



**The soldier's girl Nomasonto by Thobsile  
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## Prologue

“Nomasonto! Nomasonto! Hurry up it Mom Nomasonto!” My brother Sizwe came in running then ran out again before I could ask what was happening I heard a loud roar of an engine. I run outside only to be met by dust as the truck drove off by our small gate was my mother’s lifeless body Sizwe was running towards it with Zamo Nonjabulo and Njabulo right behind him. My shaking legs manage to carry me as I run towards the gate while shouting. “Mama! Mama!” Sizwe kneeled next to her and my siblings also kneeled besides her lifeless body while crying.

Me: Sizwe take the kids inside.

I said with my shaking voice as my own shaking knees failed me making me collapse beside her. She was just lying there with bruises all over her body the dress she left this morning wearing was torn and her thighs has bruises on her face was a 10KG rice. Sizwe took the kids with Zamo following him. Njabulo started crying even more loudly. My tears streamed down as I take the rice off her face. What I saw will haunt me for the rest of my

life my mother's once beautiful face was unrecognised her eyes that were once the most beautiful thing were just staring at me with no life at all her full lower lip was busted and blood had dried out her nose has dislocated and her cheeks were bruised and I could still see the boots prints on her face even her jaws were dislocated. I couldn't stop my tears from gushing out my heartbreaks a million times. "Sonto" She said smiling I jumped trying to run while screaming.

"Sonto! Sonto Sonto wake up!"

I jump up almost knocking my sister on her forehead my heart was beating fast and sweat was dripping down my face even my night dress was wet. I tried to normalise my breathing with my heart beating abnormal.

Zamo: Uyaphupha futhi are you okay? (You are dreaming again)

I took a deep breath and wipe my face with my hand.

sans-serif; background-color: transparent; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; vertical-align: baseline; white-space: pre-wrap;">Me: Ngikahle. (I am okay)

Zamo: Are you su-

Me: Ngithe ngikahle Zamo go back to sleep. (I said I am okay)

Zamo: Yoo I was just trying to help.

She said and covered herself with a blanket then went back to sleep.

I took a sigh

Me: I know Mtana sekhaya and I'm sorry.

She just ignored me. This is me this is how I am. Ever since her death I've never been the same again. I hardly sleep; when I do sleep same nightmare happens almost every time. I had limited my sleeping time but today seems like one of those days where I overslept.

My name is Nomasonto Nkomo from Kwagwinyikopi a village where we are ruled by a ruthless man; he took our land and made us his slaves. Apparently his father was the King of our village a very good man after his death his son the one who is ruling now took over ever since then things changed. Greedy and power was the only thing

that matters. He took the land from the people saying all this land is his forefathers land he has farms that produce sugarcane vegetables and fruits not forgetting weed. Oh yes the ruthless pig has a land that he use for weed. All types of weed and he makes a damn good money yet he pay people peanut sometimes he doesn't even give them money he only gives them food; a 10kg rice potatoes and 5lt oil then that all. What you cook that with is none of his business. He has guards guarding the whole village one wrong move you're dead my mother unfortunately got on their bad side and they killed her that was two months ago. She left Sizwe my 24 year old brother Me I'm 20 Zamo she's 18 and Njabulo and Nonjabulo who are twins and they're only 7 years old. The whole village bow to him. Sizwe and I make a living for our siblings by planting vegetables and fruits then I would go and sell them at our local small market since our so called King doesn't sell his vegetables and fruits here big trucks always come by to collect them.

ONE

## NOMASONTO NKOMO

“Sonto” it morning I am busy washing the dishes my siblings Njabulo and Nonjabulo are having their breakfast then they will be off to school. Yes we do have schools and clinics but in our school there is no grade 12 once you reach grade 11 you either go work at the farm where you would get killed or you try to make a plan on how you gonna survive that life for us and the clinics lacks service they are in bad conditions. Today I decided to go to the market a little bit late than usual.

Sonto: Umm

Nonjabulo: Is mom in heaven? Zamo said she’s now an angel looking after us.

After our mother’s death we never really talked about it we just carried on as if nothing happened; People who

works at the farm hardly live that long. They get killed for no reason at all.

Njabulo: No dummy mama is in the ground they buried her. Heaven is up there.

Nonjabulo: No dummy she's an angel right Sonto?

Sonto: Yoo finish up and go to school you will be late.

I said wiping my hands; we live in a small one mud room. We basically do everything here; sleeping and cooking but we use fire to cook Sizwe has built a really small shack where we cook and we also have paraffin stove so sometimes we use it that is if we have paraffin. Sizwe has his own small shack behind this room and behind his room is our garden.

Njabulo: Sonto yini kungamelanga sifike late eskolen?  
(Why shouldn't we be late for school?)



These two never stopped asking questions.

Nonjabulo: Because we will fail dummy.

And they always answer each other. Lucky me!

Sonto: Okay up you go kids.

We don't have much just one double bed a dinner small table with only two chairs an old cupboard and an old wardrobe that we share.

They mumbled something while standing up from the chairs taking their old torn school bags; I made a note on my mind to buy them those cheap school bags month end.

Nonjabulo: Wait my colouring book

She said getting under the bed and retrieving it.

Sonto: Don't I always say all your books must be in your bag before you eat?

She made puppy eyes while putting the book in her bag.

Njabulo: Sonto

Sonto: Oh no

Njabulo: What? I just wanna say have a great day I love you.

He said and walks out.

Sonto: Enjoy your day babe I love you more.

I shout after him as Nonjabulo also shout for him to wait for her.

Nonjabulo: Wait for me Njabulo! Bye Sonto!

Sonto: Bye! Baby Enjoy!

I took the plates they were using and washed them. Sizwe walk in with his dirty boots and the bucket we use to water the plants. He put the bucket down and sits on a chair.

Sonto: Sizwe that bucket is dirty you should've left it outside.

Sizwe: Sorry Sonto.

He took the bucket out and also took off his boots; I am a neat freak they all know I hate dirty. I always keep the house quirky clean. He got in and sits on the chair again. I dished up the porridge for him.

Sizwe: Thanks I think we going to have a problem. The plants are dying and the other ones are still small if it keeps up with this sun we would run out of food neither to eat nor to sell.

I took a deep breath; the sun has been too hot these days even worse we are struggling with water in this village.

Sonto: I know

I took a seat opposite him.

Sizwe: If things go on like this I will be forced to go to the farms.

Sonto: No I refuse. You can't go there.

Sizwe: We have no choice Sonto the kids will starve.

Sonto: We will make another plan you're not going there and you will not work for that man.

Zamo: Let him go to the farm the last thing I want is to starve.

Zamo said waking up and throwing the blanket aside. She has been bitter ever since our mother's passing I think it broke her so much and she doesn't know how to deal with it.

Sonto: I will make a plan we will make plan.

She came and stood in front of us.

Zamo: What plan exactly? He's the older one he must stop being useless and go to the damn farm and get a job.

Sonto: Zamo!

Sizwe: Stop acting like a spoiled brat Zamo everyone in this house is trying but all you do is complain eat and sleep. You should be helping Sonto with selling cooking and cleaning but no she has to clean after you all the time! All you do is sleep.

Zamo: Are you saying I shouldn't eat your food Sizwe?

Sizwe: Less mouth to feed less problems.

He said eating his porridge with no care. Zamo might not be helping around the house but Sizwe shouldn't be hard on her.

Zamo: Fine! Fine! Keep your food I won't eat it then. I will just starve to death.

She said crying and stormed out. I gave Sizwe a disapproving look.

Sizwe: She needs to grow up mudala memngaka kanti futhi uyasazi isimo sakulendawo. (She's old now and she knows our village situation)

I just shake my head and went after her she's sitting under the mango tree; I went and took a sit beside her. She wiped her tears and kept sniffing. I put my hand on her shoulder and made her lie on my lap then brushed her hair gentle.

Sonto: It Okay mtana sekhaya kuzolunga. (It going to be okay Sister)

I could feel her tears wetting my dress.

Sonto: Come inside and have your breakfast.

Zamo: Angeke ngize ngikudle ukudla kwa Sizwe mina. (I won't eat Sizwe's food)

Sonto: Akusikho kwakhe ngokwami. Iza udle mtana mama. (It not his food it mine come and eat)

She stood up we went inside and Sizwe has left I dished the porridge for her then went to sweep the yard. We have a very beautiful yard with flowers and trees. At the back it our garden where we plant all the vegetables we sell. I always keep both the yard and the house clean; Sizwe helps with trimming the trees and taking care of the flowers. Actually Sizwe and I help each other with everything. We both responsible for planting and then he does the watering most of the times but if he's not around I water them with the help of the twins we clean the yard together and sometimes he does the cooking if I got held up at the market.

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI



I am having a really hectic day things aren't going so well here in my company. One of my interns have messed up big time and a person who was supposed to be supervising him didn't do his job apparently they say he acted like a boss and just sit his lazy ass down and let the interns do the job without monitoring them now I have to clean up the messy shit he made. See my company specials in technology and my interns were supposed to fix some giant virus one of our clients was facing they manage to fix the virus but they flashed computers and that company lost all their important data now I am the one who has to clean up their shit by retrieving that data. It was going to be okay if it was just one company but no it three three fucking companies and retrieving lost data is not easy. My office phone rings irritating me even more.

Bukhosi: What?

Pam: Sir your mother is here to see you.

Bukhosi: Tell her I am busy.

Pam: Sir she ins-

Bukhosi: Didn't I say I was busy Pam?

She mumbled a sorry then drop the call. That woman can wait; I got far more important things right now. If I fail to retrieve this information it gonna taint my image not that I care much this company means nothing to me I only use it as a distraction other than that I am good without it I also care about my reputation. The door opened and she walked in fucking bitch.

Bukhosi: Mother

I know she didn't miss my sarcasm. She walk towards my desk and put her hand bag on a chair her hand settled on her hips and I knew she's gonna bite my head off.

Mom: So you're too busy for your mother?

Bukhosi: Yes

Mom: Bukhosibemvelo I am your mother.

Bukhosi: Since when? Please woman step out I am busy.

Mom: Military fucked your mind.

Bukhosi: I was long fucked up before military now close the damn door on your way out and next time you burg in my office like that I will put a bullet right through your skull without thinking twice.

She looked at me for a moment searching if I was being for real or I am just bluffing but knowing me she knew I wasn't bluffing; she then snatched her bag from the chair and walked towards the door. She turned and looked at me.

Mom: I just came to tell you your brother is getting married and you need to be there it would mean a lot to him.

Bukhosi: I won't make it I am busy.

Mom: Can you not include him in our beef. You're his brother you need to be there.

Bukhosi: I don't have a beef with you woman and as I said I am busy.

Mom: You don't even know when the wedding is.'

Bukhosi: and I don't wanna know now bye mother.

She took a deep sigh and left closing the door. I click my tongue this woman likes getting under my skin and I swear I will skin her alive.

I went on with doing my work by knock off time I had retrieve almost all lost data for one company. I took the office phone and called Pam my personal assistant.

Pam: Sir

Bukhosi: Get Ndaba in my office now.

Pam: Yes sir

Ndaba is the supervisor that fucked up and the stupid son of a bitch is about to lose his damn job. I don't work with fools.

Few moments there was a knock on the door I ordered him to come in he walked in and took a seat opposite me.

Bukhosi: Who said you can sit?

Ndaba: I... I'm ... Sorry Mr Nkosi.

He stood up I threw him a brown envelop.

Bukhosi: You're fired get all your shit and leave my premises.'

He bend over and picks up the envelop

Ndaba: You can't do that you can't just fire me that not how the law works.

Bukhosi: My Company my rules I don't fucking give a shit about a damn law.

Ndaba: I will take you to CCMA I know my rights. We signed a contract

Bukhosi: Try me after that walk under the ground. Now fucking leaves my office before I put my foot up your sorry ass.

He swallowed hard then turns and left right when my personal phone rings. Not everyone has my personal number only the important people.

Bukhosi: Mabandla?

Mabandla: Looks like you will be going to fetch the new stock again this weekend.

Bukhosi: I am busy you do it.

Mabandla: I have a wife and kids' weekend is family time. You are a lonely wolf.

Bukhosi: Fuck you

Mabandla: Man I would love to fuck me plus I am so damn hot but I don't do chocolate box I only fucks my wife.

Bukhosi: Pussy whipped.

Mabandla: I can smell your salty ass over here get laid man and took off some steam.

I chuckled; this guy is like my brother from another mother. He's the only one who knows me in and out. I have taken a bullet for him and he also had taken a bullet for me that how strong our brotherly bond is. Some people would find it hard to have a normal conversation with us to even joke with us. I am sure the outside world thinks we are made of stones we don't let anyone in. The only people who we relax around are his family; his wife and kids other than that we are always hard as ice.

Bukhosi: Fuck you; the old hang was here.



Mabandla: You should've let me pull a trigger on her a long time.

Bukhosi: I might take you up on your offer pretty soon.

Mabandla: Give me time and date.

Bukhosi: Be ready for divorce papers though Zee won't hesitate.

Mabandla: I doubt she would divorce me she would just put a bullet through my skull this one. I have been giving her shooting lessons.

I laughed.

Bukhosi: Damn do you still value your life? One wrong move Zee would brow your brains.

He laughed.

Mabandla: Tell me about it I should sleep with both my eyes open.

I laughed.

Mabandla: Well get ready for the village on weekend.

Bukhosi: Man I hate dealing with that piece of kak.

He laughed.

Mabandla: Suck it up that what you get for not getting married.

Bukhosi: Fuck off.

He laughed and dropped the call.

I wrapped up what I was doing then left.

Two

TWO

NOMASONTO NKOMO

Sonto: Here is your change Ma.

“Thank you child I like your onions they are fresh and your carrots the best keep it up child”

The old woman who has just purchased onions and carrots said giving me the compliment I will cherish forever.

Sonto: Thank you Ma.

I thank her with my best smile she smiled and walks away and she's one of the lucky ones. His son works as the guard at the king's castle so every guard's family get to be taken care of really well the king built them big houses with electricity and they are excluded from us. They live in their own small heaven where they have it easy in that side the South of the village only guards' families' lives there.

"Fresh! Banana! Fresh Banana! Here sorry sis we have fresh Banana this side" The market is always buzzing with noise either of cars or my fellow sellers. The competition is tough here you get lucky if you manage to sell your entire stock.

“How much are potatoes?”

Sonto: R20 here and R30 over there.

“Uh too expensive”

Sonto: As you can see they're clean I washed them make it easy for you to cook won't get your hands dirty they're big and they get ready fast and totally the best for a mash.

If you are selling you better know your story. Get your customer to buy for a simple lousily reason.

“Umm okay give me two R30's”

I smiled and packed her potatoes.

Sonto: Thank you you won't regret it Ma'am

She gave me money and walk away but turned mid-way.

“I almost forgot you the lady with big mangos right?”

Sonto: Yes Ma’am

“Oh please give me some; they made me swear to bring your mangos”

Sonto: Ah sorry Ma’am I have ran out of mangos for a today.

“Hau that was fast it still early”

I smiled I am a naturally smiley person smiling comes easy and besides the way to a customer’s pocket is rocking a best smile.

Sonto: Oh yes people love my mangos.

“Umm I will see you next time then”

I bid her goodbye as she walks away.

There was a sound of an engine roaring the trucks they use have this irritating sound that roar so loudly. The truck showed up and parked besides the road four guards with big guns came out laughing at what only them knows. They started walking around; one of them took an apple on one of the tables. That what they do they harass us in any way they like. He took a knife from his pocket and cut the apple. The other guard took a banana on another table; the other one took an orange and started throwing it around. Some woman who lives across the river sells avocados when they got near her table one of them took out his small gun and started shooting the avocados while laughing. We all covered our ears. He made a mess all over the table and the poor woman has run a little far from her table.

“Whoa did you see that! Yay!”

He said jumping they then laugh while walking away.  
They got near my table.

“Kuhle lokhu” (This one is pretty) One of the guards said looking at me; I just faced down while playing with the hem of my dress and praying they don’t harass me.

“Not bad” The guy with an apple said pointing me with his knife they then walk away.

I sigh in relief.

The avocado woman started cleaning the mess they made. No one actually cares about anyone here everyone go about their business. Whether you get killed in front of them they won’t say anything they would just go home and talk about how you got killed. Everyone looks out for their families only; I took ten of my avocados and went to her table.

Sonto: Ma



She looked up.

“Nomasonto”

Sonto: I'm sorry Ma here you can sell these and hopefully by the end of the day you would've got some money.

Her eyes became glassy same time. Avocados don't sell that much most of the time I would go home with no one who has bought them so imagine this woman only sell avocado they shoot her avocado and maybe she hadn't even sold anything for the time being.

“Ngiyabonga Sonto ave unehliziyo enhle may god bless you my child.” (Thank you Sonto you're so kind hearted)

There is nothing like a “May God bless you” from an elder it makes you feel superior like you can conquer the world. I smiled at her and thank her for the blessing then went back to my table.

By the end of the day I have sold most of my stock; all mangos sold all carrots sold all onions sold seven pockets of potatoes left fifteen avocados ten pockets oranges and five pocket of green pepper. Not so bad for a day. I packed everything in one big box then left.

“Sonto! Sonto ngimele!” Zinhle said coming towards me.

Zinhle: Girl why are you leaving me?

Sonto: Sorry friend I am just in a hurry I have to start with the pots or else my siblings will starve to death.

Zinhle: Shame and Zamo would be sleeping.

Sonto: You know her.

We chatted as we walk to the van/truck (guruguru) that we use as a transport to back home it only R10 not that

expensive but expensive to us since we struggle. Lucky the queue wasn't that long probably because the others are still packing.

When I got home Zamo was just sitting under the mango tree Sizwe has built a bench there using woods it quite a nice cosy place to sit at and watch the sun set. I got inside the house and the kids were laying down on a handmade matt doing their homework. I greeted them then put the big box down and started with cooking. Later on I got a stock for next day ready; by the time I went to bed I was dog tired.

**BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI**

Someone knocked on my office door I instructed them to come in; I am still busy working on retrieving the companies' data. I have managed to retrieve all lost data

for one company and now I was working on a second company. The door opened I heard clicking of heels and I knew it Pam. I look up. Pam is a beautiful woman with curves on the right places and a tinny waist; she's that type the screwing type Even though I never screw her.

Bukhosi: Pam

Pam: Sir I have brought this file they are from Ready Enterprises you just need to go through them and sign for me.

Bukhosi: Okay

Pearl: Should I remind you about your meeting later on?

Bukhosi: Yes and I won't be coming to the office afterwards. Get the interns to work on Ready Enterprises contract and the hardware guy should supervise them; tell him if he doesn't do his job or if I hear about any

mistake he should take his shit and leave before I fire him myself.

Pearl: Yes sir

She looks nice today with her above the knees dress long heels exposing her long fresh legs. The dress is hugging her body perfectly and her cleavage is out there looking sexy. She walked out shaking her ass.

Mabandla was right I need to get laid.

I took the office phone and called the HR department.

Naledi: Sir

Bukhosi: I need you to draft a post to fill up Ndaba's position I fired him.

Naledi: On it sir.

I dropped the call then went back to my work.

Later on Pam called to remind me of a meeting I took my laptop bag pack up my laptop and left. Today I am driving my Audi R8 I love sport cars; I drove straight to the restaurant I was meeting the client at. He was already sitting waiting for me.

Bukhosi: Mr Mill did I keep you waiting?

Mill: I was here early.

Bukhosi: Good how you doing?

I called for a waiter and ordered whisk on rock. Mr Mill gave me a weird look he must not. I don't answer to him.

Mill: Nkosi I would be good if you come bearing good news.

The waiter came with my whisk I took a sip and looked at him.

Bukhosi: Lucky you I manage to retrieve all your data.

Mill: Great and we will be taking our contract somewhere else where they actually know how to do their job.

I knew this was coming.

Bukhosi: Seems like you have already made up your mind and I don't think I will be able to change it.

I took another sip while he took a sip of his coffee.

Mill: You won't even try?

Bukhosi: Will you change your mind if I were to try?

He looked at me for a while.

Mill: You're right don't. I can't be associating myself with thugs in a suit.

Bukhosi: If you still value your life you won't insult me ever again.

Mill is an old white motherfucker who thinks this is apartheid time; I will fuck up his life in worse possible way. He must not start with me.

Mill: Is that a threat?

Bukhosi: Oh trust me if I were to threaten you; you would leave this restaurant with your pants wet. Take it as a friendly warning and be luck I gave you a warning I don't usually give such.



I took a memory stick from my pocket and threw it on the table.

Bukhosi: Here is your shit never insult me on my face. Be a pussy and insult me behind my back those balls you got I will cut them off with a butter knife.

I gulp down my drink and left him still staring at me.

I drove straight to my house I will finish up this work so I would deal with these clients once and for all and if they want to leave they can go I don't give a fuck.

After parking I walked inside. I live with my helper an old woman who was homeless; I took her in and made her my maid. She benefits a lot I pay her good money she has her own room inside the house she eats my food and the only thing she does is making sure the house is clean all the time.

Bukhosi: Betty!

She's showed up from the kitchen wearing an apron.

Her: Bhukhosibemvelo you're home early today.

She has to be the only employee in my life that calls me by my name and that is because I take her like family I don't appreciate people calling me by my name unless they had earned that privilege.

Bukhosi: Ya I will be working from home today could you please make me something to eat. I will be in my office.

She's not that old only 59 this year.

Betty: I will be going to the orphanage after that I heard they are running out of food.

She runs few orphanages around town I am guessing that where her money goes.

Bukhosi: Okay I will call one of the guys to drive you there.

Betty: Thank you son your food is coming right up.

She's kind and warm hearted for some reason I love having her around she gives me that motherly love.

Three

## THREE

### NOMASONTO NKOMO

The moment I heard the first rooster I woke up instantly I always have to sleep late and wake up early because if I don't I suffer. My body has got used to my sleeping pattern but sometimes I do over sleep. The house was clean I just woke up and went to start the fire; it was still dark outside just a little bit. I finished making the fire then took the kid's school uniforms and ironed them. The uniform is old and torn but at least it always clean that I make sure of; after I was done I poured water on a big pot and left them to boil so we will get bathing water and I will get some for soft porridge. I took some of the potatoes that I didn't wash yesterday and washed them. The sun was starting to come up by the time I was done parking everything for work including my lunch box. I sweep the yard then went to bath and woke the kids up after I was done while they were bathing I made them

breakfast dished up then bid them good bye. The sun is so hot today; I wanted to go to the market early so I would catch farm workers. I carried my box all the way to the stop which is not that far from my house. There was a queue already. I just greeted the last person on the line and queued. Zinhle showed up same time when the truck showed up she's lucky the sun didn't get to burn her that much. We all got in; our boxes were packed nicely at the far back.

Zinhle: Did you hear the old Prince is back.

