caresses them slowly and seductively. I clench them as my clit starts to throb while my breathe hitches up.

Ty: Wanna give daddy something for being late?

He husky muttered, pressing his hard length on my back. I swallow hard nodding.

Ty: On your knees.

Shit! I'm a gone girl. He knows how much that commanding voice drives me crazy. My pussy pulses as I drop to my knees and pull his shorts down. He length springs out of with pre cum oozing on his mushroom head. I lick my lips and innocently look at him. One thing I learnt about him is that as much as he loves the crazy talkative me he loves the innocence in me. It just drives him wild.

Ty: Fuck!

I run my hand on his head causing him to shut his eyes hissing. I repeat the same action before I stroke him slowly. Just as I open my mouth and guard him in the bedroom door flies open and incomes Scarlet. He quickly pulls his pants up.

Scarlet: What are you guys doing?

Me: I was just helping your dad with his shoes sweetie.

She frowns and shift her gaze to her to her father then back to me.

Scarlet: But his wearing flip flops.

When did she become smart?

Me: Yes there was a thorn on his shoes and I had to remove it for him.

Scarlet: Is that why he looks like his constipated?

I stifle a laugh nodding. She shakes her head and lightly slap her forehead.

Scarlet: His such a baby.

I giggle shift my eyes to him. He sheepishly smiled. Shame my poor man looks horny and ready to burst. His whole body has changed color to pink.

Me: Why don't you go back to the party and we will follow you.

Scarlet: Okay.

She turns on her heels and runs out. I release a breath I wasn't aware I was holding.

Me: That was close. Where were we?

He nods dropping his pants. I open my mouth and take him in. I dare him by keeping my eyes on his as I bob on his length moaning. He drops his eyes to my chest and pull down the straps on the dress, revealing my bra. He slide his hand on my breast and pinch my nipple. I moan and clench my thighs harder to soothe the ache. Saliva drops out on the corner of my lips as I attempt to deep throat him but I fail miserably. Our moan echoe around the whole room making me wonder if there are no people on the corridors. I slide my hand on my underwear and flick on my nerve bud moaning while tears stream down my cheeks.

Ty: So beautiful.

He stroke my face, wiping out the tears but they keep falling. Gripping my head, he pushes deeper until blocking my air way and furiously fucks my mouth. I use the same rhythm as him on myself. It doesn't take long before he pulls out and cums on my chest. His name slips out of my lips as I follow suit biting my lip.

Ty: Fuck! That was beautiful.

He muttered panting. I nod and remove my hand out of my panties. He bends down and clips my hand and brings my wet fingers on his mouth. I pool out more juices by the mere sight. He licks me clean then turn on his making way to the bathroom. I jump to my feet and take out my underwear. He comes back shortly looking fresh and wet towel on his hand. He pauses on his steps.

Me: What?

He flashes me a smile.

Ty: You look beautiful like that.

I laugh and stumble towards him to take the towel. Raising my dress, I wipe my mess and move to my chest.

Me: Of course you would say that.

Before he could reply the bedroom door flies open again. He groans.

Ty: We should lock the door next time.

I nod wiping my chest and fix my clothes before turning to her.

Scarlet: Auntie Swazi did you finally remove the thorn on his shoes.

Me: (frowning) What thorn?

Ty clears his throat turning to me.

Ty: That thorn baby.

What's wrong with his eyes? My frown deepens as keeps dropping his yes. I follow his line of gaze and find myself staring at the floor. What am I looking for?

Me: I don't see any thorn.

He clears his throat again.

Ty: That thorn.

He emphasizes on his words. And then it click on me causing me to widen my eyes.

Me: Oh that thorn. Yes that thorn.

I cannot believe my lies are finally catching up on me.

Scarlet: I'm glad you removed it. Now can we get back to the party.

Me: Yes.

I cheerfully muttered and padded towards her while Ty follows behind me.

Scarlet: Auntie Swazi what that on your chest?

Me: Where?

She stands on her tiptoes and scoop up the cum in my chest. My eyes popped out of my sockets. Didn't I just wiped that?

Scarlet: Is this cream? Must have been smeared on your chest when you were doing the cake.

She mutters bringing to her lips.

Us: No!

We muttered in unison, screaming. Remind me again why didn't we lock the door?



***NARRATOR***

Zozo and Swazi sat under the shade watching the kids going up and down the backyard. The noise can make one deaf but they couldn't do anything because it was a party and that's how parties are.

Zozo: You know I didn't want to come here earlier on because I thought I would be alone with those typical rich housewives.

Swazi giggles and sips on her drink.

Swazi: If it was any other day I would have also thought the same thing.

Zozo: From being a baker and to being the madam of this mansion. How did you meet this man?

Swazi blushes.

Swazi: It's a long story but to cut it short he was a regular at the bakery and he started courting me from then.

She laughs reminiscing the good old days.

Swazi: I made him sweat shame and I told he my love ain't mahala and he must Sebenza for it. And at that time he didn't even know the meaning of Sebenza.

They both giggle.

Zozo: You were mean.

Swazi snorts and playfully roll her eyes.

Swazi: A girl got to do what a girl got to do and I'm sure you did the same thing with that man there.

She shifts her gaze to where both men are. Feeling eyes on them, Tyson turns towards them and locks eyes with Swazi before he winked at her and turned the meat. Swazi drops her eyes blushing. Zozo giggles.

Zozo: Love is in the air.

Swazi: Yep the girl is gone.

Laughter erupts around them. Scarlet ran towards them with a smile plastered on her face.

Scarlet: Did you see me doing a backflip in the pool?

Swazi: No baby I wasn't paying attention.

Scarlet sighed disappointed.

Scarlet: But I thought you were watching.

Swazi: I don't have my glasses on so you know...

Scarlet: You can't see properly from afar.

She giggles completing her sentence. Swazi smiles and picks up her phone.

Swazi: Why don't you try again and this time I will capture it.

Scarlet grins and runs to the pool and waves at her. Swazi stumbles towards her and gives her a thumbs up. Scarlet holds her nose and dives in the pool and her friends follow suit. Swazi saves the video and goes back to her seat.

Zozo: You're very good with her.

Swazi: I try.

Zozo: One would swear you are her birth mother.

Swazi: We just have that special bond. She's too adorable not to love and she makes it easy for me to fall for her.

She smiles looking at Scarlet as she runs out of the pool to her father. Tyson scoop her in his arms and spins her around.

Zozo: Have you ever thought of having your own?

Swazi: We haven't spoke about that but I know some day I would like to mother one.

Zozo: I'm hoping to have this special bond with my little bean right here. In months to come I would be mothering one.

She pats her stomach fondly causing Swazi to jump to her feet letting out a scream. Alarmed

Tyson and Ade rush to them.

Swazi: Oh my God.

She jumps up and down excited causing Zozo to giggle.

Ade and Ty: What's going on?

They muttered in unison while Ade rushes to Zozo's side and place his hand on her stomach looking for any sign of danger.

Ade: Are you okay?

She rolls her eyes.

Zozo: I'm fine.

Ty: Babe why are you screaming?

Swazi: Because I'm going to be a godmother. Oh my goodness do you know what that means?

Both men sigh in relief before Ade breaks into a chuckle.

Ade: Women!

He mumbled under his breath and pecks Zozo's cheek and goes back to where they were seating.

Ty: Am I missing something?

Swazi: Yes a lof of things. I have to make a list for the baby shower and the gender reveal party.

She gushes ignoring the man in front of her. Feeling left out, Tyson turns on his heels and makes his way to his seat.

Ty: What was that all about?

Ade: We are expecting.

Ty: (frowning) Expecting what?

Ade chuckles at the clueless man beside him.

Ade: A baby you moron.

Ty: (chuckling) What? Congratulations.

He exclaims and bro hug him. A snicker breaks their hug.

Sandile: Is it all you need a hug day because I also need one?

Laughter erupts around as they stumble towards them.

Ty: Motherfuckers what are you guys doing in my house?



Kagiso: If it was any regular day Jones I would have shoot your ass down but I'm with my beautiful wife and she hates guns.

Ty: Remind me why are you still with this moron?

Busi giggles and waves him off as Tyson pecks her palm.

Busi: Because I love him.

Ade and Tyson snort as Kagiso smirks at them.

Ade: Where your eyes that blind that made you to choose him at out of all men? There are plenty fishes in the sea.

They burst into laughter.

Kagiso: Fuck you Igwe!

Ade: (laughing) Language brother.

Kagiso smiles shaking his head and raise his middle finger.

Sandile: We brought out granddaughter to the party and decided why not tag along so we can annoy you.

Tyson chuckles.

Ty: Come ladies I will show you were the rest of the ladies are.

They turned on their heels and made their way to Zozo and Swazi who were laughing at dance moves Scarlet and her friends were doing.

Zozo: I swear white kids can't dance.

Swazi: They are jumping like Kangaroos navigating their way in the jungle instead of dancing.

They laughed again.

Ty: Babe I brought you guys company. Baby I trust you take care of them. Ladies this is the lady of the house and she will take care of you.

Swazi: They are in great hands. Do we have to wait until all invited children arrive before we eat? We are hungry bandla and the snacks are not doing their job.