She asked the moment we got off when we had arrived at the market.

Sonto: Nop

Zinhle: He is back Sonto and this year he will be the one who will be choosing the wife at the reed dance.

The king has so many kids last time I checked they were around 20

Sonto: good for him.

Zinhle: Good for him? That all you gonna say? Girl we should join the reed dance this year it not the old man doing the picking.

Here in the village every year they host a reed dance where all virgins would come together for virginity testing then they will go to the King's castle for celebration and the king would pick a wife no matter how young she is if he want her he pick her. Some of his wives die some just vanish so far he has ten wives.

Sonto: Zinhle I won't be joining the reed dance I don't want anything to do with that man and his family.

Zinhle: That family is rich they're like our god. Marrying to them would be an honour.

I stopped walking and looked at her.

Sonto: Those riches are our tears and one day they will turn into a river and everything that has his name attached to it will drown and he is not my God I serve a living God he's up there.

I left her standing there.

“Sonto”

Sonto: Hello Mzamo how are you?

Mzamo: Ngiyancenga tombi and mama's leg is fine now.

Sonto: That great I am glad she is okay now.

Mzamo: You carry one box these days.

Sonto: Yea it tough these days with this weather; I am slowly running out of stock.

Mzamo is a guy who usually helps everyone who is carrying two or more boxes well he get paid for it so that is his job. And right now he was carrying a big box with his head.

Mzamo: Eish askies Sonto plus we have no water; the drought will be the death of us.

Sonto: Tell me about it. This sun should give us a break now; I have turned black like coal.

He laughed.

Mzamo: You're still very beautiful though.

I smiled shyly and thank him.



Mzamo: I will bring you isqeda during the day so you will cool off the sun. (Isqeda- iced juice)

Isqeda sells at one of the houses that have electricity the guard's houses.

Sonto: Thank you Mzamo that would be really great.

I said smiling he smiled back.

Mzamo: I will see you then Nkosazana.

I nod and walked to my table as he walked away.

The day went by really quick by end of the day I had sold my entire stock; I didn't have that much stock since I am running out. Mzamo did bring my ice juice which cooled me off. I took my empty box and went to queue for a transport back home. When I got home the house was so

dirty clothes were all over the place the dishes were not washed even the bed was not made. Zamo was just lying on the unmade messy bed. I just sigh and started cleaning. She went out and left me cleaning mind you I am dog tired the sun did burn me and now I have to clean and cook. After I was done I went to the garden and got spinach it was still small so I had to be picky. I cooked spinach and pap. Tomorrow it Saturday I don't have much to sell I will just go to the market a little later.

**BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI**

Today I didn't even bother with going to the office I just finished retrieving data for both the companies now I am on my way meeting up with Sync Inc one of the companies. I got there and waited the manager is late and I hate people who are not punctual after 10 minutes of waiting she showed up.

“I am so sorry Mr Nkosi to keep you waiting traffic is hectic on a Friday”

Bukhosi: Miss Sithole.

I said in a form of acknowledgement she took a seat opposite me. This woman is not that old she just recently took over her father’s company and I must say she’s doing an amazing job so in terms of business I admire her.

Her: Please call me Zama.

I nod while taking a sip of my whisky.

Bukhosi: Anything to drink Zama before we begin.

I said looking around trying to locate a waiter.

Her: Oh no I will prefer if we just get to business I have to rush to another meeting but you can invite me for drinks some other time.

She said smiling and I just knew she's flirting.

Bukhosi: My kinda lady straight to business here is the memory stick I manage to retrieve all your data.

Her: Oh thank God I almost lost my mind.

She took the stick and put it in her handbag.

Bukhosi: I really apologise it was a mistake and I would understand if you decide to take your business somewhere else.

Her: Oh please Mr Nkosi Sync has been part of your clients before me and I trust my daddy's judgemental besides this is the first mistake you have been good to us so I won't be cancelling anything.

She's loyal; businesses need more people like her.  
Loyalty is very important.

Bukhosi: Thank you Miss Sithole your loyalty is appreciated.

She smiled.

Her: Let me get going we will keep in touch Mr Nkosi.

I shake her hand then she left these are kinda people I prefer when it comes to business.

I took my business cell phone and called Pam to let her know we will be giving Sync Inc discount for a month. The next company also didn't cancel the contract only that pig cancelled. On my way home my business phone ringed.

Bukhosi: Yes

“I need a guy by Sunday the work must be done; I will email you the details.

Bukhosi: Consider it done.

Instead of going to my house I drove to Mabandla.

Mabandla: Look who decided to grace us with his presence I will sure have nightmares today.

I rolled my eyes and walked past him.

Bukhosi: Zee come get your husband before I blow his brains.

I walked to the lounge and sit down. Zee was just watching TV she laughed.

Zee: You will have to go through me first.

Mabandla laughed and kissed her cheek before settling next to her I admire these two they went through a lot but here they are standing on their own feet.

Bukhosi: Oh wow you too are such a bore where are my kids?

Zee: They went to Pearl's house thank God I can breathe.

We chilled a little she made me something to drink then me and Mabandla went to his study.

Mabandla: so you ready for tomorrow?

Bukhosi: It not like I have a choice.

He laughed.

Mabandla: Get married then.

Bukhosi: Mxm Zach called he want one guy for a quick quick job.

While I run an IT company Mabandla has a security company or should I say a company that train people to kill Assassin Company but of course we had to call it Security Company just so it won' t jump.

Mabandla: I will get one of the guys.

Bukhosi: I forwarded the details to you.

Mabandla: Good now tomorrow don't get yourself killed.

Bukhosi: Fokofo

I gave him my middle finger and left.



Four

FOUR

NOMASONTO NKOMO

I just finished sweeping the yard; the kids are having their breakfast.

Sonto: Finish up guys.

I decided to go late to the market since I would be finishing the stock I have it not even that much.

Njabulo: Sonto you shouldn't have sweep the yard I was gonna do it.

I smiled at him.

Sonto: That so sweet babe but you can still sweep. You know how the tree leaf gets all over the place.

Nonjabulo: I will also help.

Sonto: I would love that.

They finished up while telling me about school. I washed the dishes and took the money I made the past few days and went to Sizwe's room.

Sonto: Knock.

Sizwe: Come in Sonto.

I walk in; he was laying on his wood made bed.

Sonto: Hey you okay?

Sizwe: Today you are selling the last stock.

He took a deep sigh.

Sizwe: I was thinking maybe I should go to the king and ask him to give us the portion of the land by the river.

Sonto: That a great idea that land will be perfect for amadumbe and sweet potato.

Sizwe: Exactly I was looking at it this morning when I went to fetch water; we won't suffer that much with watering the plants. I would wake up early than everyone just like always.

Sonto: Do you think he will give us? That man is a dog.

Sizwe: I don't know and honestly I don't think he will but it worth the try.

I nod.

Sonto: Anyway here is the money we made so far.

I took a sit beside him and we calculated the money.

Sizwe: R2 050 not bad it would last us for a month.

Sonto: Yea I would buy food then we save the rest for rainy days.

Sizwe: You do that; I will go to the Palace today and ask the king.

Sonto: Okay.

I took R50 and gave him.

Sonto: Here buy something for you or for Slindile.

Slindile is his girlfriend whose father happens to be one of the King's guards.

Sizwe: No use that money for school bags their bags are torn.

Sonto: Sizwe you work too hard you need to spoil yourself.

He just shoves the money to me and told me to buy school bags for the kids. I went back to the house and dish up my lunch box pecked everything then left for the market.

I was having a really slow day; the avocados were not even selling. The rest of mangos were selling just a little bit my onions haven't bought and carrot only one pocket left. The sun was too hot and I arrived late I wasn't selling much I am hungry and stressed as hell.

Mzamo: Hello my lady look what I bought you.

Mzamo showed up out of nowhere and hand me iced juice.

Sonto: Oh Mzamo you are the best thank you.

He smiled and walked away rushing back to his work. I decided to eat first then drink my ice juice.

I took my lunch box of pap and spinach and started digging in but the loud roar of an engine disturb me it not the usually rusty irritating noise this one sound different

Sponsored

it not the usually rusty irritating noise this one sound different almost nice. I looked the way the sound was coming from; everyone was looking hoping it not the guards. A nice black car showed up I have never seen

such beauty in a car before no lie I was amazed. It packed right across me beside the road. The owner a tall dark buff man came out. He look sort of scary a scar on his left cheek make it worse. You could tell he is ruthless; there is a dark aroma around him. He took a cigarette lit it up and started puffing that when I noticed his beautiful big watch. It would look good on Sizwe; He's dressed so well with no mistake I just knew he is from the royalty.

Probably the Prince Zinhle was on about the other day. I couldn't help but stare at his watch I smiled imagining how trilled Sizwe would be if I were to buy him such watch. I could already hear his voice saying. "For me? Ngiyabonga mtaka mama you didn't have too; but thank you so much Mtaka mama" I should buy him something nice he deserve it he works too hard. I was smiling to myself when I looked up he was staring right back at me gosh I was so embarrassed I quickly looked away and pretended to be eating. You know that embarrassing moment when you're looking at someone and you get lost to your own thought not realising you are staring too much. With the corner of my eyes I could see him crossing the road and my heart started beating faster than normal. He stood in front of my table but I didn't dare look up I kept playing with my food.



“You were staring and I wanna know why?”

His voice is so cold; I felt the hair on my back raising. All the blood in me left my throat became dry same time and I swallowed hard and slowly looked up.

Sonto: So ...Sorry

“Wrong answer”

He said sending shivers down my spine. I tried watering my dry throat with my saliva.

Sonto: I .... I ...Was just looking at your watch.

I honestly answered and looked down again feeling really embarrassed.

“Why?”

Sonto: I just thought it would look good on my brother.

I said so fast that I doubt he even make out what I said. He extended his hand and took my lunch box gosh I have never been this embarrassed my cooking is good yes but it just I don't want him taking my food. I am sure he is the type that sleeps with meat and wake up with meat.

I slowly looked up as he take a spoonful and put it on his mouth then started chewing.

“Ummh”

He said while chewing.

“I am taking your lunch box”

He said and walked away towards his car leaving my heart bleeding I was hungry and that was my lunch. What am I supposed to eat? These people are so fucking ruthless I hate everything from royalty. I watch him as he opened his car placed my lunch box took something closed the door then made his way towards me again.

Him: How much is your entire stock?

For a moment I was so shocked. I quickly used my brains to calculate the stock I am left with.

Sonto: R180

“Good please pack it all for me”

Sonto: Excuse me?

“Pack up all that stock”

He said staring right at me. I felt tears burning my eyes it my last stock yet he is taking it. Wasn't enough that he took my food his father got farms producing the same thing; does he have to be this cruel. I pecked everything into a box. He took his wallet from the pocket and took out R500 note.

“For the stock and buy yourself a lunch since I took your food”

Tears just burned my eyes they were tears of joy and I felt myself getting full same time. All the hunger I had gone. Now I could buy bags and school uniform for the kids without using the money I made the past few days.

Sonto: Thank you so much.

“Your food is delicious”

He said and picked up the box then left I watched him with a smile as he put it at the boot of his car then

walked to the driver's seat he looked my way for a while. I wave he nod then wave back and drove off.

Five

FIVE

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

From the market I drove straight to the Palace when I reached the gate two security guards had to check with the King before letting me in. I rolled my eyes and drove in when they had finally opened. His yard is kind of big so I drove the distance and parked in front of the house. His

Palace has a very big house double story and several roundavels. Instead of getting off I took the food I took from that lady at the super market and started digging in; her food is so delicious no lie there. I haven't eaten such food in my life. The moment I laid my eyes on it; it looked so appetising I just had to taste it. I muffed the food while mourning a little that how good the food tasted but my little heaven on earth was short lived when someone knocked on my window. My car is tinted whoever is outside can't see inside I roll down the window and one of the guards asked why I was not coming out I just ignored him and rolled up my window then ate my food when I was done I drank a bottle of water wiped my mouth then finally went out only to find the guards surrounding my car.

Bukhosi: You got to be kidding me.

"Hands where we can see them sir"

One of them said. I raised my hands in a form of surrender they searched me when they were satisfied

two of them escorted me inside the big house. The old motherfucker that I hate with every fibre in me was sitting on his royal big chair with two guards behind him. I took a sit on a wooden chair besides him.

Bukhosi: Is my stock ready.

Him: Sometimes you forget you are in my territory

I clench my jaws. He must not press my buttons.

Him: You come here and do as you please.

Bukhosi: I apologise your highness now let get to business and stop whining like a pussy.

He gave me a tense stare which I gladly returned. It not like I am asking him to give me the stock free I am paying for heaven sake. After a while of stare concert he gave in and ordered one of the guards to fetch my stock.

Him: I prefer dealing with your brother than you.

Bukhosi: At least we can agree on that one.

His guard showed up with two boxes of marijuana I had to check first I don't trust this man.

Bukhosi: It was a pleasure doing business with you Sengwayo.

I bow a little as I stood up; between me and him he knew I was just mocking him.

Bukhosi: Tell your lap dogs to follow me with the boxes.

Mabandla and I co own all our businesses this is an empire we building for our families one day. After military we were both fucked up to a point where Mabandla almost committed suicide a friend of ours



couldn't handle the trauma that came after military so he ended his life Mabandla and I are still holding on. And thanks to the businesses we started they keep us insane and always busy even though I still suffer but it better than before. As for Mabandla I think finding his way back to Zee helped him a lot. They stock in the boxes inside my car and I gave them the briefcase with money then drove off.

## NOMASONTO NKOMO

I had bought the grocery schools bags and shirt for the kids. When I reached the stop Mzamo's little brothers helped me carry the grocer to my house I was so grateful I caught them.

Sonto: Thank you Sbongiseni but why didn't you guys go to school today.

Sbongiseni: Our shoes are torn and my shirt burned while ironing Bhuti Mzamo said he will buy new ones once he had money.

Sonto: Oh I am so sorry about that.

I gave them each R1 to buy something nice for themselves. Zamo was lying on the bed as usually and the dishes were dirty mind you I cleaned and washed the dishes before I left this morning but here we are she ate and didn't clean I am seriously getting fed up with Zamo. I just ignored her and cleaned then pack up the grocer took the bucket so I would put rice but found it empty. I am the one who does the cooking in this house and the last time I checked I didn't finish it.

Sonto: Zamo what happened to the rice?

Zamo: Ma Dlamini came by desperate and asking for one cup so I gave her all of it.

Sonto: Excuse me? You gave her rice that would've lasted us for two days.

Zamo: What the big deal you bought food didn't you?

Sonto: What? Zamo I work damn hard to put food on this table and you just give it away just like that.

Zamo: She was hungry; her family was dying of hunger.

Sonto: How is that any of your business? Ma Dlamini is lazy just like you while we wake up every day she sleeps just like you.

Zamo: Now you are insulting me.

Sonto: Do you even know the meaning Insult? Zamo you took our food and gave it away. You know damn well we

have run out of stock to sell meaning there won't be any money coming in.

Zamo: It simple Sizwe will go to the farm and get a job.

Sizwe: Azwanga Zamo?

He said walking in; when it comes to Zamo I was defeated. She doesn't know the struggle of waking up every morning of getting yourself burned by the sun waiting for people to buy when some will just criticize and you would've no choice but to smile and try to change their mind about your stock. The struggle I go through every day. She doesn't even help with planting all she does is sleep.

Zamo: Oh you are home; I hope you have a plan on what we going to eat while Sonto don't sell anything.

Sonto: You going to eat the food you gave Ma Dlamini.

Today Zamo pissed me off no lie; she's stupid really stupid.

Sizwe: She did what?

Sonto: She gave Ma Dlamini all the rice rice that would've lasted us for two days.

Sizwe: Uyahlanya Zamo?

Zamo: You two bark like toothless dogs just because you feed us doesn't mean you are our parents.

Sizwe: Then start feeding yourself; we never claimed to be your parents. Had you been helping around the house you would know how sweaty we get for the food you just gave away.

Sonto: Exactly!

Zamo: So are you really going to have big mouth over food? Then I won't eat your food till I have paid the rice I gave to Ma Dlamini.

She said and stood up from the bed she tried to leave but Sizwe blocked her way.

Sizwe: That your sticking attitude that will make me slap you so hard.

Zamo: What are you waiting for Sizwe? Eh? Go ahead hit me? Slap me Sizwe?

She said poking his chest with her finger while tears just streamed down her eyes.

Sonto: Zamo stop this nonsense you were wrong and you should apologise.

Zamo: Shut up Sonto! Will slapping me makes you feel like you are a man enough to feed us? You are useless Sizwe! Useless! So go ahead!

She said still poking him.

I was never ready for the slap Sizwe gave her she fell on the ground.

Sizwe: you will shit yourself Zamo; I am not your age mate.

Zamo: Do you feel like a real man now? Do you feel like you got balls now? Does hitting me make you feel better? I hate you Sizwe I ...

Before she could finish Sizwe hit her he kept on slapping her she hid her face with her hands but Sizwe gave her several back slaps and she was crying uncontrollable. As for me I was just standing there not knowing if I should

stop him or just let him beat her Zamo is getting out of hand it time she's taught some manners.

Six

SIX



## BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

After I had drop off the weed at the warehouse I drove to my house. Our weed operation gives us really good money it sells really fast. We make ten times more than the money we spend buying the stock. Don't mistake us with gangsters we are no gangster we just business men making a living. The only drug operation we have is weed which has been legalised we train people to kill and protect and I run an honest IT company so there is no shady shit happening in our lives. When I got home I took the box with veg's I bought at the market then I walked in Betty was sitting on a couch reading a book. She looked up and took off her eye glasses.

Her: What is that?

I placed the box on the coffee table; she gave me a weird look.

Betty: You don't buy grocer.

She stated going through the box.

Bukhosi: I was at this market in a village; they had nice fresh veg's so I thought I should buy you some.

She gave me a look.

Betty: Oh they are indeed fresh.

I fake a smile then walked away had my shower and called Mabandla after I was done.

Bukhosi: The stock is at the warehouse the boys will start contributing it.

Mabandla: Hallelujah you are still alive; I will ask Zee to thank the almighty when she's praying.

Bukhosi: Hahah very funny I had this amazing food man. Damn even now I am still full.

Mabandla: Whoa the pig gave you food?

Bukhosi: Fuck that moron an African mamasita a true definition of beauty.

Mabandla: Whoa you found yourself a village chick.

He said laughing.

Bukhosi: She's beautiful and makes a mean meal ukudla kwamadoda angempela. (Food for real man)

I said with a smirk on my face.

Mabandla: Wadla ngwenya. Eh uzitholele umfazi emakhaya. (You found a wife at the village)

He laughed so hard.

Mabandla: Ndlangamandla! Mtungwa! Mawandla ka Ndlela! Awu-suka when am I meeting this village girl.

He was mocking me I know him very well. All these clan praise he is mocking me.

sans-serif; background-color: transparent; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; vertical-align: baseline; white-space: pre-wrap;">Bukhosi:  
I shouldn't have told you.

I said and dropped the call; he called back but ignored him.

NOMASONTO NKOMO

Zamo wasn't talking to anyone she didn't even ate her supper the kids kept asking if she is okay but no one answered them they had to let it go.

Njabulo: I wish we can eat like this every day.

Nonjabulo: Me too.

I had cooked rice with tomato and eggs.

Sizwe: Don't worry one day we will eat more than just eggs.

Njabulo: For real Bhuti Sizwe.

Sizwe: Anything for you and Nonjabulo. I will work hard and buy you a big chicken.

They smiled excitedly.

Nonjabulo: Wow! We haven't eaten chicken in a long time; remember mama use to buy us chicken Sonto.

Sonto: OH yes and I bought you guys' fish so tomorrow I am going to cook fish.

Njabulo: Yes! Our teacher was eating fish the other day. She didn't even give me a taste I helped her clean her desk but she didn't give me food.

Sonto: Worry not; tomorrow you will be eating fish.

Njabulo: Thank you Sonto you're the best. Bhuti Sizwe I will help you with planting tomorrow so we will get money for that big chicken.

“Sizwe! Sizwe! Sizwe!”

Someone cried outside while shouting Sizwe's name. We all stood up and went outside. It Slindile she's crying and breathing heavy. Sizwe rushed to her.

Sizwe: Slindile are you alright? Why are you crying?

She couldn't talk she had hiccups and she kept crying. I ran inside and got her water. Sizwe lifted her up and we went inside.

Slindile: He is going to burn my family he is going to burn them Sizwe.

She said crying that when I heard the noise outside people calling each other. I went out again just in time to spot Zinhle. It was a little bit dark outside.

Zinhle: Sonto! Come let go they're burning Slindile's house.

I waited no more I run after her.

Seven



## SEVEN

### NOMASONTO NKOMO

The King and his guards were standing outside Slindile's house. You could hear people crying from inside asking him to forgive them. He just stood there showing no sympathy nor mercy three of his guard started pouring paraffin around the house they took a bottle put half paraffin inside then put a paper lit it up and threw it inside everything happened so fast the house explode flames started going up you could still hear them screaming even kids Slindile has five sibling she is the older one and from the look of things she's the only one who manage to escape. It was heart-breaking people

were just standing there watching feeling sorry for them.  
The King stood on top of the truck.

Him: This is what happens if you betray me.

His voice alone makes me sick the heart breaking cries  
have stopped and no one is saying anything we are just  
standing there watching our so called King as he  
addresses us.

Him: This is my land you are my people therefore I am  
allowed to do as I please. You betray me I punish you; I  
won't be taken for granted by any of you. You must obey  
me; I won't tolerate any sort of disrespect. My land my  
rules!

“Nx yinja le!” (He is a dog)

Zinhle's father said; he was standing right besides us.  
Before I could even blink one of the guards came out of

nowhere and yank him he drag him towards the King.  
Zinhle started panicking.

Zinhle: Oh no!

Sonto: Zinhle don't.

She wanted to go towards them.

The guard whisper something to the King.

King: Oh it looks like Mdluli has something to say.

Zinhle's Dad: Shwele Nkosi yami kushelele ulimi. Ayidle izishiyele Sengwayo. (I am so sorry my king it was a slip of a tongue I am so sorry please forgive me)

He said pleading. The king just laughed.

Him: Who do you think you are?

Zinhle: Please don't kill him please.

She said crying trying to breakthrough from my grip.

Sonto: Zinhle let go home sis you don't want to witness this trust me.

Zinhle: No! He is my father Sonto. I am not leaving without him.

Mzamo came and helped me with holding Zinhle back; if she goes there they will kill her.

The King instructed the guards to throw Zinhle's dad on a fire.

They say INDODA AYIKHALI but Zinhle's father went down on his knees and beg with tears streaming down he

beg the king to forgive him. But the King wasn't having it; he kicked him making him fall. My own tears gushed out.

King: Throw him on fire.

Zinhle: Noo!

Mzamo: Zinhle please calm down they will come for you.

Zinhle: I don't care I want to die with him let me go.

Sonto: Zinhle please your mom and siblings they need you. You are the only one left.

Zinhle's mother had a stroke a year ago she can't use her right side and her two siblings are still young.

She went down on her knees crying. I couldn't see her father being thrown on fire but I could hear him crying and pleading people started screaming when I looked up

he was on fire and running towards the river which is far from here one of the guards shoot him and he fell on the ground. Zinhle had her head buried on my lap as we had kneeled down her cries so loud I could feel my heart breaking in a million pieces. Everyone went dead quiet the only thing audible were the flames of the fire and Zinhle's cry.

I keep experiencing traumatising things in my life first it was an unrecognisable face of my mother that still haunt me on my sleep and now it my friend's father burning to ashes I doubt I will ever be the same again.

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

“Eh- are you okay?”

I was just sitting on a couch starring at my wrist watch and I couldn't get her voice off my head. She was staring

at me or no she said she was staring at my watch because she thinks it would look good on her brother.

I chuckled shaking my head who does that? This brother must mean a lot to her. Maybe she was low-key telling me the watch wasn't looking good on me. I couldn't contain the smile that appeared on my face that girl is something else. I should've gave her the watch for her brother the way she was smiling looking at the watch I really wonder what she was thinking.

“Whatever you are thinking must be really interesting I have never seen you smile like that with no Ntando around of course.”

Ntando is Mabandla's name. I ignored her. We were in my bedroom and she was just laying on my bed naked.

Bukhosi: I think you should leave.

Lihle: What? I thought I was sleeping over.

Bukhosi: Not today get dressed I will drop you off.

She scoff and pout getting off the bed If i wasn't distracted I was gonna make her suck the leaving out of me course hey her pouting is sexy as hell.

Lihle is Zee's friend that I happen to screw whenever I feel like it she's the kind of girl that sell her body for money but I don't judge her that her way of living since me and her are screwing I made sure she knows I am the only one who get to fuck her. I can fuck whoever I like but she is not allowed to fuck around if she would dare do that to me I would kill her I swear. I don't share. Period!

She was still grumpy when I drop her off at her place; once she got off I took my phone and deposited 5k on her account that would really make her happy. This girl love money way too much.



NOMASONTO NKOMO

NOMASONTO NKOMO

Zinhle had no energy to walk; from all the crying she did she was just too frail. Mzamo had to carry her with his back. We walked to her house on the way no one said anything to anyone; we were all lost to our own miserable thought. We got to her house her younger brother opened the door and Zinhle's cries start all over again. They were in a round house which is their kitchen her mother was lying on a mat next to the fire and her two brothers were sitting on wooden chairs next to the fire. Mzamo put Zinhle next to her mother on the mats she crawl to her mother and hugged her while crying so painfully.

"Is she okay?"

Her younger brother asks the older one is only ten then the younger one is Njabulo's age seven.

Zinhle: uBaba Mama ... uBaba ...u ...u ...u

Her mother's tears just streamed down I think she got the hint. She can't talk proper due to her condition but you could see she wanted to say something.

Zinhle: Usishiyile uBaba! Usishiyile uBaba weee! (Daddy left us! Daddy left us!)

She said crying while holding on her mom whose body started shaking.

Zinhle: Mama no Mama noo you can't do this to me mama please.

She said holding her down.

I didn't even know what to do. Mzamo rushed to Zinhle and hold her back her mother was shaking uncontrollable while saliva was coming out of her mouth. I rushed and kneeled next to her then hold her up she was too heavy I only manage to lift her head up.

Sonto: Mama please breathes you need to ... you ... need to'...

She kicked once then twice then stopped shaking all together her eyes white as crystal and I just knew there was no life left in her I have seen my dead mother's eyes. I know a person when she's no more.

Sonto: Oh God no ...no ...no ...please no...

The kids started screaming Mzamo was trying to help a crying Zinhle to calm down and I was just there holding a dead body of my friend's mother and two boys were

watching the whole scenario while crying their lungs out. Sphiwe Zinhle's brother the one who is ten stormed out.

Mzamo: Sonto please pull it together I will go after him.

I just nodded; I don't think I still have my voice. He let go of Zinhle who was laying on the floor crying I slowly put Zinhle's mother on the mats where she has been sleeping and went to Zinhle.

Sonto: Bandile get me water.

The seven year old brother can see what is happening but I think he is still little bit confused his cries are no longer loud. I crotched next to Zinhle and put her head on my lap.

Sonto: Zinhle breathe in and out please calm down Zinhle please.

I said my voice so low that I doubt she heard me. Bandile gave me water and I help Zinhle drink. She tried the breathing process till she finally got calm only left with hiccups. After a while of sniffs and silence she finally spoke with a very weak voice.

Zinhle: What do I do now Sonto?

I hold her tight she can't do anything now she need strength then from there we will make a plan her relatives are supposed to be here by now. I am sure they have heard and seen the whole process.

Sonto: Bandile do you have sugar?

He shakes his head no.

Sonto: Go to my house tell whoever you find to give you a cup of sugar.

He immediately runs out. It dark outside I am just silently praying he got there safe and come back safe.

Sonto: Now you need strength Zinhle after that we will see what we will do.

She nod and sniffs.

Zinhle: Is she ... is she ...

She took a deep sigh.

Zinhle: gone too?

I didn't know how to answer that I just kept on brushing her.

Sonto: I'm sorry Zinhle

She didn't say anything she just kept on sniffing. Mzamo and Sphiwe were not back. Bandile showed up running he was even sweating Sizwe was with him. I was really grateful he had come.

It was already middle of the night when Mzamo came back with Sphiwe. Zinhle and I had put her mother's body next to a wall and we covered it with a blanket cleaned the house with the help of Sizwe and Bandile. We moved most of the things to another house they have two round houses. Sizwe had to go home before Mzamo and Sphiwe came back. They looked exhausted; we all were emotionally and physically drained. Mzamo stayed with us till morning that when the relatives arrived only to be told Zinhle's mother also passed on meaning there would be two funerals.

## BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

Dead bodies were flying around we run up the hill trying to hide with trees. They are chasing us with guns one of our solders brain got blown out making his blood get all over my face since I was right behind me. It got all over me; my eyes nose and mouth I could even taste it.

“Nkosi lookout”

Mabandla said somewhere in the crowd when I turned to look the bullet came through and hit me right on the forehead. My breath shortening I was struggling with breathing as if I was under water or I have been holding my breath. I jump up tossed the blanket aside. I am dripping wet from the sweat. These dreams never stopped worse they are all really except the part I got hit by the bullet on my forehead. When I checked the time it still two in the morning I woke up and put on sweatpants with a vest then went to my gym room to get rid of all these frustrating thoughts and nightmares. It sad how I



still get nightmares of what went down in the military I need a distraction I need to put my mind on something else the last thing I want is to end up with my brains blown. Life at the military wasn't a walk in a park it came with traumatising experience and if you made it without any damaged brain or with ending up committing suicide you are considered lucky.

Eight

EIGHT

NOMASONTO NKOMO

The following day there was a lot to be done Zinhle was sitting on a matras and her relatives just didn't care I was working like a slave; there is this aunt of hers who just kept on dishing orders men from the village were busy digging the grave. The elders have made the decision that Zinhle's parents will be buried in one grave I doubt Zinhle had a say in that Her uncles and other family members had went to the King to ask him to grant them permission to take the ashes or whatever is remaining of Zinhle's father to be buried. The way I was so tired and sweaty I had just finished cooking sump. I needed to go home and freshen up and maybe get some change of clothes. We had to wake up very early and go fetch the water from the river then fire woods some girls from the village came by to help.

"Sonto good you are done with the sump I want you to cut woods and make another fire. They need fire to cook the goat."

Gosh this woman.

Sonto: Okay Aunt.

I went to cut the woods quickly made the fire outside then I sneak out and run home I am stinking I really do need to bath. When I got home Zamo the kids and Slindile were sitting on the floor. Slindile was helping the kids with their homework and Zamo was just lying down. The house was clean; I mentally thank Slindile for being around.

Nonjabulo: Sonto!

She ran to me and we hugged.

Sonto: Hey babe you okay?

Nonjabulo: Yes we missed you. Aunt Slindile made us breakfast.

Sonto: That great thank you Aunt.

Njabulo: Have you been crying Sonto?

He asked concerned.

Sonto: No babe I just had a busy morning.

Zamo: Jeez you look ....

Sonto: I know things are hectic I am so tired.

I feel sorry for Slindile; she won't even be able to bury her family. It seems like she would be staying with us this is suicide if the king find out we are all dead. I greet her then poured cold water in a basin and went to take a bath Zamo asked to come with me. So we quickly got dressed then left.

Zamo: So since Slindile will be staying with us will she also provide.

She asked on our way to Zinhle's house.

Sonto: Zamo please not today.

Zamo: Do you even know how risky it is to have her in our house.

Sonto: Zamo!

Zamo: Ummh ...

When we got to Zinhle's house we started getting busy the family had a meeting then they called me in.

"Sonto we understand that MaNdlovu took her last breath in your hands and you were helping Zinhle with moving her around"

Zinhle's uncle said.

"I wonder what she was even doing; now we are the ones to go through the expenses of cleansing her"

Her Aunt said.

I don't get these people. They were supposed to be here the moment they saw Zinhle's father being brutal killed had they were when Zinhle's mother took her last breath she was not going to take her last breath on my hands.

"Unfortunately sis we can't cleans you. There is no money we all put money together to pay for the funeral and now we got nothing and ...

Sonto: It fine I will buy the chicken and you can do the cleansing for me.

I was doing this for me; I don't want to be followed by bad lucks. Zinhle looked up from the blanket her eyes so red and swollen. I gave her a tight smile she should not worry I got this.

Uncle: Well in that case thank you it settled then.

I excused myself and went home to get the money; I ended up buying two chickens. Everything went well; her parents were buried in one grave. People ate and now we were washing the dishes outside Me Zamo and other three girls from the village Zinhle's cousins were just sitting under the tree talking and laughing Zinhle had went to the river to bath. They had performed the cleansing ceremony for me. When Zinhle returned from the river all the family members gathered in a house I bet for another meeting.

We finished washing the dishes and returned borrowed pots and plate where we borrowed them. The girls left Zamo also left. I was left behind course I just wanted to make sure Zinhle was okay. Her family also packed up

and left. I found her sitting on a mat with tears just streaming down her eyes.

Sonto: Hey

I kneeled next to her and brushed her back.

Sonto: It going to be okay it gets better with time. Trust me you will be fine.

She looked at me.

Zinhle: I am still a kid myself how am I supposed to look after two kids.

Sonto: You and I never got a chance to be kids; we have never been kids we had to grow up at a very tender age. When mama had Zamo I was only a year and few months old I had to grow up fast I had to be the one babysitting her. I honesty never got the chance to be a kid to be treated like a kid then we lost mom I couldn't let Sizwe



take all the burden I was used to working for everything anyway so after her passing we manage we stick together and made sure our siblings don't go to bed starving. Zinhle you have been working all your life you have been taking care of your family all your life. There is no different as now you can still do it. You can still look after them. You just need to be strong they need you more than they ever needed you. You will manage just fine.

She took my hand and held it.

Zinhle: Thank you Sonto I don't know what I would've done without you.

I hugged her.

Sonto: I will always be here if you ever need me.

## BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

It a Sunday and Sundays are very boring for me since I don't go to church nor do I have anything to do. I decided to go by NV (Ntando Vezi) Security Company. I will help with the training instead of staying in this house. When I got there I saw Mabandla's car and I regretted coming here he is going to nag me about the village girl all day. I walked in his office; he was doing some paper work.

Mabandla: Au Nkosi.

He said and laughed.

I took a sit opposite him.

Bukhosi: Come on give it to me I know you are dying to give it to me. So go ahead.

Mabandla: What? What are you talking about?

He tried to pull his poker face but with me it will never work.

Bukhosi: Don't fuck with me I know you are dying I know it burning you inside.

He creaked up to a loud laugh.

Mabandla: Man I was sure gonna pass by your house if you didn't show up.

I pulled my straight face. He laughed.

Mabandla: So the village girl.

I knew it I fucking knew it. I will never hear the end of it.

Bukhosi: Leave me the fuck alone Mabandla.

Mabandla: Come on; give me her name at least.

Bukhosi: I don't know her name man.

Mabandla: What you didn't even ask her? Jeez man you are so bad at this; I should give you some lessons.

I sit back on a chair and relaxed.

Bukhosi: I didn't fucking ask her name because I didn't care I just took her food; pap and spinach man damn.

He laughed.

Mabandla: We gonna call her spinach.

We both laughed.

Bukhosi: Nx you fucking stupid.

I stood up.

Mabandla: Where the fuck you going do the paper work please you know I hate this shit.

I stood by the door and gave him a middle finger.

Bukhosi: I am here to train not for fucking stupid paper work.

I opened the door and left him.

Mabandla: Fuck this shit I will ask my wife to do it.

He said following after me. I chuckled.

Mabandla: So Spinach. How does she look like?

Bukhosi: Oh fucking no.

Mabandla: What I am just asking.

The NV Company is situated in a middle of nowhere surrounded by woods. We have cottages for everyone who is training.

Bukhosi: I will never hear the end of it.

He laughed.

Mabandla: okay I will leave your Spinach alone.

He said laughing as we walk towards the shooting range.

Nine

NINE

NOMASONTO NKOMO

I slept the moment I got home and lucky me I didn't have nightmares the only nightmare I am having is the sound of a roaring engine outside our house. I literally shit myself. I panicked what if the King knows about Slindile staying with us. If that the case then we are dead. I woke the kids and told them to get under the bed; Zamo also

woke up and hid inside the wardrobe. Slindile was in Sizwe's room; at least they will take me and kill only me. I tried calming myself down by breathing in and out. The loud bang didn't stop.

Sonto: Ok Sonto you can do this you can do this.

I took a deep breath and went to open two guards were standing there and the truck was in front of our house. This was definitely a nightmare.

Sonto: Yes?

“Sonto! Sonto! Sonto!”

Sonto: Ca-

“Do you have a death wish?”



I felt my heart beating really fast. There was a lamp on my throat I swallowed hard.

Sonto: Excuse me?

My whole body was burning up yet I felt cold shivers.

“This girl has a death wish bro”

Oh god! Please don't forsake me.

Sonto: I... am so sorry ....she ... I ... I didn't mean to disrespect the King ...she

Guard1: You better not tell us you don't have money

Sonto: Money?

Guard2: If that the case bro I am the first to enter the sacred palace. Plus I am sure it is still sealed with golden locks.

He said that and bit his lower lip then wink at me making my skin crawl; these guards are creepy as hell.

Guard1: Damn

He licked his lips.

Guards: So what it gonna be MaNkomo?

Sonto: Money?

I was still confused; I just didn't know what was going on.

Guard2: The permit money.

Gosh I have never been this relieved in my whole entire life I felt like a huge weight was lifted off my shoulder. I couldn't hold my relieved face I was happy so happy.

The guards gave me weird looks.

Sonto: Oh the permit money how can I forget that.

At the market where we sell we pay permit fee for selling there.

I rushed back inside and got their money.

Sonto: Here is your money it was so nice seeing you today. Have a great day gentlemen.

I said with my best smile leaving them confused as hell as I close the door on their face then I lean on it and let out a breath that I didn't even realise I was holding. The sound of the engine roar to life as it drove off Zamo poke her head.

Zamo: What just happened?

Sonto: I almost had a heart attack.

I said holding my pounding heart. The kids got out from under the bed.

Zamo: Sizwe is putting all our lives in danger for that slut and I won't be around to wait for my death.

She said that then walk out.

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

I was in my office working as always but still I couldn't get Spinach out of my mind she is exceptional. There is something about her.

My office phone ring I wiped the stupid smile pasted on my face shook my head to bring back my memory I was acting like a love sick teenager.

Bukhosi: Pam

Pam: Sir sorry to disturb you I have Zamani here for you.

Fucking son of a bitch what the fuck he wants? I clench and unclench my fist.

Bukhosi: Let him in.

I dropped the phone and waited after a moment he just burg in without even knocking like mother like son.

Zamani: Big brother

Bukhosi: Zamani?

He took a sit opposite me on a chair.

Zamani: You got an awesome office and that receptionist chick damn man if I wasn't getting married.

He whistles.

Bukhosi: Zamani I am working.

Zamani: Oh yea sure I am tiring the knot and man bro I want you there man you dig; I want you to be my best man.

Bukhosi: I will tell you the same thing I told your mother I won't come I am busy.

Zamani: oh come on man don't be like that it will mean a lot to mama to have you there.

Funny how she said the same thing about my presence meaning a lot to him.

Bukhosi: I don't fucking care about her and I will repeat myself for the last time; I am not coming to your wedding so stop being a fucking pain in an ass.

Zamani: man bro you need to chill and let go of the past.

Bukhosi: Zamani please leave my office I don't ever wanna see you your mother and siblings ever again; don't come to my office my house and don't even call me when you see me on the street look the other way. We fucking don't know each other just like we never knew each other.

Zamani: You are being unreal right now bro what did we do? This shit is between you and Mom.

Bukhosi: Zamani leave.

Zamani: Bukho-

Bukhosi: Get out!

I said raising my voice he jump up from the chair.

Zamani: Okay okay I am leaving jeez man.

He said with his hands raised.

The moment he closed the door I hissed and punch the office table if they keep pressing my buttons like this I swear they won't like the outcome.



Ten

TEN

NOMASONTO NKOMO

[ONE MONTH LATER]

Things has got really bad in this house we have no food our plants died due to drought and Slindile is still living with us she got nowhere to go apparently her father was stealing from the King that why her family got burned. She is always inside since she can't be seen outside at least she helps with cooking and cleaning then I do the washing fetching woods and Sizwe usually fetch water in the early mornings. I was just sitting on a chair staring into space when Zamo walked in.

Sonto: Zamo what the hell is going on with you? You're hardly around and you sleep out.

She rolled her eyes.

Zamo: I told you I sleep at Nomvula's house what more do you want? They can provide food there unlike here.

Sonto: Don't you dare lie to me Zamo; I was with Nomvula yesterday she said you have never slept at her house.

Zamo: Oh so now you go behind my back and discuss me with my friends? Get a life Nomasonto.

Sonto: What the hell is going on with you Zamo?

Zamo: Sonto you're not my mother you are just my older useless sister so please stay out of my business since you are failing to provide for me I will provide for myself.

Sonto: But Zamo why you doing this to me.

I was just so defeated I just didn't know how to talk to Zamo anymore.

Zamo: Heeh sis you think you are made of gold neh you think you glitter you think you are special to me; news flash Sonto you mean nothing to me whatever I am doing I am doing it for myself not for you and definitely not to you.

Sonto: fine Sis go ahead and do whatever you want but when life hit you so hard when whatever you are doing turn sour please don't bother coming to Sonto I am done with you. I am so done you hear me? I am done.

Zamo: Finally she gonna stick her fat nose out of my business praise the lord. You know what Sonto perhaps you should be the one getting the job at the farms I just realise I would just be happier with you dead.

He words shocked me to the core I never realised my own sister hate me that much to wish death upon me. I had no come back for that I just stare at her; I could feel tears burning my eyes. I was hurt really hurt; what did I ever do to Zamo for her to hate me this much? I fought the tears back.

Sonto: Zamo ... I ...I

I couldn't even utter a word; there was a lump on my throat. Tears started gushing out. I am not the type that just cries but what she just said hurt so much I have

failed my siblings. I walk towards her She looked down I put my hand on her shoulder and squeezed it a little.

Me: I'm sorry I failed you.

I said then walk out and went to sit under the mango tree and just let the tears gush out like water tap.

I need to make a plan really fast.

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

Bukhosi: What are you doing here Zuzu?

I asked rather irritated Zee's friends can be so annoying you fuck them then they think they can come as they please in your life.

Zuzu: Live a little will you?

She took a sit opposite me we were in my office.

Bukhosi: Talk I don't have all day.

She looked at her nails admiring them and annoying me at the process.

Zuzu: I am here to make you an offer you can't refuse.

I chuckled bitter.

Bukhosi: You? Making me an offer?

Zuzu: You know my Dad can have anything in a snap of a finger imagine having someone as powerful as him on your side. Whatever you do either legal or illegal you won't have any shitty law on your case. You can start as

many businesses you want; you can run this town with me by your side.

I looked at her with interest what she's saying is interesting.

Bukhosi: Go on.

She gave me a victory smile.

Zuzu: I am tired of my father seeing me as useless; I want to build an empire. I am old now and I want to make him proud I need someone as powerful as you on my side someone who isn't scared to take the world by storm. I am ready to get my hands dirty.

Bukhosi: Get to the point.

Zuzu: You will have to marry me.

Bukhosi: excuse me?

Zuzu: Think about it my dad was a mayor he got all the contact you could think of. He has power the kinda power that can work on your favour. Me and you are the same we can run Durban city and daddy would be very proud of me.

Bukhosi: Back up a little girly we are not the same and I won't marry you.

Zuzu: Take your time Babe and really think this through before you make a decision toddles.

She blows a kiss then left shaking her small ass. Zuzu is slim probably a size 28. When she was by the door she looked back.

Zuzu: I am looking forward to being a Mrs Nkosi don't disappoint.



Eleven

ELEVEN

NOMASONTO NKOMO

Zamo left we never heard from her and no one knows where she is i know she is here around and I am worried about her. She's my little sister I can't help but worry. I just finished sweeping the yard. Slindile is inside the house while the kids are at school. We have no food to eat so today I am going to look for a job any sort of job as long as I won't be working for the King. After cleaning myself up I went to Sizwe's room.

Sonto: Sli

Slindile: Hey Sonto

Sonto: I will be off now when the kids arrive please make them something to eat.

Slindile: I wish I could help too.

Sonto: It okay tell Sizwe to get me some sweet potatoes from the garden.

She nods.

Sllindile: Okay I will.

The plan was to go to every guard's house and ask for anything as long as I will make money.

On my way I came across Zinhle and Mzamo they are on their way to the market.

Sonto: Hey guys.

Zinhle: Sonto it so good to see you.

We hugged.

Mzamo: Nkosazane we hardly see you these days.

Sonto: ey you know the struggle.

Zinhle: How are things?

Sonto: We getting there but it tough hey with the drought and the King refusing to give us a portion of his land things are about to be really tough.

Mzamo: Sorry about that Sonto I wish I could help.

I smiled.

Sonto: It okay Mzamo something will come up.

Zinhle hugged me one more time.

Zinhle: Come by my house later I will make a plan. We also don't have much but I could try.

Sonto: Thank you so much.

I bid good bye to them then left.

I knocked door to door but got no help apparently they don't want people like me to work for them because we end up sleeping with their men. I went home drained and my heart was literally bleeding. When I got home the kids have arrived and Sizwe was around making them avocado the last avocado we had.