Tyson chuckles while the others giggle. The fact that she was not ashamed of being herself made him to fall deeply in love with her everyday. She wasn't faking who Swazi was suppose to be but was true to herself.

Ty: The kids are still swimming but we can cut the swimming session short.

Swazi: Knowing that fish we call a child she won't come out of that pool. You know how she is. And please change that music

because it's also making us drowsy. Just look at how miserable Minnie is. The poor child is used to Gqom and Amapiano music on parties not this rock and pop the Dj subjected us too.

Ty: Anything else ma'am?

He amusedly muttered arching his bro making Swazi to giggle.

Swazi: No that would be all kind sir.

Ty: Let me leave you to the introductions then.

He bends down to kiss her lips and turns on his heels.

Busi: How long have you guys been together?

Swazi: It would be a year now.

Stucking her hand out for a handshake.

Swazi: Nomaswazi is the name.

Busi: Busisiwe.

Aza: Azasakhe. Nice to meet you.

Swazi: Same here.

Zozo: Zobuhle.

She waves at them. Busi and Aza wave back.

Swazi: Make yourself comfortable ladies. I'll go fetch more snacks and chairs for you.

They nod and watch her disappear inside.

Busi: So Zo which one is yours? Is it okay I call you Zo though?

Zo: I honestly don't mind because people tend to butcher my name from time to time.

They laugh.

Zozo: Mine is the darkest one of them all.

They giggle.

Aza: Shut the front door! You're the one who tamed my boy Ade?

Zozo: If taming and Ade being in one sentence is the right thing then yes it's me.

Aza: Oh I'm so going to tease the shit out of him.

They laugh.

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\*

It's late in the evening as Swazi walks Minnie's mother to the car.

M.mother: I'm sorry I was a bit late. I had errands to run so I just dropped Minnie off and rush out without saying anything.

Swazi: Don't worry about that as long as the best friend was here. I don't think Scarlet even noticed you were not here.

She muttered waving her off.

M.mother: Minnie had such a great time.

Swazi: I can tell by how tired she is. She hardly ate the cake.

They giggle.

M.mother: I also had a great time. To tell you the truth I had no errand I needed to attend. It's just Minnie is black and Scarlet is white so I was expecting the racism kind of behaviour even though I trust Tyson with my child.

Swazi: Well you have nothing to worry about. You do know we will have to schedule a sleepover soon right?

M.m: Don't remind about that. They always leave my house a mess.

Swazi: That's because you let them do as they please. With me they know they have to tidy up after themselves. I don't play with kids.

M.mother: (laughing) I'm just too soft on them and my husband hates that because Minnie gets away with everything.



Meanwhile inside the house Tyson sighs again.

Kagiso: Relax.

Ty: I can't help it. Scarlet go and call her.

Tyson picks up his glasses and knocks down the drink inside. He cringes as it burns his insides.

Zozo: When am I seeing you like this?

She whispers to Ade.

Ade: (chuckling) Never.

She gaspes shocked.

Zozo: Why not?

Ade: Because we are already married.

Zozo: Then I also want an engagement day and a wedding day because you never gave me that.

Ade: You're joking right?

Zozo: Do I look like I'm joking?

Before he could reply Scarlet runs inside and close the door behind her.

Scarlet: She's coming. She's coming.

Tyson switches off the lights and waits for her. His heart skips a thousand beats as his footsteps approach the door. He slide his hand in his pocket and takes out the box and goes on one knee. Scarlet smiles and records everything on his phone. Turning the doorknob, Swazi walks in and frowns seeing the dark house only candles on.

Swazi: So many candles?

She closes the door and walks to them.

Swazi: Doesn't this man know loadshedding is a pandemic in this country and his busy playing with candles. What is wrong with him?

She murmurs blowing off the candles. Laughter erupts around her causing her to flick on the lights. She freezes seeing Tyson on his knees chuckling.

Swazi: What is going?

Scarlet: You ruined daddy proposal aunty Swazi.

**TYSON**

I had the perfect proposal in mind. The ladies and my baby girl helped me set up the living room to what I wanted. Scarlet scattered the rose petals on the floor leading her to the living room but the woman just had to blow off those candles. I know we live in a different time whereby electricity has become a problem in our country but for her to blow the candles off and say I'm wasting them cracked me up so hard. Anyone who doesn't know her would ask me how do I live with her or how do I manage to be with her? Well my answer is just simple. The woman isn't ashamed to express herself. She's a free spirited person who speaks her mind and does what her mind tells her to do at that particular time and that's what attracted me to her. She's not faking who she is and she can only be one Swazi and I wouldn't change her for the world.

Swazi: What proposal?

Scarlet: A marriage proposal.

She scoffs.

Swazi: Forgive me for being irrational but I just saw lit up candles lined up and I did what any normal black person would do which is to switch them off because the struggle is real out there.

She shifts her gaze to me and her eyes soften.

Swazi: I'm sorry if I ruined your proposal but I'm not sorry for switching them off.

I chuckle.

Me: Forget about the candles because they are not important. It was just a gesture to make the proposal to be a little romantic.

Zozo: Come on ask her already.

She impatiently muttered causing the others to laugh. I turn to her and find her giggling. Sweat runs down my spine while my palms get moist. I wipe them off in my shorts and normalise my abnormal heart that could leap out of my throat anytime.

Me: I don't know how to express my love to you in words but you know I can express them by actions. The first time I saw you I knew you were the one even though you didn't know me. If I could write a book about you I would take years to complete it because no words in the dictionary could be the perfect fit to describe you. You're one of the million kind, a rare gem that cannot be replaced and I wouldn't trade you for anything. So baby can you make me the happiest man in the world by becoming Mrs Jones?

She smiles blinking rapidly and nods.

Swazi: Yes!

Me: (smiling) Yes?

She nods.

Swazi: Yes and a thousand yes to follow. I will marry you.

I leap up to my feet as stumble towards her as the others clap and cheer for us. I wrap my hands around her waist and capture her lips. The clapping and cheering becomes louder. She breaks the kiss and pecks my lips before I slide the ring in her finger.

Me: My finance.

I whisper in her ear, placing a kiss on her neck. She smiles.

Swazi: It sure has a nice ring to it. Say it louder so the others can hear.

She whispers back causing us to both laugh.

Swazi: Thank you for choosing me. You could have chosen anyone but you choose me.

Me: And I would continue choosing you everyday until my last breath even in my grave I will still choose you.

Tears blurs her vision. I cup her face and use the pad of my thumb to wipe them.

Swazi: I don't want to cry on such a special occasion.

Me: Then don't cry.

Swazi: I can't help it. Your words are just...

She bites her lips to suppress the cry to escape her lips before bursting into tears. The ladies cooed softly as I hush her.

Swazi: I'm sorry. I'm just a bit overwhelmed and emotional.



Busi: It's okay darling. We understand, just take your time.

She wipes the tears with the back of her hand and composes herself.

Swazi: Thank you everyone for being here to celebrate such a special day with us. I can't thank you enough for making my girl's day so special.

Scarlet blushes and hides her face with the phone making us to laugh.

Swazi: (giggling) And thank you baby for seeing me woman enough to make me your wife.

I smile and kiss her lips.

Zozo: Girl come and let me see that rock.

She giggles and makes her way to the ladie while I walk to my baby.

Me: Thank you.

Scarlet: Thank you for bringing her in our lives. I hardly miss my mother these days.

I bend down to her level and engulf her in a hug.

Me: You know she's not here to replace her right?

Scarlet: I know. Would it be okay if I start calling her mom?

I quickly break the embrace and just stare at her. I don't normally cry but right now and at this moment I feel like crying. When did my baby girl grow up and become wiser?

Me: Is that what you want?

She nods.

Me: It's up to you my love. Nobody is going to force you to do anything you don't want. You don't have to call her mom because her and I are getting married.

Scarlet: It's not by force but I want too.

Who am I to deny her request? I bring her to my chest and embrace her again.

Me: Your growing up and I don't like it.

She giggles.

Scarlet: I don't want to be an adult though. Adult life is difficult.

I laugh remembering our conversation from this morning.

Me: It's not up to you my love.

She yawns.

Me: Let's get you in bed missy.

I pick her up and make my way upstairs with her. She jumps to her feet and runs to the bathroom to brush her teeth. I fill the tub with water and place her night dress on top of the bed. Making my way back to the bathroom, I find her already stepping out of the tub. My eyes widen. How many minutes did I spend in the room?

Me: That was fast.

Scarlet: I'm not a fish.

She sasses draining the tub and makes her way to the room. I chuckle stunned. She keeps amazing me each day. Cleaning the tub, I make my way to the room and find her inside the covers.

Me: Should I read you a bed time story?

She yawns shaking her head and close her eyes.

Scarlet: Goodnight daddy.

Me: Night my angel. I love you.

Scarlet: I love you too.

Placing a kiss on her forehead

Advertisement

I switch off the lights and close the door behind me and make my way to the fools downstairs . As always they are loud and showering me with multiple congratulations.

Kagiso: I would like to propose a toast to the newly engaged couple.