Sizwe: Sonto

Sonto: What are we going to do Sizwe? We have really like super really run out food. The kids today went to school without breakfast.

Sizwe: I think it high time I go to the farm. If I don't what are we going to eat.

Sonto: What the use? They will end up killing you then what.

Sizwe: All I want is to provide we all going to die someday.

I took a deep breath it seems like we running out of ideas.

Sonto: Have you heard anything about Zamo.

Sizwe: I don't care about that one I will happily burry her body.

I will happily burry her body.

Sonto: Sizwe! That not a way to talk about your sister.

Sizwe: Why should I care? She's selfish only cares about herself.

Sonto: She is still your sister our little sister and she has been gone for weeks now.

Sizwe: She can be gone forever I still wouldn't care.

He said then walks out. I sigh and finished making the avocado for the kids.

The village is buzzing young maidens are busy getting ready for the reed dance maybe if I were to join my family will be well taken care of and I will spend the rest of my life with a man I don't love small price to pay for my families happiness. I will sleep on it then tomorrow I will go and join who knows I might get picked as much as

I hate the King I have no other choice. I have already failed Zamo who has been gone for weeks now and I don't want the same thing happening to Njabulo and Nonjabulo. Desperate times calls for desperate majors.

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

I picked up the phone and called Mabandla.

Him: Nkosi

Bukhosi: Zuzu want me to marry her.

He laughed out so loud.

Him: What? is she insane?



Bukhosi: It might be a good offer.

Him: Okay I am lost

Bukhosi: If I marry her I will have her father on my corner and man I am bored with my life I want to do something exciting something that will get my blood pumping again and what better way than being against the law? I miss the chase.

Him: I am against this; you should marry for love not power. We both know power can be very dangerous.

Bukhosi: I am suffering bro like my life is back to square one. I hardly sleep what I have been doing is boring now; I need something else something big to distract me. I can't live like this.

I know he is the only person who understands me who understand what I go through everyday all nights.

Him: Can we at least find something that won't have you get married for power especially not Zuzu; I know you would kill her on your first week of marriage that chick has a lose screw.

Bukhosi: Just say you want me to marry for love.

He laughed.

Him: Of course I do so I will find you something that will gets your blood flowing.

Bukhosi: Better be soon I am slowly losing myself.

Him: Tell you what why don't you go to the village tomorrow.

Bukhosi: Hell no I will seriously blow his brains.

Him: You won't and it will get your mind off things. And besides you might run to Spinach.

He said and laughed.

Bukhosi: Spinach vanished like a ghost maybe she was a ghost. You know I have been there so many times and I never saw her again.

He laughed.

Him: You are being haunted; the man upstairs is punishing you.

Bukhosi: Ha-ha very funny.

He laughed even more.

Him: You ate a ghost's food.

He laughed so hard I ended up dropping the call.

Stupid Mabandla.

Twelve

TWELVE

NOMASONTO NKOMO

The next morning I woke up early as usual I sweep the yard and Iron the kid's school uniforms. There was

nothing for breakfast so I just cleaned the house and woke them up. They bath got dressed then left for school. Sizwe had gone to fetch water. After I was done with everything I went to the forest to fetch fire woods by the time sun comes up I was on my way back. I bumped into Zinhle on her way to the stop she was carrying a big box lucky her she still had something to sell.

Sonto: Zinhle?

Zinhle: Sonto hey where is Zamo?

I shrugged.

Sonto: We don't know where she went; she left about a month ago.

Zinhle: Yoo that kid Sizwe should beat her she is going to bring you problems.

Sonto: He already done that but you know Zamo are you still going to join the reed dance?

She went quit and I regretted bringing that up after the whole king ordeal I doubt she still wants anything to do with that man.

Zinhle: Yes I will join

She said after some time.

Sonto: Are you serious Zinhle after everything.

Zinhle: There is no guarantee that I would be picked and if I don't my siblings will soon starve with no dad around things will be difficult I will soon also run out of stock to sell then what? What we gonna eat? I am going to try my luck Sonto.

She is right if we don't join we going to starve to death.

Sonto: I will also join; I will go to the practice today later.

Zinhle: You will join?

Sonto: I have no choice Zinhle.

She sighed.

Zinhle: I know at least we doing this for our families.

Sonto: Yea I believe everything will be fine eventually.

Zinhle: ha I doubt we were born into this and we will die into it.

She is right nothing will change no matter how much time passes we still going to suffer just like our parents we will suffer till death. The truck showed up.

Zinhle: Bye Sonto I will see you later.

She said hurrying towards the stop. I waved goodbye then carried on with walking back home. I was so damn hungry and we had no food I just drank some water. Slindile has done the washing so I took the clothes and hanged them on the line then went to sit with her.

Later that day when the kids were back from school; I got myself ready to go to the practice. Zinhle came to my house to get me we both went there. The practice is by the river when we got there almost all the maidens from the village were there chances of the prince picking me or Zinhle were very slim but it would be worth the try.

Gogo: Nawe Nomasonto uzojoyina? (Are you also here to join Nomasonto)

Bukhosi: Yebo gogo.



Gogo is the old woman who checks maiden's virginity then train them for the ceremony.

Gogo: This year's ceremony is blessed indeed you two are joining.

She clap once and told us to lie down so she would check if we still virgins like we would come here knowing we are not virgins. After the whole process we were allowed to join. The other maidens started talking shit saying we joined because we want the Prince why we were not joining all these years only joining now when it the Prince doing the picking. I mean like who would want to marry an old man and worse be miserable it not like we want the Prince we don't have a choice we want to feed our families. We ignored them and just practised after the whole practising Gogo called us aside.

Gogo: I will need you to pay joining fee of R100

Zinhle: There is a joining fee?

Gogo: You want to just go and marry the Prince for free; of course there is a joining fee.

Gogo: You want to just go and marry the Prince for free; of course there is a joining fee.

Everything is about money here where would I get that money? I don't even have a cent to feed my family then I'm required to pay for joining I might not even be picked.

Sonto: When is the joining fee needed?

Gogo: Before the ceremony and the ceremony is this weekend so by Friday I must have the money.

I took a deep sigh.

Sonto: Okay Gogo we will make a plan. Thank you.

We left; Zinhle was complaining the whole way.

Zinhle: This is day light robbery a joining fee really?

Sonto: These people love money they even came to my house to collect permit fee.

Zinhle: You lie; I thought they would let you be since your spot has been taken by someone else.

Sonto: My spot is taken by someone else?

Zinhle: You didn't know?

Sonto: No

Wow! They replaced me made me pay permit when someone is already occupying my spot. Pigs! Pigs! We talked about our hate for the King then parted ways.

When I got home Sizwe has cooked sweet potatoes again and the kids were eating.

Njabulo: Sonto where were you? Did you get money to buy us food?

I took a deep sigh.

Sonto: No but I promise I will get money soon

Nonjabulo: I am tired of eating sweet potato and water.

Sonto: I know sweetheart but don't worry I will make a plan soon.

Nonjabulo: I get so hungry at school since we no longer eat breakfast.

Sizwe walked in.

Sizwe: Oh Sonto I didn't know you were back yet.

Sonto: I just got here I joined the reed dance and they need joining fee of R100

Sizwe: You did what?

Sonto: Sizwe it not like we have a choice.

He sighs and dished sweet potato for me. I thank him.

Sizwe: I will go to the farms tomorrow.

Sonto: No please don't

Sizwe: Sonto w-

Sonto: No Sizwe I don't wanna lose you. I will be left alone with the kids.

I was hungry yet I couldn't eat I forced the food down my throat.

Sizwe: Eish!

He said then walked out. The kids finished then went to sleep.

I just stayed up all stressed up.

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

We were in hospital waiting room; Me Mabandla his wife Zee and Junior Mabandla's older son. Quinton Mabandla's younger son had fell and broke his arm so he was rushed to the hospital last night. The doctors said he

will be discharged today his arm broke but he will be fine.

Zee: What is taking them long? I am sure my baby is hungry.

Junior: Will he be able to use his arm again?

He whispered on my ear.

Bukhosi: Yes he will champ.

Junior: So his arm won't be cut.

Bukhosi: No champ they won't cut it but he won't be able to use it for some time.

Junior: I will help him; I will be his second arm.

I smiled and we did our special fist bump.

Bukhosi: That what a man do look out for his family.

He smiled happily. Mabandla's phone rings he looked at me before showing me who is calling.

It that stupid King; someone was supposed to go there today. He picked up and told him he will come there tomorrow.

Thirteen



## THIRTEEN

### NOMASONTO NKOMO

I am busy cleaning the yard fixing the flowers and watering them. They have also died due to drought. The way I love my flowers seeing them like this brings sorrow to my heart. I wipe off sweat from my face; then took a deep breath. Sun wasn't giving me a chance burning me so hard. I continue with fixing my flowers while humming a song the kids are at school Slindile is obviously inside the house and Sizwe is somewhere out there trying to provide for us. I felt my shoulders heavy; you know that feeling when you feel like someone is standing behind you. I stopped what I was doing and looked back.

My eyes must be deceiving me.

Sonto: Oh it you prodigal daughter.

It Zamo she has tears streaming down her face and a plastic full of her clothes. I look back to my flowers pretending not to care when I deeply do when all I wanted was to wrap her in a tight hug and tell her everything is going to be okay

Zamo: I ...

She cleared her throat.

Sonto: "Amazing Grace How sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me

I once was lost but now am found

Was blind but now I see"

I sang not even giving her a chance nor looking at her.

Zamo: Sonto ...

She drops her plastic and kneeled next to me while crying. I could feel tears burning my own eyes but I kept singing.

Zamo: Sonto I'm sorry I'm sorry Sonto ...

She said crying holding on my feet since I was kneeling working on my flowers. I have waited for so long to hear her say those words. I turned to her and hugged her back.

Zamo: I am so sorry Sonto.

I hush her while holding her to my chest. She cried letting it all out. Finally she calm down.

Sonto: Zamo wh-

Zamo: I am pregnant Sonto.

I quickly let go of her she looked down.

Sonto: What? Are you crazy Zamo? How can you bring a kid knowing very well our situation?

She just cried. I took a deep sigh and hugged her. I didn't know what to do; I am not good with fighting and shouting I will leave that to Sizwe. He is the one who will deal with her.

Later that day Zamo was making fire so we would cook the last sweet potatoes we got from the garden while I was disposing water that I was using washing the dishes. Njabulo came from our small gate running.

Njabulo: Sonto! Sonto! Phuthuma uNonjabulo uphelelwe amandla akakwazi uhamba. (Sonto hurry up it Nonjabulo she has no energy; she can't walk)

I dropped down the dish splitting water in the process and hurried to him.

Sonto: What? Where is she?

He stopped running and bends over putting his hands on his knees and tried to normalise his breathing.

Njabulo: She can't walk ... please hurry ...I ...I left her by the ...by the big tree not far from school I couldn't carry her.

I waited no more we run towards their school which is really far from our house. I didn't even get that far; I got tired and had to stop running. We heard a car roaring behind us I didn't care even if it the truck with guards I will stop it for a lift. I stood beside the road when a green

beautiful car showed up speeding leaving dust behind. I waved my hand stopping it for a lift. It passes us then stopped and reversed. The windows rolled down revealing the person behind the steering wheel.

My heart literally stopped for a second I got tongue tied. I blinked and composed myself.

Sonto: Please help me; my sister is sick and laying somewhere in a tree where she could even be bitten by snakes.

It the man that once took my food at the supermarket. Njabulo has tears and sweat streaming down face.

Him: Get in where is she?

His deep cold voice said making me shiver a little. He opened a passenger sit from inside; we quickly got in Njabulo sat on my lap and we directed him towards the tree where Nonjabulo was laying helplessly.

Him: What happened? Is she sick?

Sonto: Yes her ... I ...

I took a deep breath and looked out the window I felt like there was a lamp right on my throat and I seem to fail to utter any words out.

Njabulo: She is hungry we left this morning without eating.

Him: Why didn't you eat?

Njabulo: There is no food; Sonto and Sizwe don't have money to buy us food.

It went dead quit in the car till we got there.

Njabulo: Over there she is over there.

I quickly wipe the tears that manage to escape. He hit the brakes and the car came to a stop Njabulo and I run out towards her when I saw her eyes closed I panicked.

Sonto: Nonjabulo!

I said shaking her she slowly opened her eyes.

Nonjabulo: So ... Sonto ngilambile. (I am hungry)

Those were her first words her voice so low; Tears find their way out of my eyes.

Sonto: Let go home baby I will make you something to eat.

Njabulo helped me lift her up; the man was just sitting in his car. We manage to get her on my back at least she



was under a shade the sun didn't burn her. I walked toward the car while Njabulo took their bags.

Sonto: Thank you so much for giving us a lift.

Him: Get in I will drop you off at your house.

He got out of his car and opened a passenger door for Njabulo then opened at the back for me and Nonjabulo. We got in and Nonjabulo laid her head on my lap I wipe my tears off then sigh. He got in and made a u turn.

Him: Don't you eat at school?

Njabulo: No we don't eat sometimes I clean my teacher's desk then she gives me food and I would share it with Nonjabulo.

Him: Where are your parents?

Njabulo: They both died the King killed them.

Sonto: Njabulo! That enough

This man is the King's son for crying out loud does he have a death wish. We directed him; the car went quite till we got home. The only time we talked is when directing him to our house.

He parked in our yard then went out to open the door for me; Zamo came out of the house and just stood there with her hands on her waist. I still got her problem of which I don't know what to do about it; how she can bring a kid in our situation it beat me. The man carried Nonjabulo out of his car and put her on my hands that were ready to carry her she's heavy no lie there.

Sonto: Thank you so much.

He just nod without saying anything then drove off maybe he was angry about what Njabulo said his father killing our parents.

I carried Nonjabulo inside the house then sent Njabulo to get us sugar from Zinhle's house. At least Zamo has put sweet potato on the pot they are already boiling.

Njabulo was fast to return. I made sugar water and help her drink a whole jug. I also made some for Njabulo then went to put more woods on the fire. Tears just gush out. I have come to realise everyone in this house depend on me. I wiped the tears and checked if the sweet potatoes aren't ready yet the roaring sound of the engine disturbs me and it wasn't the guard's engine it was him the Prince. I went outside same time as he parked on our yard for a second time today.

## BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

Her eyes glued on me I opened the door and walked towards her. I still can't get over how mesmerising their yard is so clean with flowers that are well taken care of.

Bukhosi: I can help you.

While driving toward the Palace I realised her situation can work on my favour.

Sonto: Sorry?

Bukhosi: I will buy your siblings grocery but you will have to pay me back.

Sonto: I ...

Bukhosi: I will find you a job at the city and you will come with me work there then pay me and get some money to buy food for your family.

Sonto: At the city? ...but we are not allowed to leave the village.

Bukhosi: Leave that to me make a list of the things you will need.

Sonto: I ... I don't even know you.

Bukhosi: Bukhosibemvelo Nkosi now you do.

Sonto: Nkosi?

Her eyes widen.

Sonto: ain't you from the Palace?

I made a disgust face.

Bukhosi: No I just do business with your King.

Sonto: Oh ...

She thought I was from the Palace what the fuck I don't even look like that frog. I just stare at her as she seems like she is in deep thought her eyes are red she has been crying and for some reason that sent a wrong signal so my cock as I felt it twitch at the thought of her crying.

Bukhosi: I will go to the Palace to finish the business I have with your King on my way back I will pass by the supermarket and buy everything your family will need while you are gone; So in the mean while pack and get yourself ready.

She is debating with herself she want to go but she is scared yet she knows this is one in a life time opportunity; it could work on her favour. Before she

could even move a guy showed up carrying a small plastic of what seems like potatoes. He walked up to us.

“Sonto is everything okay?”

He asked concern written all over his face. Umm so Spinach’s name is Sonto.

Sonto: I ... Sizwe.

She took a deep sigh.

Sonto: This is Mr Nkosi he has offered to help but I will have to leave with him. Mr Nkosi this is my brother Sizwe.

Sizwe: What?

Sonto: He will get me a job at the city.

Bukhosi: Er could you get the list I asked for I will leave you to explain everything to him. I don't have all day.

She blinked few times then took a very deep sigh while looking at her brother. I am assuming it the same brother that she thought my watch will look good on him. She took the plastic from him then walked inside her siblings the young boy and some girl were standing by the door looking at us.

Sizwe: You can't take Sonto man take me instead. I will work hard.

Bukhosi: Tough like tough guy I prefer your sister.

I could see anger on his face but he won't do anything. These people can't defend themselves because of fear their King installed on them. Spinach came out and gave me the list.



I drove off; when I arrived at the Palace the same process of being checked happened. The King was so disappointed at me who came he was expecting Mabandla. He gave me his sticking attitude but I wasn't in the mood for it. From his palace I drove to their stinking supermarket and bought everything on the list then drove back to her house. If I was to get there and she tells me she changed her mind I swear I would kidnap her. I drove in their yard the young boy ran to me.

Njabulo: You will bring her home again right?

He said the moment I stepped out of the car.

Bukhosi: Yes boy I will

I said smiling at him while brushing his head he reminds me of Quinton Mabandla's son.

Bukhosi: Come and help me with this.

He help me take out the grocery the girl who was sick also came.

Nonjabulo: You have a beautiful car; Njabulo said you are his friend; is it true?

“I didn’t say that Nonjabulo”

The boy said feeling embarrassed they look alike they might be twins.

Bukhosi: I thought you are my friend Njabulo.

Spinach and her sister came out to help carry the grocer inside.

Njabulo: I am your friend?

He asked with a big smile.

Bukhosi: Are you not my friend?

I also asked teasing him. He grinned.

Njabulo: I am your friend

He said happily.

Nonjabulo: Can I also be your friend?

Bukhosi: Yes you are my friend too.

Nonjabulo: Yess!

I have a very soft spot for kids. When I had taken everything out of the car I help them carry inside I walked in their little house. These kids are so clean; the

house might be old and ready to crumble any day but it clean so clean and spotless it may have old furniture but it is so clean that I wouldn't mind eating their food if they were to offer. I admire that about them they love themselves. The older brother wasn't around when we were done Spinach rushed at the back of the house and I went to wait in the car. Moment later she showed up her sister the one who look about her age hugged her while crying she also hugged Nonjabulo and Njabulo and kissed them. Njabulo took her plastic that has her clothes and came toward the car while Spinach was still talking with her sister. I bought them enough grocers to last them for a month or even over I even added on what she wrote on that list.

Njabulo: Where can I put this?

He has tears in his eyes and I felt bad just a little kids got to be my weakness. I got out and took the plastic from him put it in the back seat then turned to Njabulo.

Njabulo: When I bring your sister back month end I will bring you something.

He smiled.

Njabulo: ngempela? “For real”

Bukhosi: I promise.

I am not the kind of person who breaks promises so I will bring him something finally we left. Before you enter the village there is a gate you pass written PRIVATE PROPERTY NO ENTRY and there are guards who are always there making sure no one enter without permission so spinach had to hide so we would pass without guards giving us problems.

Fourteen

FOURTEEN

NOMASONTO NKOMO

The house is on fire people are standing in a circle watching. Suddenly a man came out of the on fire house running and screaming he run towards me I also started running away far from him in an open field. I run screaming and asking him to stop when I look back to check if he is still chasing me I slip and fell on the ground he came towards me I started screaming and kicking. He

holds my upper hand I screamed and kicked but was shaken violently.

“Hey wake up” I opened my eyes still kicking and screaming.

“It okay” I took in my surrounding as I opened my eyes I am in a car It already dark outside.

I took a very deep sign relieved I was just dreaming yet embarrassed my nightmares caught me in front of a man that has helped me.

Bukhosi: Are you okay?

I nod my head he hand me a bottle of water.

Bukhosi: Here drink this.

I drank half of the water.

Sonto: Thank you I am okay it was just a dream.

I said then looked out the window we outside a fancy store. It been a long drive I don't even know when I fall asleep.

Bukhosi: We at the garage I wanted to check if you want something to eat.

I shake my head no.

Sonto: No thank you.

He sigh and went out garage is fancy Very fancy. He came back shortly and gave me a paper bag written steers.



Bukhosi: Eat

I was about to thank the food when my stomach made that embarrassing hungry sound. He gave me a look then shakes his head and started driving. I opened the bag and started devouring something that tasted so heavenly. I couldn't help but mourn while eating it. After I was done I took a sip of the cold drink and then beep so loud embarrassing myself even more.

He just looked at me and chuckled.

He drove in complete silent and I just watched as cars moved around the city is beautiful very beautiful. I couldn't help but love the lights as he drove he is speeding making everything move fast and I just fell in love with a drive at nights. We finally turned to a quiet street surrounded by houses that had bright light. He

slow down and turned on some gate pressed a button then the gate opened. I was so amazed. He drove and packed his car after opening with the button again.

Him: Come

He took the paper bag and my plastic opened the door while looking around. There are so many beautiful cars. He walked leaving me behind not even checking if I was following I quickly followed him as he enters another door. What we walked in was out of this world talk about heaven on earth. I even felt like my presence will ruin this house. We entered what seems like a kitchen a very clean shiny kitchen. Even the floor is shining everything is spotless and shining. I hugged myself avoiding touching anything he threw the paper bag and carried on with walking entering another door where an old lady was sitting and reading.

Him: Betty

She looked up from her book.

Her: You finally home; I couldn't go to sle-

She stop when she realise he wasn't alone. This might be his mother why is he calling her by her name? I will never understand rich people.

Her: Oh hey there.

She said with a most beautiful smile I have ever seen.

Sonto: Hi

sans-serif; background-color: transparent; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; vertical-align: baseline; white-space: pre-wrap;">Sonto:  
Hi

I answered shyly

Him: Betty this is ...

He looked at me for my name I can't believe he doesn't know my name but then again I never told him.

Sonto: Nomasonto.

She stood up and came to give me a warmly hug.

Him: Please get her settled in one of the rooms she will be staying with us.

She smiled and held my hand while she took the plastic that has my clothes I couldn't help but look around.

Sonto: You have a beautiful house.

I said looking at Bukhosi and feeling embarrassed he saw our tiny house. Betty and I walked up the stairs. She showed me my room.

Her: Don't mind him he act like a robot same with his brother.

I smiled oh so he has a brother.

Her: This is going to be your room sweetheart.

The room was so big bigger than our tinny room back home. It had a very beautiful big bed that looked so comfortable. She put the plastic on the bed then walked towards another closed door. I smoothly run my hands on the bed as I made my way towards the window. What I saw there literally filled my heart a garden full of beautiful flowers with a well-trimmed grass something

familiar. I can't wait to explore it during the day. Their garden is so beautiful well taken care of; I should offer to do their garden as a way of thanking them.

Her: Come kid

I walked towards her.

Her: This is your closet.