We chuckle and pick our glasses. He shifts his gaze to me and smirk. Judging by the mischievous glint in his eyes his about to say shit.

Kagiso: Who knew an old man like you can get cuffed? Run Swazi while you still have time.

They laugh as I raise my middle finger.

Kagiso: On a serious note though my friend. I'm happy for you. You finally found the right woman for yourself. Keep her happy at all times and I promise you, you will be counting road to 25 years in your marriage.

He flashes his wife as smile and she blushes. He rises his glass and we follow suit.

Kagiso: To Swazi and Tyson.

Us: Swazi and Tyson.

We click our glasses and down the drink inside. My eyes finds herself as she looks at her ring again. She smiles fondly and turns locking her eyes with me.

Swazi: Thank you.

She murmurs.

Me: I love you Mrs Jones.

I murmur back.

Swazi: I love you too sthandwa sam.

## ***YVONNE***

The knock on the door startles me.

Voice: Room service.

Me: Finally.

I jump to my feet and make my way to the door. I open widely and watch him push the curt inside.

Me: Thank you.

Waiter: Pleasure ma'am.

He turns on his heels and makes his way out and shut the door behind him. I swallow the saliva filling my mouth as I pull of the lid. Picking up my fork, I lower myself on the couch and dig in. If



it was any other day I wouldn't have ordered spaghetti and meatballs but it was the only cheapest thing on the menu. The room alone costed me an arm and a leg. I had to call it a day at 5pm because jet leg and jet fatigue were finally kicking in. In my own mind I had a plan that after arriving at the airport I would go to his house and I will still find him there but little did I know it will take me the whole day to look for him. I don't know where will I start from tomorrow morning because I plan to search for them again. I know by now my sister knows I didn't go to the interview I lied about and she knows I scammed her. My phone rings on top of the bed. I place the dish and make drag my feet to it. Speak of the devil and she will call.

Me: Hey sis.

Nancy: Where are you?

Me: In South Africa.

Nancy: What the fuck Yvonne?

I roll my eyes knowing a lecture is coming.

Me: You wouldn't understand.

Nancy: I don't think I will ever understand. I used my last money for fuel because I thought you were going to an interview.

Again I roll my eyes.

Me: Blah, blah, blah. Cry me a river Nancy. It's just a few dollars no big deal.

She screeches on the end of the line.

Nancy: Did you just say few dollars?

She bellows in rage.

Me: Why are you turning this into a big deal? It's just money Nancy. Few paper notes.

Nancy: Fuck you Yvonne. Do you hear me?

Me: Yeah crystal.

I sarcastically muttered. She clicks her tongue fuming and disconnect the call. I make my way to the couch and throw the phone beside me and pick up my food. I know if she were in my shoes she would have done the same thing but she's Nancy who loves to blow things out of proportion. Just as I pick the fork and about to fill my taste buds with this delicious

spaghetti, my phone pings indicating a notification. I slowly chew and pick it up. I frown seeing a notification on Instagram. I log in on the app and choke on the food. I cough rapidly trying to stir the food in the right direction but it blocks my airway. Widen my eyes, I start to panic and violently beat up my chest while tears fill my eyes and swallow as the saliva as many times I can. My heart shatters in million pieces as I stare at the picture again. It's a picture posted by Tyson of a woman's hand wearing a ring that looks expensive than mine. My heart tightens more in my chest as I struggle to breathe. The rock on top is bigger than mine. Everything about the ring screams a fortune while I'm wearing crumbs. How could he do this to me? We have a child together for goodness sake. It was suppose to be our time not this nonsense I'm seeing. The caption below says "I asked and she said Yes. World meet Mrs Jones."

**YVONNE**

I shiver and try to pull the blankets to my face but I come back empty handed. I groan and flip my eyes open. The first thing my eyes set on is the dark room and the half eaten plate on the table. My mind is a bit foggy as I try to retrace my steps from last night.

Me: I must have slept on couch and fell during the night.

I murmur trying to convince myself and make my way to the bathroom for my morning routine. It's day two back in the country and I could already feel a migraine forming on my skull. I don't know where will I start looking but I know I'm not giving up so easily. Stepping out of the shower, I wrap my body with a towel and walk to the room. I cease on my steps when I find the cleaner in the room.

Cleaner: I'm so sorry ma'am I thought no one was inside. I let myself in after I knocked four times.

Me: I was just in the shower.

Cleaner: I'll be quick then.

I nod and go through my clothes. I settle for a red bodycon dress and red peep toe pump heels and finish off the look with a red lipstick. A smile curve on my lips as I look at my reflection on the mirror. I walk back to the room and shove my belongings in my purse then walk out of the room. I don't know where am I even going but I'm just letting my feet lead me wherever.

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Thirty minutes later, I end up at the mall just window shopping. If someone told me I would be window shopping someday I would probably laughed at that person but circumstances are

forcing me not to laugh at this minute. I pause on my steps as my eyes fell on a familiar face. I squint my eyes and my heart skips a beat when I finally recognise the face.

Woman: Don't wonder around Scarlet.

She yells after her as she runs the opposite direction as her. I turn on my heels and follow them. They walk inside food lovers and the woman pushes the trolley Scarlet picked up for her.

Scarlet: Can we please try out their cupcakes mom.

She calls her mom? TF?

Woman: Hey I thought you liked my cupcakes.

Scarlet smiles sheepishly.

Scarlet: I do love them but you don't have that flavour.

I follow her line of gaze and find her pointing at the cappuccino flavour. The woman shakes her head and my eyes finally fall on her left hand. It's the same hand and the same ring that was on that picture he posted yesterday. Suddenly I now remember why I slept on the floor. I must have fainted staring at the picture.

Me: Scarlet.

I yell and make my way towards. They both turn and Scarlet freezes on her steps.

Me: Baby come to your mother.

She stares at me and hides behind the woman.

Me: (yelling) Didn't you hear me? I said come here.

Did the brat just shake her head at me? I click my tongue and close the gap between them and grip her hand.

Me: Let's go.

Woman: I would suggest you let her go right now.

I ignore her and the audience we have suddenly gained and drag the brat out of the shop while she's screaming God knows what. A hand grabs my shoulder and turns me to the intruder.

Woman: Hey lady I'm talking to you.

Me: Are you stupid or what? Can't you see I'm ignoring you on purpose.

Woman: And mina ke ngikhuluma nawe. ( And I'm talking you.)

Is she swearing me or what?



Me: Repeat what you just said.

Woman: I'm stupid and I tend not to follow instructions.

She retorts

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sassing. My nostrils flare.

Me: (screaming) How dare you? Do you know who I am?

Woman: I don't think you do know who I am. Let the child go.

She calmly muttered causing my anger to spike up. I could feel my blood boiling.

Me: You brat.

I muttered removing my grip on Scarlet who just bit me and runs toward the woman.

Me: Scarlet get back here this instance.

Scarlet: No!

She firmly mumble making my eyes to widen. My heart skips a beat.

Me: What did you say?

Tyson: She said no.

I paled widening my eyes further more. He padded towards them and place a kiss on the woman's cheek and turns to me. The spark he had a minute ago dimmed.

Tyson: What the fuck are you doing here Yvonne?

I gulp.

Woman: Of course Swazi she's the baby mama. Why didn't you think of that?

She dramatically throws her hands in the air and rolls her eyes.

Tyson: (hissing) I asked you a fucked question.

Me: I-I-I..

I stutter swallowing hard.

Tyson: You what?

I shift my gaze at the woman and find her staring right back at me. I chuckle.

Me: So this is what you replaced me with? A fat pig who's so stupid. I bet she doesn't even have a degree.

The woman throws her head back and burst in laughter while the audience and Tyson flinch.

Tyson: You will not speak to ..

She places a hand on his shoulder interrupting him.

Swazi: Allow me.

She walks and stands in front of me and smiles.

Swazi: You're one of those baby mama's who think a child is a ring. The fact that you're still wearing that ring that is 1970 is so pathetic.

Me: You're..

She interjects.

Swazi: You will not put words in my mouth. I'm still talking.

She snaps agitated.

Swazi: The fat pig as you call her is dearly loved and adored by that man and that child. I don't have a single stretch mark on body and even cellulite. I'm fat, but I'm fresh and damn sexy than you. I just have extra meat on my thighs, ass and hips unlike you.

She giggles and close the gap between us and whispers.

Swazi: This is a secret between us. The man loves the love handles in me and I'm sorry to say I love how he handles my body when he fucks me.

She innocently smiles and step back.

Swazi: Now next time don't try to body shame another person to get back at a man. And for the record this fat pig is a baker by profession and soon to Mrs Jones now beat that grandma.

She turns on her heels and makes her way towards them. Tyson smirks while Scarlet stuck out her tongue at me. Tears fill my eyes.

Tyson: I hope you heard my wife loud and clear Yvonne because next time we bump into you I will not be nice. Now disappear in front of us capish.

He roars at me causing me to jump startled and run to the nearest bathroom while tears blur my vision. I have never been so humiliated in my life.

Me: Get a grip of yourself Yvonne.

The tears roll down on my cheeks even though I'm trying to peep talk myself. For a second I tell myself that I really deserve

better and being bitter doesn't suit me. I'm too beautiful and any guy would be lucky to have me as his wife so why am I still stuck on Tyson? Why can't I just move on with my life and forget about him? I know wherever he is he doesn't even think about me so why am I bothering myself about him? Why am I torturing my heart with a man who doesn't care? I really do deserve better. I look at the ring in my slowly slide it out. I'm done with him. He's humiliated me enough and this is the last straw.

## **ZOBUHLE**

Balancing the tray in my hands with the wall, I push the door and padded inside the room. The shower stops running as I place the tray on top of the bed and open the curtains. He walks out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around his waist and dripping wet. I snort.

Me: Seducing me won't change the fact that I still want to be courted.

He chuckles.

Ade: It's too early for your nonsense.

Me: I'm serious though.

Ade: And I know that. Can we please get over the festive season first and after that I promise you we will do everything you wanted. From the first date to the wedding.

Me: Okay.

Ade: Good!

Me: I brought you breakfast.

Ade: (frowning) It's not my birthday today and I know I didn't forget any important date so what's the occasion?



I laugh in disbelief.

Me: Haibo can't a wife make breakfast for her husband.

He smirks.

Ade: Wife right?

He teases.

Me: Yes I'm your wife.

Ade: I love the sound of that but is it safe for me to eat her food? I don't want to end up in hospital for food poisoning.

I screech and pick up the pillow close to me and throw it him. He laughs ducking it. I know it's my first time serving him like this but could he at least appreciate the effort. I've been

learning how to cook Nigerian dishes and I can safely say I'm nailing them now; thanks to Google and Mam' Eunice. I've taken this wife duty thing serious and I enjoy doing. Everyday he wakes up and find his clothes already ironed. I do the laundry in our room and clean the room myself. The last thing was for me to learn to cook his food and now I can cook them with my eyes closed.

Ade: I'm just messing with you sweetheart.

I playfully click my tongue.

Me: You know last night made me realise how far we have comed. The journey was not an easy one but I really appreciate you for sticking through out until today. Life is too short and I wouldn't choose another life partner but you.

Ade: You're not dying on me right?

I pinch my bridge nose. Can't he be serious for one second in his life?

Me: I give up on you.

I mumble padded to the door. He runs after me and holds my waist.

Ade: And I also appreciate you too. The journey was indeed long and we overcame every obstacle that was on our way. You're a strong woman and not many women who were in your position would have fought and held on. I'm proud of you and the person you're becoming.

I feel the tears wetting my cheeks before I could comprehend what's going on. Looking back to those dark days I'm still trying to understand what made me not to snap and end it all. I don't know when was the last time I heard the voices in my head. The therapy sessions are really helping and knowing the old Zobuhle she would have still be cursing and swearing at this man for trying to help her. I've really grown.

Me: I wouldn't have done it without your support.

Ade: I was just doing my job. That's what an married couple do. They support and stick with each other through thick and thin.

I smile through my tears an mumble.

Me: For better or worse.

Ade: In sickens and in health until death do us apart.

I bite my lip to suppress the cry wanting to slip out of my mouth.

Ade: I love you both.

Me: We love you too daddy.

I really love this man and I thank God for him everyday.

**SEASON FINALE****NOMASWAZI**

I always ask myself one question. Why do women like to embarrass themselves? The guy probably made it clear that he doesn't want her so what is the use of forcing things when you're unwanted? The incident made me question some other women's sanity. I know if it was me I wouldn't be running after the guy and try to get his attention. I would have moved on with my life and pretend like he never existed in the first place. Life is too short for me to be worried about ex's.

Me: Where are we going after this?

Ty: It's your call. I don't know.

I roll my eyes and push the trolley to the counter.

Scarlet: Can we go to the park please daddy.

Ty: Like I said sweetie it's your mother's call.

She flashes me a toothless smile and turns to me.

Scarlet: Please mom.

Me: I don't see why not.

Scarlet: Yes.

She cheerfully throws her fist in the air making us to giggle. When she called me mom this morning I froze and started to panic. Not that I was expecting her to call me that but it felt unreal and it made me realise the direction my life was heading. I was a mother to her and soon to be wife to her father and maybe some day soon to be mother to her siblings.

We walk to the parking lot and load the shopping bags in the boot. My phone rings just as I was about to step inside the car. I smile.

Me: My love.

She snorts.

Mom: You only remember me when I call you. You hardly call these days.

Me: I'm sorry it's just I have been busy.

Mom: I heard that excuse before Swazi.

I heavily sigh and lean on the door.

Me: Okay I wanted to tell you this face to face but you're so impatient.

Mom: And that is?

Me: Get abakhongi together. Siyashadisa la ekhaya. Our perfect wedding sishadise betele.

Mom: Huh?

I groan.

Me: Ma I'm getting married.

Silence....

Me: Ma?

Mom: To who?

Haibo what does she mean to who?



Me: To Tyson.

Mom: Hai Swazi come home so we can talk. You know yourself, you can't elaborate things further.

I'm not fumbling with words.

Me: Ma I'm saying I'm getting married.

Mom: And I'm not disputing that I just want to hear it from the horse's mouth, face to face. I know you like exaggerating things so I want to see for myself.

I snort.

Me: Fine I'm coming.

Mom: We will be waiting for you.

I disconnect the call and shake my head.

Me: Can you believe my mother doesn't believe me when I'm telling her that I'm getting married.

I mumble as I open the door and slide in.

Ty: (frowning) Why?

Me: Because she says I love exaggerating things so she will like to be Adam. She believes by seeing.

He chuckles and brings the engine to life.

Me: You guys will have to go to the park alone.

Scarlet: (sulking) Why?

Me: Because I'm being summoned home by my parents.

Scarlet: Can I come with you?

Me: Of course.

Ty: I guess I will drop you off and drive straight home.

I nod and lean back on the armrest. I know I love to exaggerate things a little bit but couldn't she believe me? These past months she's has seen how much I have changed and grew. I'm not the old Swazi who let people walk all over her. I speak my mind and voice out my opinions even though they don't matter to others. I'm not ashamed to be a big girl like I was once was. In fact I love being me and I don't think I would change myself for anything. I smile as he parks the car two houses away from mine. Whoever installed manners into him deserve a medal for teaching him respect.

Ty: Call me when you need to be picked up.

Me: Will do.

I kiss his lips and jump out of the car with Scarlet behind me. He hoots and drives off while we wave at him then turn and make our way to my house. I giggle as I open the gate and close it behind me when my mind takes me down to memory lane where Oliver and I clashed for the first time. I look at the fence I was forced to jump and laugh.

Scarlet: Are you okay mom?

I nod laughing.

Me: Never been better my baby.

Scarlet: Then why are you laughing alone?

Me: It's an inside joke.

Scarlet: What's an inside joke? And how come I don't have one?

Me: Someday you will get it.

Scarlet: When?

Me: Someday.

Scarlet: When is someday?

Bathong this girl! Didn't she hear me say someday? Sometimes I resist the urge to tape her mouth and just be free from answering a lot of questions from her. She's curious and inquisitive. I knock once and push the door.

Me: Knock- knock.

He shifts his gaze away from the TV and smiles at me.

Me: Sanibonani.

Baba: Yebo. Awusemhle.

I blush and kiss his cheek.

Me: Ngiyabonga khehla lami.

My mother walks out of the kitchen wiping her hands with a dishcloth.

Mom: That was fast.

Me: Sawubona sthandwa sam.

She smiles and rolls her eyes.

Mom: Yebo Nomaswazi.

I giggle and stride to her and kiss her cheek.

Me: I was already at the mall when you called so I asked him to drop me off. Nisaphila bandla?

Someone pulls my dress. I should have know Mandlovu will send her pets but I didn't think it would be this fast. I'm someone's fiance for trust sake what does she want from me?  
Oh

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my bad it's not the pet but the little human I came with.

Scarlet: When are you introducing me?

She attempts to whisper but my parents heard her. They crack up so hard. I giggle.

Me: Parents this is Scarlet my daughter and Scarlet these are my parents.

She shyly waves them. They laugh.

Mom: Come help me in the kitchen.

I nod and turn to Scarlet.

Me: I'm coming.

She nods and lower herself on the couch.

Scarlet: What are you watching?

I hear her ask my father as I disappear in the corridors with my mother. I should have known she wouldn't be quiet for 5 minutes. My father chuckles before he answers.

Mom: So you're really getting married?



She mumbles eyeing my ring. I nod and lean on the counter.

Mom: I'm happy for you but you will have to tell your father.

I suck in a deep breath.

Me: I was hoping you will talk to him on my behalf.

Mom: I'm not getting involved. You will tell him today before you leave.

I heavily sigh and nod.

Mom: Go give him his food and tell him.

She shoves the tray in my hands. I feel sweat runs down my spine as I walk back to the lounge. I always knew my mother didn't love me that much when it comes to my father. She always throws me under the bus.

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My father demanded a hand written letter from his uncles to him asking for my hand in marriage. I don't know where will we get those uncles but he understood when I told him. He has to pay lobola for me and knowing my father he will make the negotiations a little difficult for them. I wanted to compromise and right the letter for him but my father told me to stay out of this because it's none of my business. I thought I was the one getting married and not them but I knew those are my customs and traditions and they have to be followed. I set the table and walk back to them.