It was more like a room; they are expecting me to put my clothes in another room. She walked away and opened another closed door.

Her: This is your bathroom.

She showed me how the bathroom is operated. How to use the bathing sink and toilet she filled the sink with bathing water for me then left me to bath. I was both scared and happy. I took off my clothes carefully folded them nicely and put them on a basket. The water was

very relaxing; I lay back and enjoyed bathing. I cleaned myself very nicely when I was done I drained the water the way Ma Betty showed me then I cleaned where I was bathing and wrapped a towel she gave me. I walked out my heart almost stop beating when I saw Bukhosi standing at the window looking out.

I cleared my throat.

He slowly turned and looked at me.

Sonto: I was bathing ...

I said nervously. He walked towards me with his hand on his pocket; he stood right in front of me. He has changed into a t shirt and pants his strong body so exposed and he is so handsome yet scary. I hold the towel really tight just so it won't fall and embarrass me. His tense eyes just stare at me.

Him: This is Durban there is nothing for mahhala.

I blinked my eyes and looked down. He is way taller than me.

Him: I have helped you even provided a place to stay and that doesn't come free dear.

I was just looking at his feet; I couldn't bring myself to look him in the eyes.

Sonto: I will p-

He laughed bitter. You know the laugh but not laugh.

Him: Yes you will pay me.

He used his hand to hold my chin and lifted my face up making me look at him. His hand is cold and sends shivers all over my body. He slowly caresses my cheek with the back of his hand then he bit his lower lip.



Him: Yes you will pay me. And if you refuse you would have to find your way back to the village.

He said before letting go of my face. My heart sink.

Him: Wake up early tomorrow you got the job.

I wanted to thank him but I couldn't find my voice. I just watched him as he went out and closing the door behind him.

I couldn't sleep I was still shaken by what Bukhosi said and I felt bad about the way I left. Me and Sizwe got into an argument he didn't want me to leave then I am worried about the kids I trust Slindile to look after them; before I left I sincerely asked her to cook and wash for them even Zamo agreed to help around and to look after the kids but you can never trust that one. I didn't even

tell Sizwe that she was expecting. Sizwe would kill her she begged me not to tell him I will only tell him when I am around so he won't do anything stupid. All these thoughts were running through my mind I had moved from the comfortable bed and went to sit by the window with a blanket. Fifteen

FIFTEEN

NOMASONTO NKOMO

There are no chickens to wake me up here but I manage to wake up last night I had moved from the floor to the

bed when I felt sleepy. I woke up and went to take a bath then wore my dress it old and worn out. I was so nervous I didn't even know what kind of job I would be doing. After making sure the room was spotlessly clean I made my way down stairs. There was no one; I walked towards the kitchen still no one since I am up let me be useful. I will make breakfast for everyone. I don't even know what I would make I don't even see their bucket of food; I started opening every cardboard checking what I can make. I smiled when I came across their small buckets that had maize meal.

I will make soft porridge. I checked the pot they were all spotless clean I tried operating the stove by switching it to on I waited till I could feel the heat then I started preparing the breakfast. While the porridge was getting ready I clean making sure I leave everything with no dust or any sort of dirt. Ma Betty walked in.

Betty: Nomasonto you up already?

Sonto: Yebo Ma I made breakfast hope you don't mind.

She smiled

Betty: Of course I don't mind sweetie what did you made  
I am also hungry.

Sonto: I made soft porridge should I dish up for you?

Betty: I haven't eaten soft porridge in a very long time  
please do.

She showed me how to use the electric cattle after  
sometime of struggle. I made warm water for her to  
wash her hands then I served her the porridge also  
dished up mine and sit next to her at their big dining  
table.

Betty: So Nomasonto where you from baby?

Sonto: I am from Gwinyikopi village; we are ruled by King Sengwayo.

Betty: The village umm are you here to study?

Sonto: No Ma I am here to work.

Betty: What? You are still young you should be going to study.

Sonto: I finished school now I have a family to take care of back home.

She sighs.

Betty: Okay sthandwa sami.

We ate while having small talks; she warned me about the city that it can ruin my life. Bukhosi walked in well dressed in a suit.

Betty: Let me go and freshen up morning son.

She stood up and walked away.

Bukhosi: Morning Betty.

Betty: Nomasonto made breakfast you should eat.

I stood up and took the dirty bowls to the sink.

Sonto: Morning

I couldn't even look him in the eyes as I walked towards the sink.

Sonto: Should I dish up for you?

He took a sit on the high chair.

Him: Yes.

I prepared warm water put them in a bowl and took a cloth to wipe his hands. I walked towards him.

Sonto: Please wash your hands.

He washed his hands while looking at me and then he grabs the cloth and wiped his hands. After he was done I served him his bowl of porridge. Then went to wash the dishes me and Ma Betty were using. She walked in.

Betty: Bukhosibemvelo I will need someone to take me to the orphanage.

Bukhosi: Okay I will call someone to take you.

Betty: Thank you son I have lot of boxes to take. Zee's fancy friends have donated a lot.

I cleaned the sink after I was done.

Betty: Baby please make me tea.

Sonto: Okay Ma.

She showed me where I would find everything for tea.

Sonto: Would you like tea Bukhosi?

Instead of answering me he gave a dead stare.

Betty: Never mind him he doesn't drink tea.



Sonto: Oh ...I ... I'm sorry.

Bukhosi: Betty on those donations can you find her something appropriate to wear.

I looked at my old dress feeling a little bit embarrassed. He addressed me as HER even after knowing my name.

Betty: Come with my tea baby I will find you something perfect for you.

I finished making her tea then followed her to her room; I still can't get over how beautiful this house is. We entered her room. She went to her closet and came back with a box; she put everything on top of the bed. Different clothes that looked so fancy and expensive.

Betty: Pick whatever you like.

She took her tea and stood back these clothes look so new to be donated. I went through them some were just something else had backless backs. I picked two summer dresses that have flowers.

Sonto: I like these

Betty: They are beautiful; I also think this will look good on me.

She said giving another dress; it looks like it would be too short and tight on me. She picked two more dresses.

Betty: Trust me you going to need them.

So far I have five new dresses. I smiled at her.

Sonto: Thank you Ma let me go change.

I rushed to my room excitedly. I changed to a yellow summer dress that was just around my knees then I took my head wrap and wrapped my head. I looked at my reflection and I couldn't believe this is me looking so beautiful and bright.

Sonto: Mama please look out for me wherever you are.

I said and took a deep sigh then made my way back down stairs. Bukhosi was already waiting for me.

Bukhosi: I don't like to be kept waiting let go.

Sonto: I'm sorry.

He walked to his garage and got in one of his car I also got in.

Sonto: You have a very beautiful garden would you mind if I help out there?

Bukhosi: I pay someone to do that.

Sonto: Oh ... you pay someone to do your garden?

Bukhosi: Yes

What that crazy why can't he do it.

Sonto: I can do it and you won't have to pay anyone it the least I could do after everything you have done for me.

sans-serif; background-color: transparent; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; vertical-align: baseline; white-space: pre-wrap;">Bukhosi:  
And how will you do that with work?

Sonto: I can do it both

He didn't say anything; he just kept on driving after a while.

Bukhosi: Okay.

Sonto: You have beautiful cars and house.

Bukhosi: You compliment a lot.

Sonto: Sorry.

I looked out the window as cars drove off and people walked around up and down. If I ever said the market was buzzing it clearly it was because I was never in a city. This place is so crowded so many cars and people moving up and down. I saw some people who were working on the street selling fruit and vegetable like I used too. He parked beside the road across a building written gateway mall.

Bukhosi: Come

Sonto: What kind of job will I be doing?

Bukhosi: Just come and shut up.

I got off and followed him he walked inside the building and there were shops fancy shops I couldn't help but look around. This place is amazing. He stopped outside a shop that had a closed sign on the door then knocked moment later a very beautiful lady opened.

“Hey Bukhosi” They hugged and she opened the door wide then closed once we were inside.

Bukhosi: Zee

“You must be Spinach”

She said smiling.

Sonto: I am Nomasonto.

“Oh yes love I am sorry I am Zethembiso you can call me Zee”

She brief hugged me.

Sonto: Nice meeting you sis you can call me Sonto.

Bukhosi: Zee please don't tell your stupid husband I went to the office.

Zee: I will never lie to my husband

Bukhosi: Oh come on just tell him I am working from home I am not ready to see his stupid ass.

Zee laughed.

Zee: I will think about it.

He groaned then turns to me.

Bukhosi: This is where you will be working. I will see you later.

Sonto: Thank you so much.



He nod then opened the door to leave.

Zee: Hey no goodbye no nothing; Seriously Bukhosi.

Bukhosi: Leave me alone Zee!

Zee: You still need me to lie for you.

Bukhosi: Bye Zee have a great day. Take care of my girl.

He then walked away I took my eyes off him and looked around the store it a store that sell traditional clothing and accessories. So amazing everything about the city is extraordinary.

Zee: Yoo Girl that man that man will be the death of you.

She started cleaning and wiping dust.

Sonto: What do you mean?

Zee: Here wipe the dust; make sure the store is always clean. Your duties will be; cleaning the store every morning making sure it clean stock up and assist customers. You will be working with someone; she will be working behind the counter while you work at the floor.

She checks her wrist watch.

Zee: She's late; God this girl is testing me. Look Spi- Sonto we open at 9hh every day and we close at 6hh so you must arrive here at 8hh do not be late. Trust me the girl that is coming her days are numbered she is always late.

She showed me where I would find cleaning kit stock that need to be put on shelves and she made me count the stock on display and write everything down on a book; and that is called bookkeeping even stock that is sold it recoded there. The girl showed up just when the clock clicks 9hh.

“I am so sorry Zee it the transport”

Zee: Mbali we are not having this conversation again your days are numbered. This is Spinach she will be working on the floor while you are behind the counter.

Sonto: I am Sonto.

Zee: eish I am so sorry it Sonto.

Sonto: It okay

I wonder who Spinach she keeps mistaking me with is.

Zee is not always around the shop so it would be me and Mbali who seems like a nice lady. We finally opened and the store started buzzing with people coming in and out.

I was enjoying interacting with some of them they were sweet and nice. They would even ask my opinion on some other things before they make a purchase. During lunch time Zee took me to some shop that sells food and bought me lunch. We sit there and ate.

Zee: So how it like living with Bukhosi?

Sonto: He ... He is a little bit scary doesn't even talk that much.

She laughed.

Zee: You just have to get used to him he is just like that.

Sonto: Yoo he scares me sometimes.

She took a sigh then wiped her mouth.

Zee: Look Sonto you look like a nice strong lady. I won't tell you anything about Bukhosi if he wants you to know more about him he will tell you but I will tell you this one thing; Him and my husband his brother were in a military.

Sonto: Military?

Zee: Yes they were solders and that messed them it ruined their lives traumatised them so you must be a little bit patient with him. Do not let him treat you like trash though even if he doesn't talk talk to him.

I smiled Zee is kind I appreciate what she just told me even though it not much at least it made me understand him just a little bit.

Sonto: Thank you sis I appreciate what you just told me.

Zee: Girl you should come to our house on Saturday we having a braai.

Sonto: I ...

Zee: Don't worry I will tell Bukhosi to bring you.

Sonto: Thank you sis.

We ate then went back to the store.

I was going to get paid every month end then I would go home to my siblings I already wish it was month end.

Sixteen

SIXTEEN

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

My office door open with no knock and there is only one stupid person who could do that.

Bukhosi: You got to be fucking kidding me Mabandla you are like a dog chasing a bone.

He slammed my door and came to sit down with a smirk on his face.

Mabandla: I knew you liked her.

Bukhosi: Who?

Mabandla: Don't act stupid you know who I am talking about; Spinach.

He laughed.

Mabandla: You even went as far as starting a war with Sengwayo for her.

Bukhosi: Who said I did it for her?

Mabandla: We both know the truth man that King gonna slaughter dragons the moment he heard you took one of his people.

Bukhosi: She doesn't belong to any one and I am ready for that piece of shit.



Mabandla: Spinach the village girl definitely bewitched you.

Bukhosi: Her name is Nomasonto

Mabandla: She does have a name after all but man Spinach suits her better.

Bukhosi: You are such a pain I asked your wife not to tell you I was here.

He laughed.

Mabandla: We both know she was going to tell me now I am going by the shop to pick Zee and to see Spinach.

Bukhosi: Oh fucking shit.

Mabandla: I can't wait to meet her.

Bukhosi: Can you leave already?

Mabandla: Is she pretty?

Bukhosi: Man she's the whole package She made me breakfast.

Mabandla: I knew it I knew it.

Bukhosi: Soft porridge.

We both laughed.

Bukhosi: I think I am going to enjoy having her around.

Mabandla: Ai this is bigger than I thought at least you will be fucking.

I threw a pen on him and he ducked.

Bukhosi: get out of here.

We talk for a while about business then he left.

NOMASONTO NKOMO

The day was going by a little bit quickly I was enjoying working here. I just stood there and waited for customers to ask for my help it was quiet easy. I was lost in my own fantasy world when some guy in a uniform written security walked in and started chatting with Mbali and Zee.

“The boss lady is around today”

Zee: Oh well I just came to check how things are.

Mbali: She came to check on me

“And you were late”

Mbali: and I don't see that being any of your business.

“The day Zee fire you I will rejoice”

Mbali showed him middle figure.

“Zee I need your help”

Zee: If it has to do with Zuzu hell no

“Come on I love that girl”

Mbali: You are not her type

They kept on talking and laughing. I did what I am hired to do which was assisting customers. A guy buff fit and

strong as Bukhosi walked in he looked around and the moment his eyes landed on the security guy who was laughing with his hand on Zee's shoulder his face turned stormy he walked towards them.

"Should I cut it off or you would take your foot off my wife" the security guy took his hand off her so quickly.

"So ...so ...

"Out" He runs out without even looking back. Gosh Bukhosi's brother is scary just like him if I was the security guy I was sure gonna wet myself.

Zee: That wasn't necessary.

Him: Are you going to give me a kiss or I should just take it.

Zee: Are you going to kindly ask for it or are you going to demand it.

He smiled.

Him: Can I please kiss you pretty please.

She laughed and kissed him they looked so cute together. He whispers something on her then they both laughed. At least he seems less grumpy unlike Bukhosi who is always grumpy. Zee turned to me and caught me staring.

Zee: Sonto come over here

I walked towards them. The guy was already smiling.

Him: Hi I am NtandoSeventeen

## SEVENTEEN

### NOMASONTO NKOMO

I closed my eyes as he grab my ass again I used both my hands to push him off me but he just took them and pinned them on the wall then he started kissing me from my mouth all the way to my neck I could feel his hard member down there poking me on my stomach tears just made their way out God please let it not be like this. When he brought his head up from my neck he found me with tears he quickly let go of me and I just slide down till I was sitting butt flat on the floor; he started pacing up and down then he punch the wall making me flinch.

Him: Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

He paced up and down again then stormed into his bathroom leaving traces of blood his fist must be bleeding. I slowly stood up and walked out I am little bit shaken no lie. I walked in my room and lie on top of the bed then let all the tears out. I am crying because I don't know what I got myself into I am crying because I miss my siblings so much I am crying because I am home sick; I am actually crying for a lot of things.

Her eyes turned all white yet she was smiling my hands that were holding her head started shaking. She smiled then her face changed into my mother's bruised face her cracked lip dislocated jaws and nose. I quickly let go of her head it hit the floor and blood started gushing out.

Sonto: No! No!

I backed away with tears streaming down my face she stood up; she's wearing the same dress she left wearing that day but it torn and blood is all over her head and face. She looks scary wrong turn scary she extend her hand for me to take.



I shake my head no.

Sonto: No

She came near me while I backed away.

Sonto: Mom no!

She just came closer slowly.

Sonto: Stop!

Her: Sonto it me come to mommy

Sonto: I said stop!

I backed away till my back hit the wall she came so close.

Sonto: No please no stop please stops.

I cried my lungs out and shout for her to stop.

I opened my eyes with my heart beating so fast sweat all over me; I must have fallen asleep after the whole thing with Bukhosi then I over slept that why my worst nightmare got into me. I jumped a little when I realised I am in bed under covers. I know very well I came here and just threw myself on top of the bed I never got under the covers what is more strange is the fact that I am a light sleeper one touch I am up. How did he manage to get me under the covers without me knowing?

I took a deep sigh then went down stairs had a glass of water. I know I wouldn't be able to sleep even if I were to go back to bed I ate some fruit and a cake I found in the fridge I just hope they won't mind. Instead of going back to bed I went to work on the garden there is a small nice built cottage that had all the garden material. I took what I needed then worked at the garden. By the time the sun

came up I was done I took everything back to the cottage then went inside found Ma Betty on the stove cooking.

Betty: Nomasonto where you coming from with all that dirty?

I smiled.

Sonto: I was working at the garden.

Betty: You are such an early bird go freshen up and come eat your breakfast.

Sonto: Okay Ma

On my way up the stairs I bumped into Bukhosi he was wearing sweat pants and a vest and he was sweating he looked like someone who has been running strange because he has been inside the house.

Sonto: H ... Hi

sans-serif; background-color: transparent; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; vertical-align: baseline; white-space: pre-wrap;">Bukhosi: I have someone who will drive you to work and he will also pick you up every day.

Sonto: Oh ...thank you.

He then walked away I also walked to my room freshen up and wore one of the dresses Ma Betty gave me then went to have my fancy breakfast.

Ever since that day Bukhosi has been ignoring me I have a driver who take me to work and fetch me I hardly see him it like he doesn't even live in this house. Things have been going well so far I am enjoying my job due to Mbali always being late I am the one who hold the store key. Speaking of Mbali she's nice and all but a bit lazy instead of working she's always on her phone. She likes expensive things she likes making herself look beautiful. She has braided hair long nails and a very heavy makeup of which she said she never go anywhere without I doubt I will be able to live that kind of life.

My life revolves around me waking up early every day; work on the flowers then go to work after work I would water the flowers then help Ma Betty with cooking she has taught me a lot regarding cooking fancy food operating electronics appliances. I even own a cooking book all thanks to her.

Today it finally Saturday Zee has invited me to the braai. I wasn't working on Saturday so I just woke up early and did the usual then went to make a fancy breakfast. Ma Betty had asked me to bring her breakfast in bed because she wasn't feeling well. I found Bukhosi sitting on a high chair.

He looked at me as I walked in I took a deep breath.

Sonto: Morning should i make you breakfast?

Bukhosi: Yes

I made him breakfast and served him after he had washed his hands. I took my breakfast and walked out.

Bukhosi: Sit down.

I stopped on my tracks and slowly turned.

Bukhosi: Sit

I walked back and took a sit opposite him. We both ate in silence. I could no longer take the silence so I break the ice.

Sonto: Will I be going with you to Zee's house.

Bukhosi: She said I should bring you.

I put the fork down no scratch that I threw the fork making unnecessary noise at the process. He looked at me while chewing looking unfazed by my actions.

Sonto: I had it enough you treat me like an object and you don't talk to me even when I ask you a question you just answer with one word showing no interest at all. The other day you attacked me for no reason at all and you haven't even apologised. I know I am living under your roof but please treat me like a human being and not some object bought to decorate your house.

Bukhosi: Umm that was a mouthful

I looked at him unbelievable after everything I just said is that all he's going to say.

Sonto: Is that all you going say I live with you for heaven sake yet I don't know anything about you and you are just ... you are just ... you are just so cold and you walk around looking scary like a wild animal ready to devour me anytime can you just please be less scary and ...and ...and less cold for once be a human for once I can't even relax in this house I flinch every time I see you and my skin just crawl you making me live like a prey.

He took a sip of his juice and continues eating as if I didn't say anything.

Bukhosi: Why did you left the village?

Sonto: Excuse me?



Bukhosi: Should I repeat myself?

I rolled my eyes and sigh.

Sonto: I left because you promised to get me a job so I would feed my family.

Bukhosi: I did get you the job right?

Sonto: Yes

Bukhosi: Then fucking do what you came here to do you didn't come here to get to know me to be all buddy with me. I am not your friend and I will never be your friend so stick your nose where it belongs and stop fucking irritating me.

I was left tongue tied.Eighteen

## EIGHTEEN

### NOMASONTO NKOMO

Earlier on I had left the kitchen with a tail between my legs; he did tell me a mouthful. He put me on my place. I have just finished getting ready for the braai at Zee's house. I'm wearing the tight short dress Ma Betty gave me the other day. It not that short just above my knees I have combed my afro hair nicely. I looked pretty. I checked my reflection one more time before I hand out of the room. I so not want to give Bukhosi more reasons to tell me where to get off. He wasn't there so instead of waiting on him I quickly went to check on Ma Betty.

I knock once and she told me to come in.

Sonto: Ma how you feeling now.

She was just laying on her bed she smile at me.

Betty: I am good sweetheart go enjoy yourself.

Sonto: Will you need anything before we leave.

Betty: If I need something. I will go get it now go he is not a patient man.

Sonto: You can say that again.

I hugged her.

Sonto: I will see you when we come back.

She kissed my cheek then I walked out.

I waited for Bukhosi till he showed up in his casual clothes.

Bukhosi: You ready?

Sonto: Yes

Bukhosi: Cool let go.

He led the way to the garage with him there are no ladies first. He drove off and we were both quite. I just stared outside the window and watched as cars and people passed by.

Bukhosi: What happened to your parents? Why were they killed?

He asked out of the blue. Oh so now he wants us to play all buddy.

Sonto: If I tell you will you tell me why you call your mother by her name?

If he wants to know something about me I also should know something about him.

Bukhosi: I don't have a mother.

Sonto: Isn't Ma Betty your mother?

Bukhosi: No she's just a house keeper.

Sonto: Oh ...

See there is a lot I don't know about him I am living with a stranger in a strange city. How stupid am I

Bukhosi: Now that you know will you answer me.

Sonto: My mother use to work at the palace as the servant she fell in love with one of the guards who was married. When mama got pregnant with me the king found out and kicked mama out then killed the guard so I never met my dad.

I said then shrugged.

Sonto: Then mama went to work at the farm after the twins turned six I honestly don't know what happened there but they beat her to death her bruised face still haunt me even now.

I wasn't even looking at him I was just staring outside the window I felt tears burning my eyes but I blinked them away.

Bukhosi: Is that why you are having nightmares.

I snap my head so quickly and looked at him.

Sonto: I thought you didn't want to talk to me.

I don't get this guy not so long ago he told me to do what I came here to do but now he is busy asking questions.

Bukhosi: I never said I don't want to talk to you

Sonto: It sure did sound like it.

Bukhosi: Will you answer me or I would have to dig it out of you.

Sonto: If I answer you will you also answer my question?

Bukhosi: You can ask only one question.

Sonto: I have gone through some really traumatising things in my life but yes she is also the reason.

Bukhosi: What kind of traumatising things?