Me: Dinner is ready.

I announce and walk back to the kitchen. I pick up the bowl of uphuthu and walk back to the living room. I place it on top of the table and start dishing up for them.

Ty: Babe what's this?

Me: Uphuthu and Amasi.

I'm sick and tired of eating the same stuff everyday. Takeouts are slowly irritating me and I miss home cooked meals. My mother taught me how to cook uphuthu this afternoon and that's the only thing I know how to cook. I stumble back to the kitchen and take out the bottle of amasi that I have already mixed with milk and walk back to them. Pouring amasi on the plate, I mix it and place it in front of them. They are looking at me like I've grown two heads.

Me: Eat.

I snap causing them to pick up their spoons. I hum and pick up my plate and make myself comfortable opposite them. I could feel their penetrating eyes on me as I dig in. Rising up my head, I stare at them.

Me: What?

Ty: Nothing.

He picks up his fork and knife that was not there when I set the table. I snort.

Me: What are you going to do with that? Slide the food?

I sarcastically muttered and he does just what I assume. He slice the food causing me to burst in laughter and nearly falling on the chair.

Me: Put that thing away and pick up your spoons. You can't eat uphuthu and amasi with a fork and knife.

Sceptically the pick the spoon and start eating. Good for them cause I'm preparing pap and tripe tomorrow even though I don't know how to cook it. I just know it needs to be boiled until it's tender. I will learn as I go by. Ngeke ngidlalwe abelungu mina.

**SEASON FINALE****NARRATOR**

It's Christmas day she's spending it on her own. Everytime she thinks about home she feels like crying. Her sister's words ring on her ears each time she thinks about picking up the phone and call her. She could at been home with her parents and siblings having Christmas lunch but she trusted her stupid organ to lead her here. She feels so stupid and naïve fo thinking Tyson would have waited for her. The man cheated on her left right and center so what made her to be so sure that he was hers? The million dollar question she should be asking herself is was he really his from the start? Heavily sighing, Yvonne picks up the slice of Pizza and pours the juice going through her contact list. She places a call and sip on her juice.

Voice: Hello?

Yvonne: Hey Rachel it's Yvonne.

Rachel: Oh hey girl where have you been and watsup?

Yvonne: I've been around and there's nothing much I've been up to. Listen I was thinking we could hang out you know.

Rachel: I would love too but I'm not in the province at this moment. My kids decided to spend their Christmas on a road trip so I tagged along.

She sighs sadly.

Yvonne: Okay I understand.

Rachel: Yea. Look I'll call you when I get back so I can have lunch but right now I've got to go.

Yvonne: Alright bye then.

She hangs up and place another call after scrolling down. It rings until it takes her straight to voicemail. She tries another number.

Voice: Hello. Charlotte speaking.

Yvonne: Hey Charlie it's Yvonne.

Tuu tuu tuu.

Yvonne: Hello? Charlotte?

She runs her hand on her face after seeing that she disconnected the call and cross her fingers as she calls another number.

Voice: What do you want?

She swallows hard before clearing her throat.

Yvonne: Hello Gabby it's Yvonne.

Gabby: I know who you are  
I have your number.

Yvonne: I was wondering if you're not busy today.

Gabby: Even if I was not busy you're the last person I would  
choose to spend my Christmas with.

Yvonne: Ouch that's a bit harsh.

Gabby: Yvonne stop wasting my time and her straight to the  
point. What the hell do you want?

She snapped agitated.



Yvonne: Forget that I called.

She hangs up and sigh. Spending Christmas alone was not part of the plan she has no choice. She closes the box of pizza and pick up her phone and keys and made her way out. The flat was depressing alone and she couldn't handle being in there. Her neighbours are people who are always swearing at each other all day long. A lonely tear escapes her eyes as she sees a family of four dinning in the nearby restaurant. She thought selling the ring will heal her but it only makes things worse for her. She misses her family and mostly importantly she misses her daughter. Maybe it was irrational for her to jump on the plane and came here and maybe she would have a second chance at love with Luke but she messed it up by expecting too much.

Voice: You do know crying on such day is seen as a crime?

She quickly wipes her tears and find a guy standing next to her. She snorts.

Yvonne: Who's going to arrest me, you?

He chuckles and sticks his hand out for a handshake.

Guy: Maybe. I'm Ryan by the way.

Yvonne: Yvonne.

She muttered shaking his hand.

Ryan: Husband or boyfriend?

He gestured to the family of four she was looking at.

Yvonne: Neither of that. I'm just miss my family.

Ryan: Well that makes the two of us. Want to join me for dinner later on.

She scoffed.

Yvonne: I've got plans.

He rolls his eyes.

Ryan: You wouldn't be so miserable like this if you had plans. It's just two miserable people having dinner nothing much.

She sucks a deep breath. It wouldn't kill anyone to have company especially from a handsome guy like him. She clenches her thighs as her pussy tingles. Oh look at her getting ahead of herself but it's been a while and it's the festive of giving.

Yvonne: Okay.

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Zozo: Is the meat ready?

Ade: Yes.

Zozo: Are you sure?

Ade groans.

Ade: For the hundred time sweetheart yes. Can you please stop fussing.

Zozo: I can't help it. It's my first time hosting people so I want to make a good impression.

Ade: You don't need to impress anyone. Even if the food was spicy and salty they would have ate it.

She throws her hands in the dramatically.

Zozo: Of course you would say that.

The buzzer goes off and Ade attends to it. He buzz them in and wait for them. They exchange greetings and he ushers them to the patio and walks back to the kitchen to check on the fussing woman.

Ade: I don't like the fact you woke up before sunrise and prepared everything. We could have hired a catering company to do this.

Zozo: I'm not going to argue with this. It's done now suck it up.

Ade: Yo....

She interjects.

Zozo: I'm a pregnant hormonal woman Adesola so please don't piss me off.

She retorts and walks to the intercom and buzz in her last guests. She opens the door and watch them stepping out of the car.

Swazi: Girlfriend.

Zozo: Hey mntase you look good as always.

She murmurs placing a kiss on her cheek and waves at Tyson who waves back and walk inside with a bottle of wine.

Swazi: You also look stunning. I see the bun is growing.

Zozo: And it's getting heavy everyday.

Swazi: Do you know the gender?

Zozo: Not yet. I honestly don't care whether it's a boy or a girl. I just want a healthy bouncing baby that's all.

Swazi: Are we early? It's quiet.

Zozo: No they are already inside.

They made their way inside and find the men with laughing and each holding a glass in their hands.

Ade: Mrs.

Swazi blushes.

Swazi: Hello everyone.

He chuckles.

Zozo: Everyone take your seats please so we can dig in.

They nod and take their seats.

Busi: Can we close our eyes so we can pray.

Kagiso: Do we have too?

He whined making his wife to sharply glare at him. He closes his eyes and drops his head causing everyone to laugh at him.

Busi: Father thank you for borrowing us another and bring us together again. Some didn't get the chance to get to see this day. May you please keep showering your blessings on us and bless the hands who made this food amen.

Them: Amen.

Zozo: Please help yourselves. There's plenty where it come from.

They laugh and start dishing up. Tyson laughs seeing spinach in his plate.



Ade: Jones?

Tyson: I just remembered the day we were forced to eat spinach and pap. No meat or anything, just plain pap with spinach.

Laughter erupts around.

Swazi: I'm trying new recipes.

She defends herself laughing.

Tyson: What's that white meal with sour milk?

She giggles.

Swazi: You mean Amasi? I cooked uphuthu the other day and he decided to eat it with a fork and knife.

Laughter.

Kagiso: How was it?

Tyson: It was not bad. In fact I love it.

Swazi: He expects to eat it everyday and I was tired of eating the same stuff so I introduced pap and tripe. Let's just say they spent the whole night in the bathroom.

Laughter.

Zozo: Kodwa Swazi what are you doing to the poor man?

Swazi: (giggling) The first time I came to his house he feed me a baby octopus.

Laughter erupts.

Swazi: Imagine the trauma I went through on that day. And he had the audacity to tell me he will keep them so we can eat them as lunch tomorrow.

Busi: (laughing) What did you do?

Swazi: I broke up with him.

Tyson: (frowning) What? When and where?

Swazi: In my head.

They burst into laughter.

Ade: Merry Christmas everyone.

Them: Merry Christmas.

**SEASON FINALE****ZOBUHLE**

The festive season came by and passed so fast before I could blink. December is really a scam. How can we finish grocery that was meant for a month in one day? It is only now I'm seeing what Swazi meant when she said cooking doesn't cost a thing than buying takeouts. I also introduced a cleaning schedule for our room. I cannot be carrying a heavy head inside me and clean after him while he sits back all day and laugh like a hyena. I know it might be seem like taboo seeing a man cleaner and should my in laws see this they would throw a fit but I'm the one who's staying with their son and taking care of him and the least he could do is clean his room.

Ade: You're ready?

I nod and drag my swollen feet to the car. We are approaching 6 months and I'm getting big and lazy each day, probably why I introduced a cleaning schedule. I don't know how many times I slept in the hospital because of short breathe and my B.P. He straps my seatbelt and rubs my stomach. The traitor decided to kick making his lips to curve a smile.

Ade: It's a strong one compared to last time.

I just nod irritated by his mere voice. If life had a remote like a TV I would have put him on mute for the rest of this pregnancy. I thrash around the seat as he jogs to his side trying to soothe the itch on my back.

Ade: What are you doing?

I ignore him and continue what am doing. I woke up on the wrong side of the bed and hating him and that means I won't talk to him until I feel the need too. The seat is not doing it's job and I'm getting emotional. Tears fill my eyes as I raise my hands and try to stratch my back but I can't reach the spot. He furrows his eyebrows.

Ade: Babe?

His frowns deepens.

Me: (crying) I can't stretch my back.

Ade: Let me try.

Unstrapping the seatbelt, I turn and face the window while he pulls the zipper of the dress down. He unclips the bra.

Ade: Where?

Me: Right in the middle.

He gets on the job and I purr like a cat. Why didn't I think of asking him in the first place. I shut my eyes and smile purring.

Me: Ohhhh.... A bit down.

I murmur dragging my saliva.

Me: Thank you.

He fixes my clothes and I smile at him. I buckle up and turn to look at him. I'm back on my jolly mood and I hate him less.

Ade: What?

Me: Did you trim your beard this morning?

He chuckles.

Ade: I did but yesterday.

Shut the front door! Where were my eyes all along? Oh he looks so handsome.

Me: You look so handsome. I can eat you up.

He smirks.

Ade: Are you okay?

He mumbled placing his hand on my forehead. Trust men to ruin the moment. I snort and try a different approach.

Me: Your sideburns....

He interjects.

Ade: Yesterday.

Haibo where was he going yesterday that made him to want to look that good?



Me: Baby?

Ade: Yes.

I knew it he never really love me. I burst in tears. He steps on the brakes and parks on the side of the road.

Ade: Why are you crying?

Me: Because I want to talk to you and you're not paying attention.

He chews his bottom lip frowning.

Ade: Ain't we talking?

I shake my head.

Ade: Huh?

He muttered confused.

Ade: What are we doing then?

Me: We were singing and you're ruining the song.

Ade: (shocked) What song?

Me: The one that was playing on the radio.

Ade: (shocked) Who turned on the radio and what song was that?

I bury my face in my hands and cry harder. I did say men are pork. Look at him feigning innocence when he knows he turned off the radio. He officially ruined my day.

ADESOLA

Have you ever been confused in your life you don't know what is what? This is me at this moment. She was fine a minute ago and now she's hysterically crying over a song which was not playing on the radio by the way.

Me: Baby.

I cooed softly cupping her face. She glares at me and yanks my hands off her.

Zozo: (snapping) What?

Chineke! What did I do? I'm resisting the urge to spring out of this car and leave her behind. Why did the doctor's office have to be far away from our house?

Me: What did I do?

Zozo: You don't know?

She bellows throwing her hands in the air dramatically. Like a kid who's getting a scolding from his mother

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I shake my head.

Zozo: Who are you calling babe? Don't you know that everyone is calling everyone babe? I call my friends babe all the time.

Me: Really?

She nods furiously wiping the tears off her face.

Zozo: What happened to sweet pet names like sweetheart?  
Nhliziyo yam.

Me: Who's that everyone?

Her nostrils flare.

Zozo: Voetsek Adesola.

She clicks her tongue fuming and unstrap the seatbelt and slam the door after her. What just happened?

Me: Where are you going?

I yell after her.

Zozo: To the doctor's office.

Me: That's a mile away.

Zozo: Don't care.

She yells back craddling her big stomach. I start the car and drive beside her.

Me: Get back in the car Zobuhle.

I firmly muttered.

Zozo: Leave me alone Adesola.

She burst in tears.

Zozo: I'm alone in this relationship.

Me: (shocked) What?

Zozo: I said I am alone.

Me: I hear that but I'm trying to understand why you are alone.  
Ain't I here for you?

Zozo: No you're not. If you were here you wouldn't have let me walk a mile to the doctor's office by my feet while you have a car on this chilly day.

I close my eyes summoning my inner strength because at this point I'm defeated. Wasn't she the one who said she will walk? What do women really want? And what's with the tears? The woman wasn't a cry baby two months ago.

Me: Please get back in the car.

I cooed softly pleading.

Zozo: No!

She firmly muttered. I throw my hands in the air defeated.

Me: I give up!

I mumble under my breath.

Zozo: I heard that.

I chuckle resisting the urge to speed off and leave her behind.

Me: It's going to be a long four months of madness.

### ***NOMASWAZI***

I'm in a very good mood today. I woke up and prayed to God to lessen the heat and sure the big man upstairs heard me and choose to make the weather a bit chilly. Thinking about how fast he replied my prayer maybe I should start practising being a priest. I cannot let people suffer while I know how to pray in tongues.

Mom: Have you guys decided on a date?



Me: Not yet.

It's a week away from our lobola negotiations and everytime I think about my stomach just churns. I become so restless to the point of having a runny tummy. I know it's just anxiety playing tricks on me but I can't help it. A lot can happen on that day and I don't know what will I do if they end up disputing because of a misunderstanding. He refuses to tell me who will negotiate on his behalf but I trust him to do the right thing. The letter was written behind my back and delivered to my house behind my back. He knows me so well. I would have read before I delivered it so I can know what's written in there. I'm just curious by nature and it's one of the many habits I want to leave them behind.

Mom: You do know it has to be done right?

Me: Yep.

Mom: I was just making sure you won't change your mind.

Me: What make you I will change my mind?

Mom: You're Nomaswazi Ngwenya and anything is possible with you.

I frown. What does that even mean?

Mom: Confused?

I nod.

Mom: You're the same girl who walked inside the bakery and introduced herself to me, her own mother.

I snicker playfully rolling my eyes.

Me: You won't let that go right?

She laughs.

Mom: It's a story I will tell my grandchildren.

Giggling, I jump to my feet and sit in her lap before wrapping my arms around her.

Me: I love you ma and thank you for everything.

I kiss her cheek and embrace as tears fill her eyes. She's my day one and I wouldn't have asked for a better mother than her.

**SEASON FINALE**

**NOMASWAZI**

Walking in the restaurant, I lower myself on the seat opposite to him.

Me: Sorry baby I'm late.

He flashes me a smile and puts his hands on top of the table. I suck in a deep breath and place mine on his.

Ty: It's okay. How is everything going on and where's Scarlet?

Me: I dropped her off at my mother's because she asked for it. It's a nightmare. I'm ready to send them back home because they are driving me nuts.

He chuckles. The week flew by quickly than we anticipated. It's Thursday today and my extended family arrived on Monday for the lobola negotiations. I don't know who told them I was getting married but the whole family is here and my mother couldn't accommodate everyone so I had to be the one who accommodate them. My mother gave me a lecture when I told her I can't accommodate them because I'm staying with Tyson in his house. Since they were already here and we couldn't turn them away we had to make a plan and being the good man Tyson is he volunteered to let them stay at his house while he moves to the hotel. In their eyes it's my house and they have every right to mess everything up. I've suddenly turned to the typical rich aunt to my nieces and nephews that I didn't even know exists.

Tyson: Just a day my love and I promise you everything will go back to normal.

I wish it was easy than that. Knowing my aunt's and cousins they will make excuses to stay longer because "my house" has everything their's don't have. I'm talking about the in door cinema they abuse everyday

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the pool and many more.

Me: I'm tired living with them in the same roof. Can you believe yesterday my cousin cooked the whole 5kg of meat and when I tried to reprimand her she said I should stop being stingy because they don't eat meat on regular basis like me. They are making Scarlet uncomfortable in her own home and I hate every single minute of it..

Ty: It's just meat my love. We will buy another pack and Scarlet is used being the only child.

I shake my head. It's easy for him to say that because his living in a hotel alone if it was my will I would have left with him but I can't leave those rats I call cousins under supervised. Can you believe I've resorted to locking the his man cave in the basement because they have long fingers. I also locked the

garage and I make sure everyday I lock Scarlet and my bedroom. They might be family but I don't trust them.

Me: I don't care how much do they eat but they shouldn't waste food. They're just taking advantage of everything and I'm sick of it. If it was by my choice I would have kicked them out.

I murmur frustrated.

Ty: Look at the bigger picture baby. It's just today and tomorrow.

I sigh and lean back on the chair. His got a point but I feel like time is moving slowly. My mother and Ty asked me nicely to just bite my tongue everytime they provoke until the negotiations are over but I feel like they won't get to see that day.

Ty: Shall we order.

I nod. He calls the waiter while I calm myself down. I don't want to ruin his day by whining about my family.

Me: It's just today and tomorrow Swazi. What harm could they do?

I peep myself and shift my gaze to the waiter and place my order. He joints it down and walk away. I look at the man in front of me and ask myself how did I get lucky. He proved to me so many times he will put me first int everything.

\*

\*

The loud music is the first thing my ears pick up when the cab drops us off.

Scarlet: When are they leaving mommy?