Sonto: No It my turn to ask where are your parents.

Him: Dead

I flinch at the use of the name couldn't he use more appropriate words like passed on/ away.

Sonto: I am sorry what happened.

Bukhosi: My mother died giving birth to me and my father died shortly after I was born.

Sonto: Oh my God I am so sorry.



Bukhosi: Which traumatising things you have been through.

Sonto: Just things that are happening at the village.

Bukhosi: Umm

He said then the silence was back I just told myself I would never speak unless spoken too. He drove in silence till we arrived at this huge house by just looking at it outside I have no doubt it more beautiful inside. He didn't even knock he just waked in after parking.

There is a noise of laughter coming from the other room. He walked towards there with me following him around like his puppet. A kid with a sling around his arm came running towards him.

We got in the room and it went dead quite Zee was sitting with other three ladies who were so beautiful. He turned to me.

Bukhosi: I am going at the back; will you be fine here with Zee?

Why is he suddenly being almost nice? I nod my head yes. He rubs my arm gentle with his hand and kissed me on the forehead then walked away without even greeting. I was still too shocked to move was he just nice right now or what?

Zee: Girl are you going to just stand there?

She brought me back to the world of the living this is a kitchen and they are all sitting on high chairs while drinking whatever it is on their glasses and they are looking at me with tense stares.

Zee: Come and sit next to me.

One of the ladies smiles at me the other two just stare at me as if I just grew horns. I went to sit next to Zee while smiling.

Zee: Guys this is Nomasonto and Noma these are my friends; Zuzu Lihle and Amanda.

Zuzu: He did not

Lihle: What the fuck is this?

Lihle: What the fuck is this?

Zuzu: Did he have to stand that low I mean like look at her.

Lihle: I need more wine.

She stood up and went to the fridge and came with bottle of her wine. I was confused really confused.

Zee: Girls play nice

Lihle: What the fuck Zee you should've warned us. I do not mind sharing a dick with Zuzu but sharing a dick with her hell to the no; she's downgrading me.

Zuzu: Bukhosi is totally losing it.

They poured each other full glasses and gulp them down.

Amanda: Don't mind them they are stupid.

Finally the Amanda chick who has been quite spoke.

Zuzu: Amanda buzz off and you where did Bukhosi pick you? Which dump site did he pick you?

She asked looking at me.

Sonto: Pardon.

Lihle: Eh she can't even hear I bet he picked her up from some village I mean like she fucking smell like a village girl.

Zuzu: Yea definitely she smells like goat.

Lihle Euw and pigs

Zuzu: and cows euw she actually stinks.

Zee: That enough.

Amanda: Guys come on.

Zuzu: What did he see in her I mean like look at me! And look at Lihle we are A class babes and look at her looking like she has been strike by lightning.

Lihle: Oh.m.g Zuzu that my dress I donated it to Betty she was supposed to give it to the orphanage did Betty give you that dress?

I looked at the dress and really felt disgust. I didn't even know what to do nor say I have never been this insulted. I am not the type to fight I mean I can't even argue with Zamo back home; how would I do it with strangers.

Lihle: oh gosh it my dress.

She laughed Zuzu joined her. They laughed so hard.

Lihle: She even wore second hand.

I just sit there and took in all their insult; Zee couldn't even look me in the eyes. I felt like she let her friends insult me.

Zuzu: and worse she looks like a hippo in it.

This is it I can't take this anymore. I stood up and walk towards where Bukhosi was and they were at the back braying I wanted him to take me back.

Zee: Sonto!

She called after me but I just ignored her and walked tears were already making their way out. Before opening the door I wiped my tears off made sure they are dry like I was never crying then I opened the door there he was laughing and playing with his brother and kids. They haven't seen me as they run around; his brother is the one at the braai stand while Bukhosi was playing with two boys. For the first time I have known him he is smiling and laughing and I just fell in love I even forgot I was supposed to tell him to take me back. I have never seen this carefree side of him he looked so relaxed and not scary at all I couldn't help but admire him.

Suddenly the door opened behind me and Zee and her friends' showed up Zee and Amanda are carrying bowls of salad while Zuzu have a glass and a bottle on her hands then Lihle only hand a glass.

Lihle: Why you standing here like a statue.

Amanda: Can you leave her alone already. Come this way.

Zee was still avoiding eye contact with me; she should after all the shit her friends said to me. I followed after them to an already set big dining table that was at the back. The guys has notice us so they came towards us with the meat.

Zee: Melinda! Melinda!

A lady in an apron showed up.

Zee: Take the kids to their play room.



“But Mo-

Zee: Junior we talked about this.

Junior: That was before Daddy Nkosi arrived.

Ntando: Junior listen to your mother.

He groaned and mumbled something while taking the other boy with him. They remind me of my own siblings. They kept talking and laughing around the table while my mind was just far away. I would rather be home starving than being here with this food and these people.

Zuzu: Hello! I am talking to you

She said clicking her fingers that had long nails on my face.

Lihle: I did say she can't hear her network don't have service.

She said then both her and Zuzu laughed.

Zuzu: Maybe she's using cell c

Lihle: It probably 8.ta

They laughed so hard I was just looking down playing with my hands and I told myself I will not cry I have done that already. I will cry when I get home when no one can see me. Bukhosi slammed his hand on the table making everyone to be jumpy.

Bukhosi: Zee gets your fucking stupid friends in order before I smash their empty heads on this wall right now.

Zee: Don't you dare me don't you dare Bukhosibemvelo did I ask you to fuck Zuzu and Lihle? Was I there when you were fucking them? And now you are also bringing

Spinach to the circle this is your mess now clean it up if you want to smash their heads against the wall; do it and see if I care.

She threw a savviest on the table then stood up and left.

Lihle: You just downgraded us by fucking her Spinach.

Ntando: Oh boy.

I was never ready for the slap Bukhosi gave Lihle; she fell on the floor with a chair hitting her head in the process. We all went quiet and Ntando just sit there and sip on whatever he was drinking. Bukhosi pushed back the chair and stood up then walk out. I didn't even know if I should follow him or if I should just wait till he is calm. Amanda went to help Lihle up.

Amanda: Lihle! Lihle! Guys! Guys! She's not moving

Oh no!

Amanda: Ntando she's not moving!Nineteen

NINETEEN

NOMASONTO NKOMO

The drama that was at Zee's house yesterday was on another level I was so scared when Lihle didn't wake up thinking she is dead only to find out she had fainted. They poured her with cold water and she woke up. I was still shaken up by what happened there the slap that Bukhosi gave Lihle made me realise he is the last person

on earth I should never mess with. Today it a Sunday and Ma Betty said she is taking me to her church God knows I didn't want to wear any of the dresses she gave me but I had no choice. I didn't want to wear my old worn out dresses and embarrass her. I finished getting ready then went down stairs where I found Bukhosi gulping down a glass of water.

Bukhosi: You going somewhere.

Sonto: I'm going to church with Ma Betty.

Bukhosi: Ok

He was about to turn and leave when Ma Betty showed up.

Betty: Bukhosi you going somewhere.

Bukhosi: Yes at NV

Betty: Oh please drop us off at the church.

He thought for a while before answering.

Bukhosi: Okay I will drop you off; her driver will pick you up.

By HER he means me sometimes he act like he doesn't even know my name. Indeed he dropped us off at church then speed off. Ma Betty started introducing me to lot of old people as her daughter and my heart just got filled with love I found a mother in her. Finally the service started it was so uplifting and fulfilling. The pastor said:

“God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power love and sound of mind” I felt that I felt it. I have been living in fear all my life the King has this fear installed in me then there is Bukhosibemvelo. That pastor went on and said;

fear not our tendency is to be afraid. That's God has to remind us so many times to reject fear and keep our eyes on Jesus.

I kept repeating these words on my mind: I should fear not he the lord will always be there for me.

I was so grateful to Ma Betty for taking me to church. We got home and started with cooking but she had to rush to the orphanage after receiving a call about one of the kids went missing I pray they found him.

I continue with cooking while singing.

Sonto: "Ungithatha down ngingelutho

Wangibeka high wangenza umuntu'

Qhubeka Nkosi ungiphumelelise.”

I could feel his presence behind me; I slowly turned and found him leaning on a door frame.

Bukhosi: It smells good in here.

I smiled genuine.

Sonto: I am almost done.

Bukhosi: Umm

He came closer and I went back to checking my pot. All of the suddenly I felt his hand on my waist I jump up.

Bukhosi: Relax I won't hurt you.

He whispers on my ear hitting me with his hot breath.



Bukhosi: It payback time babe.

Then he started kissing me on the neck I gasp for a bit air; my breathing pattern changed. He made me turn and kissed my forehead then my nose and my mouth. I was nervous but yet it felt good so good to a point where I didn't want him to stop. But the knock on the door thought otherwise.

He groaned.

Bukhosi: Fucking wrong timing.

He let go of me.

Bukhosi: Come.

I took a very deep breath and tried to compose myself before following after him It Zee and her husband.

Ntando: Sonto hey good to see you again.

I smiled at him and ignored his wife just like she is ignoring me.

Sonto: It good to see you too Bhuti would you guys like something to drink.

Bukhosi has no manners; they were still standing by the door.

Bukhosi: No they are leaving.

Ntando gave him a look.

Ntando: Actually we here because my wife have something to say.

I turned to her.

Sonto: Oh ...

She cleared her throat.

Zee: About yesterday I let Zuzu and Lihle go too far so here I am; I'm sorry.

I didn't feel her apology it wasn't sincere at all. She then turned to Bukhosi who had a murderous look on his face.

Zee: I am so sorry Bukhosi about the way I spoke to you it was uncalled for and I know if I was someone else you would've done worse than what you did to Lihle.

She said more to herself.

Zee: I am really sorry I was out of line.

Now that the apology that a sincere apology.

Sonto: okay

Bukhosi just nod his head.

Bukhosi: If that would be all we are busy.

Zee: Of course

She flips her hair dramatically and opened the door to leave.

Zee: Oh Sonto new stock is arriving on Tuesday so make sure you are early.

I nod my head it not like I ever be late.

Sonto: Let me walk you out.

I said and followed her then closed the door behind me.

Sonto: Zee you keep calling me Spinach and I want to know why?

I have been meaning to ask there is no way that was a coincidence. There is a story behind that name.

Zee: Girl go ask Bukhosi not me.

Then she walked away she's giving me attitude and I don't know why. City people are full of drama I miss Zinhle. She's a simple for keeps friend.

I sigh and went inside.

Ntando bid his goodbye then left.

I turned to make my way back to the kitchen but he held my arm and I crushed to his hard body he wrapped his arm around my shoulders bringing me closer to him. And all I wanted to do was to wrap my hands around him.

Sonto: A lot has been happening in my life I feel like I need a breath of fresh air. I just need a hug I want someone to hold me tight and tell me everything is going to be alright I need someone to take this heavy weight on my shoulder even if it just for a second I want to live in the moment I don't want to worry about my family or about anything just for once in my life. I want to be Sonto I want to think about what Sonto want what Sonto need

Twenty

TWENTY

## NOMASONTO NKOMO

I doubt I have ever been this happy in my whole entire life even when my mom was still alive I was never this happy. I feel good I smile a genuine smile. It a Wednesday and stock did arrive like Zee said it would. Bukhosi is less grumpy and cold towards me. He is the one who drove me to work yesterday then fetched me after work during lunch time yesterday he came by and took me to have lunch with him; I ended up not eating my lunch box. I was busy smiling and chatting with the client when Zee walked in; wearing high heels with a beautiful dress her hair so long. She walked towards Mbali talked to her then went at the storeroom. The customer made the purchase then left some didn't need help. Zee came out.

Zee: Sonto

Sonto: Yes

Zee: Did you count the stock?

Sonto: Yes I did I wrote everything down on the bookkeeping.

Zee: Thank you.

She walked towards the counter and got the book then started going through it.

Zee: So how it going guys?

Mbali: Ah you know the usual.

Zee: Sonto? Are you getting used to everything.

Sonto: Yes I am.



Zee: That good you good with bookkeeping. You might as well learn how to use the counter machine since Mbali seems to be always at fault.

Mbali: Hau sis Zee

Zee: Mbali please I don't know how many time I should warn you about your lateness. I have run out of patience this is not a circus.

Mbali: I will do better I promise.

Zee: Once Sonto learn how to operate the machine you will work on weekends only.

She sighs.

Mbali: better than nothing thank you so much at least I will be able to focus on my studies.

Zee: Just know if you blow it off I will have to fire you.

Mbali nod and thank her one more time.

Zee turned to me.

Zee: Can we grab a lunch?

Sonto: No thanks I am not hungry.

In actually fact I am hungry and impatiently waiting for my lunch time so I would devour my lunch box.

Zee: Oh ...I ...can we at least go have ice cream

“That won’t be necessary”

Bukhosi said walking in with his hands on his pocket looking like goodness in his formal work suits.

Zee: Bukhosi

Bukhosi: Zethembiso.

He turned to me.

Bukhosi: Have you eaten?

Sonto: No I am actually so hungry I could eat a whole cow.

He chuckled. I looked at Zee while smiling.

Bukhosi: I will be taking her for some time.

He said also looking at Zee.

Zee: Er ... it cool.

Bukhosi: My lady.

He made me hook my arm on his then we walked out with them staring at us and me smiling like I won a jackpot.

We went to have our lunch he did the ordering.

Bukhosi: Did you bring your ID

Sonto: I don't have an ID my mom had it but she couldn't do IDs for us due to our situation at the village.

Bukhosi: So you don't own an ID.

I shook my head no.

Bukhosi: Birth certificate.

Again I shook my head no.

Bukhosi: Damn then I will have to give you money in cash.

Sonto: Money for what?

Bukhosi: Money to spoil you we will sort this thing of you not owning an ID later.

Sonto: Oh

“Bhuti Bukhosi”

A girl said coming towards us she threw herself at him for a hug.

“Mom here is Bhuti Bukhosi”

A woman showed up.

He turned stormy same time like he was ready to murder someone.

“Bukhosibemvelo”

He just looked at the woman till she turned her attention to me.

Her: Hi I am Nothando Bukhosibemvelo’s mother.

I swear I thought my ears were deceiving me I slowly turned to him and he just stares at me. Didn’t he say his mother died giving birth to him is this a ghost?

Bukhosi: She’s not my mother.

He hissed still staring at me with his jaws clench.

“Are you coming to the weeding Bhuti?”

The girl asked. I was still too shocked to say anything. Even his mother must be thinking I am rude for not returning her greeting right away.

Sonto: Hi Ma I am Sonto.

She smiled.

Her: Nice to meet you Sonto.

Bukhosi pushed the chair back he is mad. Veins on his forehead are popping and his jaws are too clenched and just like that he was back to being the scary Bukhosibemvelo. He stormed out of the restaurant.

Sonto: I ... I'm sorry

Sponsored

sans-serif; background-color: transparent; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; vertical-align: baseline; white-space: pre-wrap;">Sonto: I ... I'm sorry I have to go.

I stood up and rushed after him. He was walking so fast.

Sonto: Bukhosi! Bukhosi!

I called out while running after him people at the mall looked at me. I managed to get to him and held his arm.



Sonto: Hold up.

He yanks his arm from my grip and looked at me with those scary penetrating stares then pointed his finger on me.

Bukhosi: Fucking leave me alone you fucking leave me alone.

He was freaking me out; I am so scared of him when he is looking like this.

Sonto: Can you ... can you please calm down.

He clenches and unclenches his fist.

Bukhosi: Go to your fucking job and fucking leave me alone!

He said grabbing my shoulders and shaking me violent.  
His grip so painful on me

Sonto: Okay ok I will leave you alone.

I said with my hands raised and tears coming out his stormy face made me almost shit myself. He let go of me and walked away people have gathered around enjoying the free show. I furiously wiped of my tears. A huge part of me wanted to go after him but another part of me was so scared what if he is still mad and what if he hurt me. God he looks so scary when mad. I walked towards the shop I won't go after him I still value my life maybe he just need to calm down I will see him later.

The day seems to drag; I couldn't even focus on what I was doing. I was worried about him and I just wished I knew if he was okay. Finally the day ended. I waited and waited for him to show up but he never did. Lucky Zee

was still around so she called him but it went straight to voicemail.

Zee: I don't mind dropping you off Securities would be throwing us out soon.

I took a deep breath.

Sonto: Thank you Zee.

She just taps my shoulder then we walked out locked and walked to the parking. She drove in silence.

Zee: What happened Sonto?

She finally asked. I know she has been dying to know I shrugged.

Sonto: It nothing.

And she knew I just don't want to talk about it she dropped me off at Bukhosi's house. I thanked her then walked in.

The house seems to be empty I climbed the stairs two at a time then walked towards his study where he usually lock himself in I knock once then let myself in and found him sitting there drinking.

Sonto: You didn't fetch me

Bukhosi: You are here aren't you?

Sonto: If it wasn't for Zee what was going to happen to me

Bukhosi: Then don't you think it time you learn how to get yourself to and from work without me driving you; there are public taxis you know.

My mouth was left half opened.

Sonto: You at it again you are back to being cold.

Bukhosi: Heat me up then close the door on your way out.

Sonto: Bukhosi what going on.

Bukhosi: I said fucking leave!

He threw the glass at me but I ducked and it hit the door. He didn't need to say no more I run out.

I was busy pacing up and down I didn't know what to do with this man no actually what I witness there it not a man it a monster and it a big scary monster.

He has his own skeletons problems that seem to be bigger than even me.

What the story with his mother? Why would he lie about her being dead when she is still alive? And worse whatever the story is it big for it to turn him into a monster in a blink of an eye. I have questions questions only one person can answer but yet I can't ask him.

I am too young for death. This man would skin me alive.

Maybe Ma Betty know something yes Ma Betty have to know something. She has been staying with him for years she must know something.

I quickly run out while calling out for her.

Sonto: Ma Betty! Ma Betty!

Betty: I am here sweetie

The sound of her voice came from the kitchen I run there.

Betty: Sonto are you okay? Why are you running? Calm down baby sit here.

She held my hand and made me sit down I breath in and out.

Sonto: Ma what going on with Bukhosi? What is the story between him and his mother?

She sighs.

Betty: I wish I knew. I am as clueless as you are baby.

Sonto: It must be huge.

Betty: It is he hate her so much. He hates her gut.

Oh my God I really wonder.

And now I am even more curious what did she do to him  
for him to hate her this much. Twenty one

TWENTY ONE

NOMASONTO NKOMO



Just like that things were back to square one Bukhosi wasn't talking to me the driver was back to taking me to and from work. With this man it a one step forward then twenty steps backwards. Honestly speaking I don't even know what to do. Other than that things have been really good at work Mbali is teaching me how to operate the machine it pretty much easy. I woke up early as usual and went to work at the garden then came back had my breakfast and packed my lunchbox. I run up the stairs to get ready to leave. When I got into my room on top of the bed there was money lot of money. I counted it and it 2k note.

Why is he giving me this money I took it and went to his room knocked with no answer I went to his study and knock there.

Bukhosi: Come in.

His deep voice said.

I took a deep breath then walked in.

Sonto: Morning.

He was busy on his computer not even minding me.

Bukhosi: Yes

Sonto: I found this on top of the bed.

Bukhosi: Okay

I sigh. He's back to being arrogant again.

Sonto: What is it for?

Bukhosi: For you go buy anything you like.

Sonto: But this is a lot of money I can't pay you back plus I still owe you for buying grocer for my family.

Bukhosi: Just take the damn money and leave my study.

Sonto: Why you like this?

Bukhosi: Get out Nomasonto.

I closed my eyes and sigh.

Sonto: Thank you for the money.

He nods then I walk out. I got ready for work and left. The day went on people were in and out. I was behind the counter while Mbali was working on the floor. The air changed when Lihle walked in she's wearing a really short dress with heels that are so high her nails so long and hair also. She walked up to me.

Lihle: Hi

I ignored her if she's here to harass me again then she must just do it and get over it.

Her: Look I am here to apologise what happened the other day has been haunting me and I feel really bad.

I still ignored her.

Lihle: I am also from a rural area; I came here in Durban to study. My family was struggling I was their last hope; I had to use my NSFAS money to provide for them and trust me it wasn't enough. So I had to do things things I am ashamed of. The past few days I couldn't sleep I really feel bad about how I treated you when I look at you I see me before this. A girl who came in Durban to make something of her so she could provide for her family that depend on her I may not be proud of what I do for a living but I am proud of what I have done for my family. Life here is not easy especialy if you are surrounded by rich people Girl I have been in your shoes I know how it

like to go to bed with an empty stomach to live in the rural area to have everyone depending on you. I have been through that and I sincerely apologise you don't have to forgive me but it will make me feel better knowing I apologised for half the things I said to you. I'm sorry keep well.

She then walked out I was left with my mouth hanging open looking as she leaves.

Mbali: What was that?

Sonto: You don't want to know.

Mbali: I have been working for Zee for so long now she is kind and all sweet but her friends Zuzu and Lihle are as evil as the devil himself.

Sonto: Umm

I felt good after her apology I always prefer people to apologise when they realise they were wrong. Apologising is not for everyone some people can't even utter the word sorry; so I am glad she apologised.

I went on with my day during lunch time I didn't have an appetite instead of eating I went to buy some toiletries thanks to Bukhosi for the money I was slowly running out.

On my way back I run into Lihle she was shopping.

Sonto: Lihle

Lihle: Hey

Lihle seems to be the too hyper type. The one that walk around as if they have no problems they laugh and be loud. She is that type the extrovert type.

Sonto: Thank you for apologising.

Lihle: Oh Girl it nothing come let have some drinks or ice cream I will pay.

I thought for a while.

Lihle: Come on it would be my way of showing you I am sorry.

She made puppy face I smiled.

Sonto: Ok fine I am on my lunch anyway.

Lihle: Perfect follow me darling let have some milkshakes.

We walked at Wimpy and she ordered milk shake.

Lihle: You not that bad you know you just need a little make over.

Sonto: Oh ... Lihle you said something about once being in my shoes.

Lihle: Yea I have been there but it doesn't matter I have changed my life and the only thing that matters to me now is money. Even if I were to die today I would be at peace knowing my family has a perfect roof over their head my sibling's future is secured they won't have to go through what I went through. I may be bitch and all but trust me I am a smart bitch. Enough about me so have you slept with him.

Sonto: What?

She rolled her eyes.

Lihle: Oh come on girl if you don't he will come back to us and trust me I will gladly sleep with him he pays good.

Sonto: He pays you to sleep with him.



Lihle: People pay me to sleep with them; my pussy is made of gold darling. You know I am bitch and all but I am straight forward and if I like you I tell you and if I don't I tell you.

Sonto: Do you like me?

She laughed.

Lihle: I don't like you; you took him away from me. You took my meal and if you didn't take him away maybe you and I were going to like each other.

Sonto: Didn't Zuzu take him away from you.