Me: Soon baby.

I mutter and lead the way inside. I find my cousin's son Thobeka jumping on top of the table. My eyes widen.

Me: Baby why don't you go to your room.

I could feel the thread I was holding on too is about to break. She nods and runs upstairs.

Me: Thobeka.

I scream storming to the living room and switch off the music.

Me: (screaming) Thobeka.

Thobeka: Yini?

She runs out of the kitchen with a plate in her hand.

Me: Why is your son playing on top of the glass table?

Thobeka: Hawu mzala I thought it was an emergency.

Me: It is an emergency. Please remove him.

Thobeka: Hawu Swazi his just jumping not stretching it. What's the big deal?

Me: (screaming) Removing him.

I'm seething. Who can she not see anything wrong his doing? I might claim to them that this house belongs to me but I don't know how much a brick cost. I didn't buy a single thing in this house and I know Tyson doesn't mind that I didn't contribute anything but that doesn't mean I have to disrespect him and our home.

Thobeka: You're just exaggerating everything cousin. Forgive us for being unemployed and hungry. I didn't know money can also change you.

I bit back my tongue resisting to slap the shit out of her for the nonsense she just spewed and cast my eyes to the plate she had as she walks to her son.

Me: Are those four Russians?

Thobeka: We hardly eat them at home.

Me: How many eggs are in there?

Thobeka: Four of everything.

Somebody please come and hold me before I slap someone's daughter.

Me: At least tell me you will share that food with him.

I gesture to the boy who's thrashing in her arms.

Thobeka: Why would I do that when you have a stocked up pantry?

Thobeka: Mazwi stop it marn.

She cooed softly.

Mazwi: But ma I'm jumping like Spiderman.

He muttered stomping his feet on the table.

Me: Spiderman on who's table? Menzi suka.

He shakes his head and continues to jump on the table.

Thobeka: His just a child Swazi. Stop making a fuss.

Before I could reply the table breaks and shutters in pieces.

Mazwi: Oopsie.

She gasps.

Thobeka: Mazwi.

She exclaims defeated and turns to me.

Thobeka: Mzala ngiyaxolisa.

I turn on my heels and march to my bedroom. She runs after me.

Thobeka: Swazi ngiyaxolisa bandla. {Swazi I'm sorry}

I slam the door and throw myself on the bed and pick up the pillow before letting out a demonic scream.

Thobeka: Mzala.

I ignore her as she continues to knock on the door.

Thobeka: I'm really sorry mzala but try to understand that Mazwi is a child.

I hear her footsteps fading away after that. I pick up my phone and call my mother.

Ma: Baby.

Me: (breaking voice) I tried ma but I'm failing.

Ma: Ukhuluma ngani? {What are you talking about?}

Me: Mazwi broke the table in the living room. I tried to reprimand him and his mother said his just being a child playing. I don't have that kind of money to replace that table ma.

Ma: Playing how?

Confusion laced in his voice.

Me: He was jumping on top of the table making Spiderman moves on it.

Ma: Ini? Shaya leyo ngane Nomaswazi. (What? Beat up that child.)

I giggle.

Ma: Don't laugh. Do you want that man to send you packing without paying that lobola.

Me: Of course.

Ma: Then take my advice and go beat that child up. His mother will thank you later.

I giggle hanging. I shake my head and climb off the bed and change my shoes before walking out of the room. I pass by Scarlet room and find her sleeping. I take off her shoes and open the window before going downstairs.

Thobeka: I'm so sorry Swazi.

I smack my lips shut and stumble to the sliding door leading to the backyard. My nostrils flare while my anger from earlier on comes back when I find the demonic child peeing on the flowers along the wall. Bending down, I take off my flip flop and stride to him. I grip his arms and spank the shit out of him. He screams thrashing around.

Me: Ayikho ingane eziphethe njengawe kulomhlaba.  
mhlawumbe abadala bakutshela ukuthi ngingusozigidi. Batshele



anginalutho eduze kwegama lami. Uma usuka lapha uzobe usuziphathisa okwengane ushiye impilo yabantu abadala. {There's no child that behaves like you in this world. Maybe the elders told you I'm a millionaire but let them know I have nothing next to my name. When you leave here you will be a child and leave the adult life to the adults.}

I click my tongue and drop the shoe and walks back inside. A few minutes later he walks in sniffing. I glare at him.

Thobeka: Yini boy? {What is it boy?}

Mazwi: Ngiwile. {I fell}

He burst in tears after that. The fact that he lied that means he knew what was he was doing was wrong. Glad I could help such a young child back to the right path.

**EPILOGUE****YVONNE**

Flipping through the channels, I grab the bowl of popcorns and lower myself on the couch and settle for a chick flick. I've been working on myself more this day and it's safe to say I love the person I've become. I hardly think about Tyson this day and I'm thankful to that woman who embarrassed me in the mall when I tried to kidnap Scarlet. If plus size people could love themselves like that what was so hard for me to love myself and always choose me? It was a brief meeting by I could feel the love they shared for each other. I could see my baby was happy with them and who was I to break such a happy home? I know I said I would rather die than seeing another woman playing happy family with with the man I thought was mine and my baby but the bitter woman I was once was doesn't suit me. Cold hearted and being bitter is the same thing that creates hate and leading women to bewitch each other. I thank that woman everyday when I woke up because saved me from

myself and being an annoying bitter fly on their lives. My phone beeps as I watch the movie. I place the bowl on top of the table and pick up my phone. I smile and react with a heart on the picture Tyson posted and leave a comment. It's a picture of him and Scarlet with a caption "Wishing daddy good luck on his lobola negotiations day."

\*\*\*@Yv: Wishing you all the best on such a special day.\*\*\*

I throw my phone beside me and continue with my movie. Not every women meets a man who will be their happily ever after and I learnt that the hard way. A woman can be happy without a many and who said we need them to make us happy? This me YVONNE JACOBS nd this is where I end.

**ZOBUHLE**

It's my girl's lobola day and I'm so excited on her behalf. We grew close on this past months and we don't go on a day without seeing or calling each other. I slide the shoe and pick up my bag and make my way to the kitchen.

Me: Babe I'm done.

He places the dish in the sink and downs his beer then throw the can in the bin.

Ade: Are you sure you got everything?

I chew my bottom lip going through my list in my head. I've got my slippers, my water bottle, my hat, my phone and ....

Me: I forgot my snacks.

He chuckles and stumbles to pantry and comes back with a pack of Lays and sweets.

Ade: What else?

Me: The chocolate in the freezer and we will pass by that restaurant to by the Shawarma.

He groans causing me to giggle.

Ade: What's so good about that Sharma?

I giggle.

Me: It's Shawarma baby boy Sharma. You make it sound like those Indian dudes.

He chuckles and place everything in the bed the picks up his keys and clip my hand.

Me: Mam' Eunice we are leaving.

I shout and follow behind him as he makes his way to the garage. He opens the backseat and I jump in. In his head I don't need to sit on the front seat with him because I'm pregnant. I don't know who lied to him but I just let him be. He buckles up and pick up the remote, opening the gate. He speeds off switch on the radio.

Ade: Before we get to our destination there's somewhere I need to take you.

His voice breaks me from my thoughts, picking up my curiosity.

Me: Where?

Ade: You will see.

Me: I don't want to be late on.....

He interjects.

Ade: We won't be late trust me. It's still early.

Well who am I to deny his claims. I nod and roll down the window. The cold morning breeze just cools the high temperature I'm in. We are growing big and it's getting difficult to do certain things. I need help all the time and his thoughtful enough to give me a helping hand when I need it. When his not around Mam' Eunice helps. I don't know when was the last time I spoke to my mother but she paved a gap between us, distancing herself on me and I cannot be running after her. She's proven to me she doesn't want to be in my life and I'm not going to beg her. Gone those days where I needed her the most. Life taught me blood doesn't make you family but loyalty does and that's what my employees, his business associates and their wives are to us, family.

Ade: We are here.

He kills the engine and steps out of the car and makes his way to my door. He opens the door and unstrap the seatbelt.

Me: What are we doing here?

We are outside Mug & Bean.

Ade: We are having our first breakfast date.

I blink rapidly to stop the tears from flowing.

Me: You remembered.

No matter how hard I try to stop them  
they just flow. He cups my face and wipes the tears before  
kissing my lips.

Ade: I always remember important stuff about you.

I lay my head on his chest and press my lips suppressing the sob  
to escape my mouth. This is where I belong and maybe it was  
not a mistake when he stole my ID and married me without my  
consent. This is me ZOBUHLE EMEKA and this is where I end.



## ***ADESOLA***

Life can humble you as a person. Looking back to my past mistakes I don't think I would go back there even if someone paid me too. The excruciating pain I felt when I lost my ex wife and baby on the same day cannot be compared to anything on this world. The humiliation and degrading I brought on my family was enough to make me use my brain not my dick. Lust is something we found in this world and we leave it on this world when we day. Looking at this woman in front of me crying for something so simple as a breakfast date just melts my heart. I've overcome a lot and we deserve this peace and happiness. Our appointment went well the other day. Our little human is growing and I can't wait to me him/her even though sometimes it feels like she might kill me in my sleep.