Lihle: And I don't like her just like I don't like you.

Sonto: I thought you were friends

Sonto: I thought you were friends

Lihle: We are but I don't like her I tolerate her. You see that bitch has all the money in the world got a rich mom and rich Dad not forgetting her rich brother so if she go after a man it not because she wants money like me it because she likes him.

Lihle talks as if there is nothing wrong with sleeping with men for money.

Lihle: Zuzu is a spoiled brat and then there is Amanda such a sweetheart that one. She used to be my roommate I love her. Then there is Zee she's my soul sister no one knows me like that bitch she's amazing and I love her among my friends she is the only one I would take a bullet for even though she hate what I do for a living.

She said rolling her eyes.

Sonto: Zee doesn't seem nice to me

Lihle: Girl you will get over it she's very protective of those close to her.

She laughed.

Lihle: She is our mother hen. Sometimes she gets on our last nerves.

She took a deep breath.

Lihle: Look girl take it from your home girl life here is not easy. You see man; they will use you break you and toss you like a used chewing gum. When you are with them milk them dry so when they leave you for someone else you will just console yourself with a box of ice cream and a fat balance on your account. This love thing it only exist in fairy tale oh well Zee and Amanda got it but love only those who are luck get to have it so home girl be woke this is the survival of the toughest no one will baby you.

She chuckled.

Lihle: I tend to talk a lot sometimes you should tell me to shut up.

I smiled.

Sonto: I don't mind you doing all the talking even though I have to go back now my lunch is over.

Lihle: Okay sweetie bye.

I stood up to leave she opened her hands for a hug and she kissed both my cheek in a most dramatic way. This chick got drama.

Lihle: Bye sweetie don't forget to get that make over.

I just chuckled and went back to work a huge part of me is glad I had that talk with her.

Knock off time came I went back home. I was tired from all the standing at least tomorrow it Friday. When I got home Ma Betty was cooking. She hugged me and kissed my cheek I went to change into my worn out dress then went to work on the garden. Bhuti Mandla was still around but I hardly see him. I watered the flowers then went back inside.

Sonto: Can I help you with anything Ma.

Betty: No! No Sonto you work too hard go sit down and watch TV or something. I am almost done anyway.

I smiled.

Sonto: Okay Ma I will be in my room if you need me.

Betty: Okay baby.

I went in my room and just went through the cooking book Ma Betty once gave me. I would like to try some of these cooking they look really nice.

My door opened without any knock Bukhosi walked in. it his house after all so I can't expect him to knock but a little respect would've been appreciated.

Sonto: Hey

Bukhosi: Tomorrow I am going at the village would you like to come with me.

Sonto: Oh my God for real.

I jumped out of bed while smiling. I rushed and hugged him.

Sonto: Thank you thank you so much. Oh God thank you.

I let go of him.

Sonto: I am sorry about that I just got too excited. Wait what about work?

Bukhosi: I have talked with Zee you will have to work on Saturday.

Sonto: I don't care I would even work on Sunday if I have to as long as I will see my siblings tomorrow.

I said happily.

Bukhosi: Good we will leave early morning; you know it a long drive.

Sonto: Yes thank you thank you so much for everything.

He nods and walked out.

I jumped up and down so happy and then I threw myself on top of the bed and just imagined how happy they would be to see me.

During the night I couldn't sleep at all I was so impatiently waiting for the next day.

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

After talking with Spinach I drove to the night club a guy I used to be in a military with called me and told me he



had deal I wouldn't refuse so I am going to his night club to find out what it is. While driving my mind kept drifting back to HER; I seem to can't take her off my mind. I parked and walked in his bouncers didn't give me a problem no security check they just escorted me to his office I found him sitting with the former Durban mayor who happens to be Zuzu's father.

Vusi: Nkosi I knew you would come.

I just took a sit and didn't even bother with greeting.

Bukhosi: I don't have all night.

Vusi: Very well. I want us to go into gun smuggling.

Bukhosi: Why me?

He chuckled.

Vusi: You know why you still got contact inside the army and you one bad ass.

Bukhosi: I would have used it if there was a way but I can't mess with law.

Vusi: That where you also come in Mr mayor will cover us with the law but you will have to marry his daughter.

Bukhosi: You got to be fucking kidding me as much as this is tempting I won't marry your daughter.

Vusi: Come on it a small price to pay

Bukhosi: Why me?

Mayor: My Zuzu likes you and you are a powerful man I have no doubt you will be able to look after her. She got no one.

Bukhosi: Too bad I won't be marrying her.

Vusi: What the fuck Nkosi?

Bukhosi: I won't be taking the deal.

I stood up and walked away.

Twenty two

TWENTY TWO

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NOMASONTO NKOMO

The following day I was the first to wake up of course after bathing I went to prepare us lunch boxes for the road. By the time Bukhosi showed up I was long done.

Bukhosi: You are such an early bird.

Sonto: I couldn't wait.

Bukhosi: Let hit the road then.

Sonto: I made us lunch boxes.

Bukhosi: You didn't have too.

We left it was still dark outside. He drove in silence with no music playing. He passed by a garage and bought a meal for me and my siblings. I was so grateful to him. I didn't buy them anything I was planning on leaving the money the money he had given me to them.

Sonto: Don't you have music?

I asked after a while of driving in silence the sun is slowly coming out now.

Bukhosi: What kind of music you want?

Sonto: There is this music Mbali always play at the store. She said it black diamond do you have it?

Bukhosi: No but let me download it.

He took his phone and drove with one arm while punching on his phone moment later he plugged the phone on his car and the sound filled the car.

I like black diamond their voice are so good. I was busy dancing with my head while the music plays.

Bukhosi: Can you even dance?

I laughed; I like him when he is being like this Carefree and less grumpy.

Sonto: if we weren't in a car I was going to show you. Dancing is my thing.

He laughed like voice out laughed.

Bukhosi: You definitely sound like someone who cannot dance.

Sonto: I can dance I swear.

He drove to the side of the road and parked.

Sonto: What are you doing?

I asked laughing.

Bukhosi: Show me.

Sonto: No! Drive we still have a long way to go.

He just shook his head.

Bukhosi: Show me your moves then I drive.

I laughed while hiding my face with my hands

Sonto: Okay fine you got me I can't dance.

He laughed the sound of his laughter filled the car so amazing.

Bukhosi: I knew it

He said and started driving again. I just lay there on the chair and looked at him while smiling.

Bukhosi: If looks can kill I would be six feet under right now.

He said and looked at me. I smile at him then looked outside the window. His phone rings.

Bukhosi: What? ... I said I won't be taking the deal Vusi.



He then dropped the call and continues with driving.

I must have fallen asleep because he woke me up to tell me I should get down and hide from the guards. I did exactly that he drove past them after a long drive we finally drove in my village.

Bukhosi: I will take you on my way back from the Palace.

He said as we park on my yard.

I nod.

Sonto: Thank you.

He smile and kissed my forehead leaving me blushing. He got out of the car same as Njabulo and Nonjabulo rushed to the car while screaming my name.

Them: Sonto!

I got off and hugged them both.

Sonto: I missed you so much

Nonjabulo: You are back we missed you too.

Sonto: Aren't you supposed to be at school?

I asked worried how long they have been not going to school.

Njabulo: We no longer go to school.

Sonto: What? Why?

Njabulo: The king burnt down the school.

Nonjabulo: and the guards came here to beat Zamo I was so scared Sonto.

Sonto: They beat Zamo why?

They both shrugged their shoulders and my heart was just beating so fast.

Sonto: Is she okay?

Njabulo: She is okay now she is inside the house.

Thank God they didn't kill her.

Bukhosi: Njabulo this is for you and Nonjabulo this is for you.

He said giving Njabulo and Nonjabulo gifts bags my eyes widen I didn't know he bought something for them. He

hand me the meal that he has bought for us. The twins were already ripping open the boxes excitedly.

Sonto: Thank you.

He brushed my arm.

Bukhosi: I will see you when I come back.

He drove off leaving a very happy Njabulo who got a big toy car and Nonjabulo who got a teddy bear.

Njabulo: Wow this is so cool.

I left them admiring their toys and went inside the house where I found Zamo sleeping on the bed. I put everything on the table and rushed to her.

Sonto: Zamo are you okay? What happened to you?

She just cried.

Sonto: Shhh it okay I am here now talk to me.

She just cried and let it all out.

Sonto: It okay mtaka mama everything is going to be okay.

She finally calm down.

Sonto: Talk to me

Zamo: When ... when I left here I went to stay with Nzima?

Sonto: Which Nzima? The guard?

She nods.

Sonto: Zamo that man is old enough to be your father. So what happened?

Zamo: When I told him I was pregnant he kicked me out so I stole his money. Then he came here with his friend and they beat me up Sonto I even lost the baby.

Sonto: I'm sorry that was so cruel of them.

Zamo: They beat me up like a dog.

I just hugged her.

Sonto: They are just cruel don't worry their day will come.

Zamo: I almost died Sonto

She cried even more

I went to check on Slindile then me and my siblings chilled and catch up Sizwe was not around apparently he manage to convince the King to give him the land by the river but he will be paying rent for it so he is always busy there planting. They were happier with the meal Bukhosi has bought for us.

Sonto: Where is Zinhle?

Zamo: Umm that one she is at the Palace. The Prince picked her.

Sonto: What for real?

Zamo: Yep and the King killed her brother Sphiwe.

Sonto: What? Why Sphiwe is just a kid?

Zamo: Sphiwe was eating his sugar cane and he had him killed. They shoot him to death.

Sonto: Oh my God he's so cruel.

Zamo: What is new? How is the city?

Sonto: So now Zinhle lives at the Palace?

Zamo: Yes with her younger brother and the rest of the royalties.

I sigh. She must be going through a lot.

Sonto: The city is big and beautiful but life there is something else.

Zamo: I want to-



“Knock knock”

Sonto: Mzamo

Mzamo: Sonto when did you get here? Zamo told me you went to help your aunt.

Sonto: I ... I just got back today

Mzamo: Is she okay now?

Sonto: Yea she is better

Mzamo: That good Nkosazana I just came here to warn you.

Sonto: Warn us about?

Mzamo: I think they know Slindile is here.

Sonto: What? You also know.

Mzamo: Sort of Sizwe told me. And if they know they will come here today but if I am wrong they won't. It just I heard some guards talking but I could be wrong.

I took a deepest sigh of them all and turned to Zamo and the kids.

Zamo: oh my god they will come Sonto.

She said with a shaking voice.

Zamo: They will come Sonto they going to kill us. What are we going to do?

Mzamo: Don't panic Zamo it might happen I heard wrong.

Sonto: Thank you Mzamo.

Mzamo: It was good seeing you Sonto

He bid goodbye and left.

I thought for a while.

I have no doubt they will come if it true they will come here today.

Sonto: I have a plan.

We impatiently waited for Bukhosi to help me; he is the only person who can help me.

Finally he showed up and I run to him.

Sonto: I need your help.

Bukhosi: Is everything okay.

Sonto: The King is coming to kill us we ... we hid Slindile here in our house so he found out and now he is going to kill us. Could you please take me and Slindile to the City so when they come in search of her they won't find her?

Bukhosi: You shitting me right?

Sonto: Please I am begging you please at least take her alone I will remain behind.

Bukhosi: No you fucking shitting me I give you a hand and you fucking want the whole arm. You so fucking ungrateful get the fuck in the car.

Sonto: No! I am not going anywhere; I will not leave my family to die here. I will die with them.

Bukhosi: Suit yourself.

He got in his car and drove off leaving only dust behind. I just went on my knees and let the tears fall.

Sizwe came back we didn't even have time to talk the only thing we had to worry about was our lives. We came up with the plan that Slindile should sleep on the tree just in case they do come. So when it dark she got on top of the mango tree with her blanket. The thing is she couldn't leave because if she leaves the guards will see her and we all going to die so this was the only way. If they don't come today that would mean Mzamo must have heard it wrong. Sizwe was to sit under the tree on the bench all night to make sure she is okay up there.

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

Fucking bitch; fucking stupid bitch. I was so mad. I was mad at her for being stupid I was mad at myself I was just fucking mad. I took my phone and dialled his number.

Vusi: Nkosi

Bukhosi: The deal is still on?

Vusi: You know it is.

Bukhosi: Good I am taking it.

Vusi: Wh-

Bukhosi: I have few conditions. I will come there in few hours.

I then dropped the call and drove like a lunatic.

I am fucking tired of this shit. I just signed my life with a devil I hope it worth it.

Twenty three

TWENTY THREE

## NOMASONTO NKOMO

I didn't sleep a wink I kept checking if they were coming or not. Sizwe and Slindile slept there on the tree. When morning came I was revealed this might mean they do not know. I woke up and went outside; it was still so early and a little bit cold. I felt sorry for both Sizwe and Slindile. They both run to Sizwe's room at the back Sizwe and I have to come up with a plan to get Slindile out of here. We can't live like this always we can't live in fear. Zamo was right Sizwe is putting all our lives in danger this have to stop. I'm sorry but Slindile have to leave our house.

I started sweeping the yard the kids were still sleeping.



I don't know if I was dreaming my mind just shut down the moment I saw three trucks speeding right on our yard. The moment the driver hit the brakes a younger version of the King came out the Prince and my heart just broke I am dead. We just died. He walks towards me.

Him: I am going to ask you once and you going to give me the answer that I want.

Guards lot of guards got off with big guns some surrounded our house and some stood there with guns pointed at me.

I closed my eyes as I felt my own pee dripping down my legs.

Him: Where is she?

I couldn't talk I had no voice at all. I was shaking like a leaf and before I know it I received a slap that lends me on the ground.

Sizwe: Sonto!

He said running towards me but two guards got to him and kicked him.

“I am here I am here please don’t hurt them”

Oh God! Slindile said walking towards the Prince.

Some guards had gone inside the house and came back with the twins and Zamo.

Nonjabulo: Sonto! I am scared.

The guards threw my siblings next to me and I just hugged them this is it. This is where it all ends.

Him: So you thought you are smart. You thought you could double cross us.

Slindile: I ... please kill me not them.

Him: My chair a rope and undress her then tie her on that tree with her back facing this way and whip her back. I decide who to kill and when to kill

Sonto: Oh my god! Oh my God!

I said crying there was no use to beg them to stop they were not going to stop either you beg or not. They will kill us all. They put a chair for him he sit down and they ripped Slindile's clothes off her and tied her on a mango tree she has nothing on but her panties only.

Most people were already around just watching.

And Sizwe was sitting there not far from us with his bruised face; we all knew there was no use begging. I was sitting butt flat on the ground with Zamo Njabulo and Nonjabulo holding on to me for dear life. One of the

guards took a sjambok and started whipping her back. Every whip is accompanied by a painful cry every whip left a scar that bleeds same time and the Prince was just sitting there watching showing no mercy. Sizwe tried to stand up but they kicked him again and he fell on the ground and they pointed a gun on his head. My siblings had their heads buried on my lap and their tears had wet my dress.

They kept whipping and whipping her she cried screamed and her back was full of sores which were not pleasing. She pleaded but the guard never stopped he kept on going and everyone just stood there and watched. I had no energy I just I just wished he would at least make Njabulo and Nonjabulo's death to be quicker and less painful.

He whipped her till she had no voice and her cries were just so low but that didn't stop him he kept going.

Him: Okay stop untie her and take him.

Sonto: No! No not Sizwe! Not Sizwe!

Him: You want to go first?

Sizwe looked at me as the guards rip his clothes off him and leaving him with nothing.

Sonto: Sizwe! Sizwe!

My tears streamed down even more and I couldn't do anything my heart soul and everything else was crushed. They tied him on the tree same way Slindile was tied and I just made sure to hid my sibling's face I didn't want them to see him like this.

Slindile's lifeless body was just laying there on the ground with all those bruises on her I doubt she was still alive. Another guard took the sjambok and started whipping his back.

He cried they whipped him and whipped him and my brother was crying like a kid.

Sizwe: Eh ... eeh ...awe Mah ....awe Mah...

When that guard got tired he gave the sjambok to another guard and same process went on till I couldn't look any more.

Sonto: I love you.

I whispered to my sibling who kept on crying.

Suddenly we heard more engines of cars coming then gun shoots started firing around and people started screaming while running.

## BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

It seems like we got to her house too late or almost too late. We got held up before we could reach her house some of my guys had went to the Palace while some are at the market and me Mabandla Vusi and two other guys came here to her house and the moment I saw all those people and trucks I saw nothing but red. We started shooting the guards.

I wanted whoever is responsible for touching Spinach alive. I want to kill him myself.

More gunshot were fired towards us from one of the trucks I took a grenade and threw it on the truck it blow up.

Bukhosi: Cover me

Mabandla: Wtf! Where you going?

Bukhosi: I need to make sure she is okay.

I run towards her house while Mabandla was covering my ass he was right behind me. I knew he wouldn't let me go there alone.

I did a back and shoot most of the guards who were on my way.

I saw her; she was on the ground with her siblings. She stood up and tried to usher them inside the house but someone shoot his brother. She cried trying to pick him up and she got shot my vision got blur the only thing I wanted was to kill. I started firing my gun without any pause; I fired the gun going towards them. Mabandla and Vusi were right on my tail shooting. We managed to defeat them and I rushed towards her she's still breathing. They shot her on the shoulder. I picked her up and rushed her towards the car. More trucks came our way.

Bukhosi: Shit!



Mabandla was following me with her sister. She was also shot but still breathing. The other two kids Njabulo and Nonjabulo died there on the spot. He put her in the car.

Bukhosi: Go to that clinic and try to stop the breathing I will be keeping them here.

He got in and drove.

If she dies I swear on my life I am going to kill every living thing in this village innocent or not.

I lay down and started shooting at the truck.

Vusi: Throw the grenade I will deal with the others.

I threw the grenade some guards jump. The moment it blows up I run towards there while firing the gun.

This motherfucker had more guards than I had thought. Vusi and I manage to kill them all. The other two guys we were with got shot.

Bukhosi: Let go to the palace.

We rushed to a car and drove off; I didn't even care about my driving. I have to end this; I have to make sure he is dead.

When we got there their guns were still firing around we manage to snick in the house and started shooting.

Vusi: Go I will cover you.

I nod and made my way in while he covered me. I shoot everything on my way I almost got shot few times but I am not an amateur I have been trained to kill for years now.

I shoot my way in. I held one of the guards by his neck and slam him on the wall.

Bukhosi: Where is he?

He didn't talk I tighten my grip on his neck.

Bukhosi: Are you going to talk now.

He nods his head.

I let go of him. He started coughing blood.

Him: In his o ...office.

I shoot him and walked away guns were still firing outside. I sneak towards his office; two guards were standing on the door. I shoot them both then went towards them shoot them one more time. I kicked open the door and threw myself down as guns fired my way. I

lay with my back and shoot one guards head I rolled over and shoot the other his leg then stood up and shoot another one on his chest then finished off the one I shot on the leg.

“Nkosi what going on? I gave you your stock and there was no mistake.”

Bukhosi: Oh Sengawayo you sent your dogs to touch my girl.

Him: Who? I ...

Bukhosi: Nomasonto and you better pray she makes it because nci ... nci ...nci ..nci

I shoot his leg and he groaned in pain. Vusi walked in.

Bukhosi: We taking him.

He dragged him all the way to the car and threw him in the boot.

Bukhosi: Make sure he stays alive.

To the guys who were still alive I told them to burn the Palace down.

Twenty four

TWENTY FOUR

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

I drove from the Palace to the clinic while Vusi drove back to Durban. I took my phone and called Mabandla.

Mabandla: I am driving back to the city.

Bukhosi: What? Where is she?

Mabandla: They are both with me; we manage to stop the bleeding for a while. They need professional care I am almost there. How it going down there?

I took a deep sigh.

Bukhosi: Mission accomplished call me when you reach the hospital.

Mabandla: Don't worry I got you clean all those dead bodies.

Bukhosi: On it.

Instead of driving to the clinic I turned to her house and called the guys who were doing the cleaning up to tell them not to leave any dead body behind.

The village was so quite not even a single person was outside.

I got off the car and looked at her twin sibling's lifeless bodies I actually felt sorry for them. She loved them so much; her family means the world to her. This will break her. I called a mortuary; I will take only her family and keep them in a mortuary till she recovers. The mortuary and I agreed on me paying 100k. For four bodies her older brother who was still tied on the tree naked a girl who was just laying on the ground with bruised back and the twins. I untied her brother; this scene doesn't shock

me at all I am used to seeing worse than this. I just feel bad I wasn't fast enough to save all her siblings.

I took a bedcover and covered their bodies the guys who were doing the clean-up came and took all dead bodies except her family then they drove off.

I went to sit under the tree and took a deep breath. I was waiting for the mortuary people to come. A call from Mabandla came through.

Bukhosi: Talk to me

Mabandla: It bad but the doctors are still working on them.

I rubbed my face furiously.

Bukhosi: I will be there; I am still waiting on the mortuary guys.



Mabandla: Okay

He dropped the call. I sit back and thought of the ways I will torture and kill that son of a bitch. I saw a figure coming towards the house; it already getting dark and it a figure of a man.

I whistle and called him over with my hands. He looked at me the house and the small gate. He is thinking of running away. I showed him a gun and he came over.

“Bhuti omdala ngiyacela please don’t kill me”

Bukhosi: Who are you?

“I am Mzamo a friend of Sizwe; I just came to help where I can”

Bukhosi: Sit down

He sits beside me.

Bukhosi: What was going on here?

Him: Ei Bhuti I don't know Slindile's family was burnt down by the King but Slindile manage to run. She has been hiding here and the King heard his son came here then there were gun shot.

Bukhosi: Who is Slindile?

Him: Sizwe's girlfriend.

Bukhosi: You got to be fucking kidding me he let his girlfriend stay here knowing very well that was not safe. He put his family in danger knowing very well he's a fucking pussy fucking pussy. He did well by dying because if he didn't I was going to kill him myself.

I was so fucking angry.

Him: He ... he loved her

Bukhosi: That fucking stupid he let pussy blind him to a point where he fucking put his family in danger. The same family Spinach was fighting for the same family Spinach was willing to do anything for them just so they would have a better life then he go on and sign their death warrant. He is a fucking pussy. A man protects his family not kill them.

My phone rings I picked up.

“Nkosi when are you going to meet your end of the deal?”

Bukhosi: You fucking mother’s cunt I will fucking marry that stupid daughter of yours when I am done with my shit.

I dropped the phone and almost threw it away; instead I put it on my pocket and punch the tree hurting myself at the process. The guy just ran away without even looking back.

I had no choice but to marry Zuzu so I would be able to save Spinach we didn't have enough guys to fight the King so I had to ask Vusi to assist with men.

It was already dark when the mortuary arrived and took the bodies on my way back I was hoping I don't come across any police the way I was driving. I arrived at the hospital in the middle of the night; I rushed to the front desk.