Zozo: Thank you baby.

Me: Its nothing compare to what you did for me. For us and our family.

She shakes her head fighting the tears off.

Zozo: I didn't do anything.

Me: Yes you did baby. You brought warmth in our home and you're carrying a precious cargo in there.

She snorts rolling her eyes.

Zozo: The big head that will tear up my intestines.

I laugh.

Me: His/she's really big.

The doctor asked if we wanted to know the sex of the baby but she refused and said it will ruin the surprise on the gender reveal party. So we still don't know what are we carrying.

Zozo: I feel content and happy. Thank you.

Me: I should be thanking you. Thank you sweetheart for seeing me man enough and choose to stay with me.

Zozo: Hormones.

She raises her head and look at the roof fighting off the tears. I push back the chair and leap up to my feet and round the table. I help her to her feet and pick up her bag then walk out of to the parking lot. Opening the backseat, I wait for her to slip in before cupping her face and smash my lips on hers. This is my safe heaven and happy place. I'm content with how mu life turned out to be. ADESOLA EMEKA is the name and this is where I end.

## ***TYSON***

The day I have been waiting for has finally arrived. I'm finally doing right by my woman and I cannot wait for everything to be over so we can be in our space and celebrate this milestone we about to achieve. Sleeping in a hotel and not working up next to her has been the most difficult thing I've ever done in my entire life. She's the air I breathe and I once said finding true love these days is one of the most difficult task to tackle. It's rare and people are fake out there. It shouldn't be about your bank balance or what you bring to the table. It should be about that skip of a heart beat and the feelings you get. Money doesn't usually buy happiness and let's not forget it's the root of evil. People will do anything to get their hands on money even it means getting them dirty. True love should be a team effort; where you help each other when the other one is failing. I have mistaken that feeling with someone else before as even went as engaging her, thinking she's my soulmate until I set my eyes on her.

Behind those big beautiful mesmerizing eyes is very a free spirited girl who loves laughing and that's what I love about her. She's authentic and true to herself. I never saw thick women attractive before. My type was the model type, slim

with a tiny waist. But it all change on her. She proved me wrong that all women are beautiful no matter which size they are. She made me sin and give up everything I have just for her.

Sliding my hand in my pocket, I take out the first photo I've ever owned of her and trace my hand on her face and smile. The Queen of my heart and my castle. She's laughing at this picture as always and it's a refreshing site for my eyes. Most women would be ashamed to been seen in public with me because I'm old enough to be her father but she gave me a shot in happiness. She's not ashamed of our relationship and that boost my ego everytime we go out those motherfuckers gawk at her. I won't hesitate to kill for her.

Sandile: Ready?

He holds my shoulder snapping me out of my daze. I turn to him and chuckle.

Me: I was born ready man.

Sandile: Let's go before they start charging us a lot.

Me: I don't mind paying.

He chuckles.

Sandile: We all say that when we are madly in love.

I raise my middle finger at him causing him to laugh as we go to the garage. I wet my lip with my tongue and bring the engine to life. Sandile, Oliver, Kagiso and two of their uncles will be negotiating on my behalf. I'm trust them to fetch me my wife or else I will such a nigga down if they don't meet the required demands. Speeding off the driveway, the Lamborghini roars out on the road leading to my Queens house to fetch her traditional. TYSON JONES is the name. My Queen and I are not ending here. It's only just the beginning.

***NOMASWAZI***

I've been anxious since last night. My mother has been assuring me and trying to calm me down but I can't help it but feel anxious. I have that voice in my head that keeps saying something might go wrong but I don't want to entertain those thoughts. Maybe it's because I don't know who's negotiating on his behalf but I trust him to do the right thing.

Ma: Buya lapho.

I close the curtain and throw myself on the bed. The buzzing noise from my aunts and cousins can make one deaf. Not trusting them enough, I sent my mother to Ty's house since I needed to be home and asked her to pack their packs. As soon as the illi sound comes out I'm giving them their bags so they can Voetsek. They have overstayed their welcome and I don't think I will ever invite them in my house in the future. They are animals and belong to the zoo not with us humans.

Voice: Sikhulekile ekhaya kwaNgwenya.

My heart skips a beat when I hear that voice outside. Pressing my lips together, I look at my mother and find tears streaming down her cheeks.

Ma: You're really leaving me.

Me: I don't want to cry ma.

She giggles and wipes her tears off with the back of her hand. The door of the bedroom flies open and in comes the wives. I smile.

Aza: You thought we will miss your day?

She murmurs engulfing me in a hug.

Me: I didn't expect you to come.

Busi: Darling we support each other.



She kisses my cheek and makes her way to greet my mother.

Me: Don't make me cry please.

She giggles while tears flow down her eyes.

Zozo: It's your little ninja making me cry.

I laugh and embrace her.

Zozo: Just one step closer to being Mrs Jones. How do you feel  
mntase.

Me: My emotions are mixed and I don't know which on to grab  
on because they all come on the forefront at the same time.

Zozo: Is happiness part of that?

I nod. She claps her hand in mine and squeeze it.

Zozo: Then don't let negative thoughts take away your happiness. Do not let them drag you down.

Ma: Let me go and check if everything is still going in order in the kitchen.

I gulp nodding. I might have my friends around me but my mother is still my best friend and I know she has to be out there helping but she's the only one who can calm me down at this moment.

Zozo: Nothing will go wrong. Ty will shot someone's child.

She teases making us laugh. I settle on top of my bed and pick up my phone to check the time as they take out their shoes and settle next to me. His text is the first thing I see.

\*\*\*Ty: One step closer to being mine. I love you with all my heart. \*\*\*

I blush and reply

\*\*\*Me: I love you too and I cannot wait to be yours traditionally. \*\*\*

Someone clear her throat making me rise my eye from my phone. I find them smiling.

Me: What?

Busi: Did someone just get a good morning text.

She cooed softly. I blush and they laugh.

Aza: Tyson and Swazi sitting in a tree.

I laugh not expecting this from her. She's a bit uptight but fun to be around with.

Busi: K. I. S. S. I. N. G

I laugh harder covering my face.

Me: Stop it guys.

They laugh. If someone might walked in here he/she would not believe them if they say their married woman with old children because they can be childish at time and I love their vibe. The door opens and my aunt walks in.

Aunt: It's time.

I suck in a deep breath and pick up the blanket and cover my head while my cousins follow suit.

Aunt: Swazi you will be the last one to walk in just to confuse them a bit.

I nod and follow her instructions. Walking in the living my heart feels like it would leap out of my throat.

Baba: There's are the flowers we have in this house so which one are you picking.

Oliver: The last one.

I know that voice from somewhere. I peek through the blanket and find his eyes on mine before he winks at me. Oh my goodness his back. I've never been so happy to see him in my life.

Baba: Thank you guys. You may leave.

We back to the room and I rush to my phone to place a call.

Ty: Baby.

Me: Why didn't you tell me his back.

He chuckles.

Ty: I knew seeing him will brighten up your day even though you have a hate and love relationship.

I giggle.

Me: He can be annoying at time but his your best friend and I know his the closest thing you have to family.

Ty: You and Scarlet are my family now.

I smile and hang up. We beat the remaining time by chatting and laugh. The door flies open and my mother and aunts walk in ululating.

Ma: Everything is done and someone went to call your husband. It's time to serve them.

I smile and slip on my shoes and walk to the kitchen.

Thobeka: Mzala should I help you?

The Lord will forgive me on this one but I don't want my cousins especially her near those men.

Ma: She already has help.

She shoves the tray in Busi's hand and pushes us to the out of the kitchen. I stifle a laugh and time stops when my eyes locks with his when I walk in. His dress shirt is made from the same fabric of my dress.

Voice: Swazi.

I snap out of my daze and blush when I find amused eyes staring at me. I quickly serve them and rush out of the room. I could hear them laughing behind me. My cousin Xolani barges in the kitchen.

Xolani: Aunty.

Ma: Yini?

Xolani: There's a convey of cars outside and it's heading this way.

Ma: What? Are you sure?

He nods.

Xolani: I was at the tuckshop when I overheard a man asking about you.



Placing everything on the table we rush outside and stand on the gate.

Ty: What's going on?

He muttered wrapping his arms around my waist. I shrug my shoulders and look around us and find everyone outside, waiting in anticipation. The cars indeed finally comes to a stop on our gate. A man steps out.

Man: Presenting King Daliwonga Cele from the kingdom of ...

His voice fades as I zone out. What could a king want my house? I know for sure we are not associated with the royal family so what could he want. Someone gaping breaks me out of my trail of thoughts. I must have missed something. The man rounds the car and opena the backseat and we watch and very tall man step out of the car. He fixes his lepaord skin that is across his chest and shoulde blades and scans the crowd. His eyes set on me before they move and settle on my mother.

Ma: (gasping) No!

She exclaims shocked.

Dali: Nomathemba how can you marry off my daughter without my consent?

My head is spinning. I know for sure his not for sure his not talking about me. I thought I was my mother's only child or am

I missing something? NOMASWAZI NGWENYA JONES is the name and with such discovery this is not the end of me.

.....**THE END**.....

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