Bukhosi: I am looking for Nomasonto; she was admitted this afternoon by Ntando Vezi.

With blood still on my clothes she didn't need me to ask her twice.

Her: Oh sir two ladies were bought by an Ntando and both of them just came out of surgery but let me get a doctor for you.

I rubbed my face with my hand and waited.

A doctor showed up after a few moments.

"Hello I am doctor Dlomo you must be Mr Nkosi please follow me"

I followed after him to his office.

Doctor: Mr Vezi told me you would come.

He said the moment we both settled down.

Bukhosi: How it going with her?

Doctor: We managed to remove the bullets; however both ladies lost lot of blood.

Bukhosi: How long will it take for them to recover from that blood loss? Will they even recover?

Doctor: Right now it hard to tell. The estimates of recovery time range from few days to several months. Marked individual variation is found within any one group of donors; for example Fowler and Barer noted recovery times of from 21 to 98 days among 63 subjects.

I sigh.

Bukhosi: They will survive right?

Doctor: As I said Mr Nkosi it hard to tell right now due to blood loss Nomasonto the one who was shot on the shoulder we have performed a surgery called shoulder

arthroscopy to examine and repair the tissues around her shoulder joint so with her the only concern we have is the blood loss.

Bukhosi: Yoo ... and the other girl.

Doctor: I didn't get her name but she is in a critical state. The bullet went in and out even though it missed all the targets like bottom of the lungs liver and so forth she will get peritonitis from leaking intestinal fluids there is a possibility that she will live with that but peritonitis kills too. And getting shot in the stomach really hurt really hurts enough to paralyse her with pain and at this moment Mr Nkosi only time will tell.

I lay back on the chair feeling a little bit dizzy from all the information I just received.

Bukhosi: This is too much.

Doctor: We will just have to wait and time will tell ah can I have both their identity information.

I shake my head.

Bukhosi: I don't know much about them just make up something man. And this thing should stay be-

Doctor: Don't worry Mr Vezi has already briefed me with that. I will see what I can do about their identity.

I nod.

Bukhosi: Thank you we will keep in touch.

Doctor: You should have your fists checked.

He treats my fists then I left. I know I won't have much sleep but I really do need a shower and a change of clothes.



Twenty five

TWENTY FIVE

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

I was busy drinking my whisk; ever since I came from the hospital I didn't sleep a wink. I kept thinking about my next move like chess I am unpredictable and dangerous every move I make either make me or break me I use my brains to conquer. I walked out of my study and took a

quick shower then went down stairs where I found Betty making breakfast.

Betty: Bukhosibemvelo where is Nomasonto? I didn't see her today even yesterday.

Bukhosi: She is in hospital Betty

Betty: What? What happened to her is she okay.

Bukhosi: Nomasonto was shot she is stable for now. I am on my way there.

Betty: Shot where who would shoot that soul I am coming with you.

She said taking off the apron.

Betty: let go I hope my baby is fine.

She walked out and we locked then drove to the hospital on the way she was busy praying to her god to protect and save Nomasonto. We got in the hospital and she was the first to walk up to the front desk.

Betty: Where is my baby? Nomasonto?

I walked up to them same time as Doctor Dlomo showed up.

Doctor: Mr Nkosi.

He extended his hand for a hand shake.

Bukhosi: Doctor we here to see Nomasonto.

Doctor: Of course please follow me.

My phone rings in my pocket.

Bukhosi: Excuse me; I have to take this you can go ahead with Betty.

The doctor nod Betty was just in a hurry. I picked the call.

Bukhosi: Mabandla

Mabandla: Where are you?

Bukhosi: In the hospital.

Mabandla: I am on my way there.

Bukhosi: Okay see you.

I dropped the call and asked a nurse where I can find Nomasonto. She directed me to her ward.

I stood outside the door and watched as Betty cried while holding her hand. Betty is very good hearted shedding a tear for someone she's not even related with; I took a sigh and made my way in.

Betty: What happened to her? Bukhosi she is very good hearted she can't die.

Bukhosi: She won't die Betty she is going to survive trust me.

She nod and walked out.

I stood there and watched her with all those tubes connected on her; the machines that were keeping her alive were busy beeping. The door opened and the doctor walked in.

Doctor: She may be unconscious but she can still hear you talk to her.

He then checks the machines and wrote something down then walked out again.

I took a sit on a chair; I didn't know what to say to her.

Bukhosi: Hey ...er it me ... I ...

I rubbed my face with my hand then held her hand her left hand had a sling around it and her shoulder was bandaged the anger that I had yesterday came back. I clench my jaws and just sit there watching her. Mabandla walked in with Zee and Betty.

Zee: Oh my God! Sonto

Mabandla: Bro

We fist bump.

We stayed in her room for a while Zee and Betty prayed.

Mabandla and I went to check on her sister she looked worse than Nomasonto. We then walked to the waiting area to wait for Betty and Zee who were still with Nomasonto.

Mabandla: What the plan?

I looked at him. He can read me like an open book.

Mabandla: You going to marry her?

sans-serif; background-color: transparent; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; vertical-align: baseline; white-space: pre-wrap;">Mabandla: You going to marry her?

Bukhosi: I have no other choice deal is a deal.

He pats my shoulder.

Mabandla: That fucking bitch is a nut case.

Bukhosi: Tell me about it.

I lay back and closed my eyes.

Bukhosi: The King is with Vusi I want to deal with him when I am calm; if I were to deal with him now I would



just blow his brains out and that is a too easy death for that piece of kak.

He nods.

Mabandla: Just remind me to bring popcorn when that happens.

I just chuckled. The ladies came back me and Betty drove back to the house. I went to my study and just tried to catch up on my work. I want to distract myself before I lose my mind.

Betty knock on my door to tell me there was someone here to see me.

I followed after her; Zuzu was standing in the lounge with a big luggage next to her.

Zuzu: Hello hubby

Bukhosi: What you doing here?

Zuzu: I am moving in hey old lady go get the rest of my bags in my car.

I just stood there with my hands on my pocket.

Bukhosi: We are not married yet.

Zuzu: I know and we will soon.

She walked up to me and run her hands on my chest seductively.

Zuzu: and when we are I will treat you like a King.

Bukhosi: You can start by getting your hands off me.

She got her hands off me.

Zuzu: I can't wait to be Mrs Nkosi; I have found the best wedding planner and daddy will be paying for it. You will pay for the cost and I don't want this lobola thing let just get married.

Bukhosi: He might as well pay for the whole thing.

Zuzu: Oh come on baby you can afford me. And I want a big wedding everyone have to know I am getting married.

Betty walked in with two bigger luggages.

Zuzu: Take these to my hubby's room

Bukhosi: Betty please takes these to the spare room.

Betty took the bags and walked away.

Zuzu: I thought we will be sleeping together

Bukhosi: Listen here; I will only marry you after my girl has recovered so stay out of my face before I do something I would not even regret.

She blinks several times and walked away following after Betty.

I just click my tongue.

I took my car keys and left. I drove to Vusi's house.

Vusi: Nkosi

He said opening his door.

Bukhosi: let talk business.

Vusi: Of course come on in.

I walked in and he led a way to his study.

Vusi: Well ...

Bukhosi: I will marry that bitch after Sonto has recovered out of this deal I get 60% and you get 40% at the end of the day I am making a big sacrifice and it my contact we will be using it only fair I get more.

Vusi: Done for me you know it about power man.

Bukhosi: and how I deal with that bitch has nothing to do with you or her father. She will be my wife and I would be dealing with her the way I see fit.

Vusi: I don't fucking care what you do with her.

Bukhosi: Good where is that piece of trash.

Vusi: He is at the club alive and kicking.

Bukhosi: Please keep him there.

Vusi: Very well. I was thinking let take on the underworld. Me and you together take all their operation and run them.

Bukhosi: I am not interested if you want to take them on then you are on you own.

Vusi: More money for me.

I shook his hand then left for hospital.

I would rather spend my time at hospital than being under one roof with that bitch. Twenty six

TWENTY SIX

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

[TWO WEEKS LATER]

I had just received a call from the hospital saying Nomasonto is awake. I left in between a meeting and drove to the hospital. When I got to her room I opened and walked in she looked my way and I just knew she is not the same her eyes had no life she has lost hope and it broke my heart to see her like that.

Bukhosi: Hey

She just looked at me without saying anything; I took a sit beside her.

Bukhosi: I am glad you okay

Sonto: Did they make it?

I held her hand.

Bukhosi: The twins and your brother didn't but your sister is here in hospital. The doctor said she might pull through.



She closed her eyes and tears streamed down I wiped them off.

Sonto: I asked you to help me had you ... had...

Bukhosi: What?

Sonto: I begged you ... I begged you Bukhosi

Bukhosi: You really shitting me now; what am I to you? Your God? You can't expect me to go around and save the day I am not your God. In fact you should be grateful to me and blame your brother like it or not he is the one who signed your death warrants and you let him.

I said then stood up I opened the door and took a deep breath closed it again and went back to sit by her side.

Bukhosi: I shouldn't have said that I am not good with this. I don't know what to say or ... you are right it my fault.

If she wants someone to blame then I will let her blame me it okay she can blame me as long as it will make her feel better.

Sonto: Where are their bodies? Who buried them?

I didn't like the way she was she was too broken. She talked about being dead inside but now she looks dead.

Bukhosi: They haven't been buried; I took their bodies to the mortuary. You can bury them when the doctor discharges you. The doctor said you will be discharged soon. And your arm will recover in few weeks.

She just nods.

Bukhosi: I can take you to see your sister.

Sonto: I don't want to see her; Zamo will be more than happy with the twins and Sizwe's death.

From what she just said she doesn't look pleased with her sister being alive.

Bukhosi: Okay.

I stayed for a while even helped her eat then left her. I walked to her doctor's office.

Bukhosi: Dlomo

Doctor: Mr Nkosi

Bukhosi: So she is good now right?

Sonto: Yes she is but I am scared she will suffer from depression so I suggest therapy for her.

Bukhosi: I can get her that.

Sonto: You can come and pick her up tomorrow she is fine but she will have to change her diet to accommodate the blood loss. She must eat food like; poultry fish leafy green brown rice lentils beans and so on. Let me make a list for you. She will have to come for her checks up though other than that the arm will heal for now she will have a sling around it.

Bukhosi: So tomorrow she is coming home is it safe?

Doctor: Yes it safe she will be fine Mr Nkosi as long as she sticks to the diet and get therapy.

Bukhosi: Thank you man.

He nods and gave me the list of food she will have to eat  
I drove back to my house.

I found Zuzu sitting on the couch with some gay guy.

Zuzu: Hey baby you back; this is Kim our wedding  
planner.

Kim: Umm you got yourself a chocolate darling.

I walked past them without even greeting.

“Bukhosi have you heard anything from Sonto?”

Betty asked walking down the stairs my house is under  
renovations I want it to be wheelchair friendly since  
Nomasonto’s sister will be moving with us once she

recover and the doctor said there is a huge possibility that she will come out not able to walk.

Bukhosi: She's up Betty and she's getting discharged tomorrow. I want you to get everything on this list it the food she will be eating.

Her smile got wide.

Betty: Thank God I will pass by her then go to the shops.

Bukhosi: I will call someone to drive you then

Betty: Thank you son.

I nod and rub her shoulder gentle and walked past her.

## NOMASONTO NKOMO

Even though I saw them getting shot I am still in deny.  
How can they die how can Njabulo and Nonjabulo die  
they are just kids. God should've taken me instead not  
them. I feel numb I don't know what to feel

Sponsored

and it my fault I failed to protect them I should've never  
allowed Slindile to stay in our house I should've kicked  
her out had I did that both of them would be alive my  
brother Sizwe would be alive. I should've died with them.  
Tears just stream down.

How can I go on with living without them they were everything to me. Without them I have nothing to live for.

The door opened Ma Betty and Zee walked in. Ma Betty rushed to me she hugged me and my tears just streamed down even more.

Betty: It going to be okay sweetheart I am here for you.

She said then let go of me Zee also came and hugged me.

Zee: Hey how you feeling?

I shrugged.

Sonto: I don't know.

Zee: Betty please gives us a moment.



She walked out and left me with Zee she took a sit beside me.

Zee: I don't know what to say but if you need me I am here. I can help with the funeral arrangements so when you get discharged things would be easy.

I closed my eyes they are gone. I will never see them again.

Sonto: Thank you Zee I would appreciate that.

She went through her bag and came back with a brown envelop.

Zee: This is your payment and you can still work for me after you have recovered.

I took the envelop from her.

Sonto: Thank you.

Zee: I am really sorry about your loss

Sonto: Thank you I would like to be alone now if you don't mind.

Zee: Of course.

She kissed my forehead.

Zee: I will check on you tomorrow.

I nod and she walked out Ma Betty walk in again. She put on a weak smile

Betty: I am so glad you coming home tomorrow.

Sonto: Thank you Ma

Betty: Let me go and rush to the shops I will see you tomorrow baby okay.

I nod and she kissed me and left.

Once I am out I will go burry my siblings. Maybe burying them will give me peace knowing they are really gone.

The following day Bukhosi came to pick me up the drive back to his house was filled with silence. My mind was just thinking about the twins I love them too much for them to die. They should've not died.

When he parked I wiped the tear that managed to escape he helped me out and we walked inside the house.

“Welcome back home sweetie I was so worried about you”

I stopped on my tracks; Bukhosi had his hand on my back. What is this witch doing here?

Zuzu: Baby you can hand her over come and sit on the couch love you must be tired.

I just stood there frozen; Bukhosi just led me to the couch and helped me sit.

Bukhosi: Zuzu will be staying with us.

He said helping me settle down.

Zuzu: Should I get you anything sweetheart hospital food can be awful.

Again it his house but her being here just takes another part of me that I thought I was still holding.

Zuzu: Yey Betty gets more cushions and stop running around like a headless chicken in my house.

Did she just said 'in her house'

Betty came and put a cushion behind me

Bukhosi: I am going to put this in your room.

He said then kissed my forehead and left Zuzu gave me a nasty look before faking a smile.

Bukhosi walked away.

Betty: How you feeling baby?

Sonto: The same nothing has changed.

Betty: You going to be fine.

Zuzu: Betty don't you have toilet to clean get out of here.

Ma Betty looked at her then back at me she gentle brushed my face.

Betty: Let me get you something to eat okay.

I nod my head and she walked away Zuzu walked behind me. She leans on the couch and whisper in my ear.

Zuzu: Listen here you ugly frog hippo he is mine me and him are getting married so you nothing to him but a use tampon. Do yourself a favour and go back to whatever dumping site you came from cause so God help me you mess this for me I will do more than breaking your arm.

She then poke my left shoulder making me feel the worse pain I have ever felt the pain I was feeling was mixed with the pain I am feeling inside.

I let the tears stream down as she walks away.

Twenty seven

## TWENTY SEVEN

### NOMASONTO NKOMO

I knew Zuzu was going to make sure that my stay here will be as miserable as I am. I lay on my bed and just cried. I wasn't crying for Zuzu I was crying because I didn't know how I would live without the twins and Sizwe I was crying because I will never see them again I was crying because I will never hear their lousy everyday arguments. I feel utterly lost and all I want to do is to crawl into a hole and just die I hid under the blanket and just let the tears fall. I couldn't even eat. I was a walking corpse.

My heart was aching so badly I felt like ripping it off. I wanted to sleep yet I couldn't sleep worse my arm was also not giving me any chance to breath.



The door opened I didn't even look up I just cried on my blanket.

He got behind me on the bed and held me tight making me cry even more.

Bukhosi: Please don't cry you're hurting me

I wish I could stop I wish these tears could stop.

There is a void inside me that can never be filled how will I survive with this heartache?

He just held me carefully not to touch my arm.

Bukhosi: You are the strongest person I know; I know you will pull through. I have someone who will come and help you with healing.

I don't want someone I just want to die. I just want to be with them.

Bukhosi: Will you wait for your sister's recovery before you bury them.

He asked and I found his voice gentle for the first time.

Sonto: No ... she wanted them dead she wanted me dead there will be no use waiting for her.

I have this too much anger inside me towards Zamo. A huge part of me hates her so much to a point where I wished she is the one who died instead of the twins couldn't God just takes her.

How could God be this cruel how could he allow innocent kids to die and save that she devil.

Bukhosi kept brushing me gentle while holding me from behind. I felt so comfortable in his arm.

The following day Ma Betty helped me with bathing and getting dressed. She forced me to eat of which I ate two to three spoons. I spent the whole day laying on my bed I had no tears to cry anymore. Tomorrow I am going to lay my siblings to rest and honestly I have no energy for that but it need to be done the sooner the better.

Ma Betty walked in with food again.

Sonto: I am not hungry Ma.

Betty: Sonto you have to eat.

I shake my head no. she put the food down and came to me.

Betty: You have to be strong my baby your sister will need you.

Sonto: That one won't need me; she never needed me before she made sure I know how worthless and pathetic I am every day and I have no doubt when she wake up from that death bed she will tell me she wished I have died with them.

Betty: She will never do that she's your sister. You are all she has left with.

Sonto: You don't know her like I do Ma.

The door opened Zuzu walked in. I rolled my eyes.

Here comes the witch.

Zuzu: What the fuck? Betty what am I supposed to wear? You didn't fucking iron my clothes I asked you so well to have all my clothes Ironed but no all you do is sit your

lazy ass down with that pathetic good for nothing hoe  
now I don't have something to wear.

Betty stood up.

Betty: I'm sorry I was cooking for Sonto.

Zuzu: I don't fucking care about that hoe she could die I  
still won't care. And I don't fucking get it you so slow I  
told you to put black with black and white with white do  
not mix my clothes. Do you know the struggle I go  
through every day when I have to check what to wear

Betty: Yoo Zuzu don't you-

Zuzu: Yoo woman I am madam to you stop being fucking  
slow and do your job before I personally kick you out.  
Now go on go iron my clothes and stop staring at me.

Ma Betty walked out fuming with anger and I was just  
sitting there too shocked to even move. Where does she

get the audacity to speak with her elders like that how she could be so rude to an old lady? Who is old enough to be her grandmother?

She turned to me the moment Betty walked out.

Zuzu: and you fucking bitch didn't I say stay away from my man.

I just ignored her she walked towards me.

Zuzu: I saw him leaving your room this morning you are a witch you village ugly hippo.

Sonto: I dint ask him to sleep in my room.

She slaps me I felt my cheek getting hot and I couldn't believe it I just couldn't believe.

Sonto: How could you?

Zuzu: Stay the fuck away from my man! Let this be your last warning.

Sonto: Why don't you tell him to stay away from me?

She was about to slap me again when Bukhosi talked behind her.

Bukhosi: You made a mistake.

He walked up to her and held her by her neck while choking her neck. Veins were popping on his hand and his jaws were so clenched. And I knew I knew he was mad as hell.

Bukhosi: Let that be the last time you talk to her like that last time you look her way last time you lay your fifth hands on her don't test my patients bitch I will detach this useless head from this HIV AIDS body of yours.

He had lifted her up she kicked and tried to hit his hand from her neck saliva was coming out of her mouth and her eyes kept blinking. She looks like she was on a lot of pain.

Sonto: Bukhosi stop.

Zuzu kept kicking and I was so scared he would kill her.

I stood up and walked towards them when Bukhosi is angry he becomes an animal. What would happen if he kills her will I even survive after I let him kill her.

Sonto: Bukhosi let her go.

Bukhosi: She fucking touched you and you want me to have mercy on her this stupid good heart of yours is making you stupid you are so stupid stand up for yourself.

Sonto: Let her go.



I held his arm to hold him back but he pushed me and I couldn't balance since I have one working arm I fell hurting my arm in the process.

Sonto: Aahh.....

Bukhosi: Spinach!

He let go off Zuzu and she fell on the floor then started coughing while holding her neck with tears and saliva all over her. He crawl to me and helped me up I pushed him of me.

Sonto: Let me go.

I said with tears falling down my eyes.

Sonto: You are sick! You are an animal! I should've died with my siblings instead of this pain I am feeling.

I stood up crying.

Sonto: You need help! You are just like him heartless and ruthless all you do is hurt and take advantage what have I ever done to this world? Why do I have to be always hurt? Who did I wrong? When will i find peace? I hate men like you they use their power to hurt us. Why God didn't take me? He should've taken me he should've taken me.

I cried my heart breaking millions times. He came towards me.

Sonto: No! Please get out get out! Get out! ...aaah!

He looked at me hurt written all over his face then he walked out I kneeled down and just cried. I don't even know when Zuzu left.

I cried till I couldn't cry no more I was so broken. My heart was just bleeding.

I lay there on the floor and just cried my arm hurt so badly and my head was pounding I need pain killers. I stood up from the floor took my pills and went out to get water while passing by his study I heard noise of things breaking and I didn't know if I should go in and check or if I should just walk away.

I took a deep sigh and walked towards the door I opened the door and took a peek everything was up and down and broken. He was holding a chair hitting a table. He stops and looked at me. Our eyes locked I saw anger and murderous he looked so scary and his fists were bleeding there was blood on the furniture.

Bukhosi: Leave Nomasonto!

He said and hit his fist on the table. He has anger issues and his anger is scary as hell. I quickly walked out and went down stairs; I warmed water with salt and put them

in a bowl then walked up. I went to his room and took the first aid kit then went back to his study. I opened the door walked in and closed it again then lean on it as he look at me.

I am done running If he want to kill me then he should go ahead and kill me. Running is no longer an option. I lean there for a while he is sitting on a small couch his computer chair and bottles are all over the place broken. I took a deep breath and walked towards him he just looked at me. I was expecting him to kick me out.

I kneeled next to him and took his hand with my one arm I cleaned his wounded fists without saying anything. I cleaned both his fist then bandaged them.

He helped me with the bandage since I couldn't use my other arm proper.

When I was done I crawl beside him on the couch and lay on his shoulder.

He took a deep breath and held me.

Twenty eight

TWENTY EIGHT

## NOMASONTO NKOMO

Ma Betty came to tell me Zee was here to see me I went down stairs taking my pain killers along before I enter the kitchen I heard her talking with Zuzu I stood beside the door and listen.

Zuzu: What I do with my life it fucking none of your business

Zee: Do you really want to leave this house in a coffin because trust me Bukhosi will kill you.

Zuzu: Again how is that any of your business?

Zee: He doesn't love you Zuzu let it go.

Zuzu: I love him and he will learn to love me now buzz off I am going to marry him.

Zee: Zuzu y-

Zuzu: Yoo Zee jeez you want me to go after Ntando cause trust me I can do that.

Zee: Try me Zuzu I am no longer that naïve girl I will skin you alive.

Zuzu: Then buzz off.

She threw a glass on the floor making it breaks into pieces then made her way towards the door I also walked in.

Zuzu: Nx

She clicks her tongue when passing by me. This girl is definitely crazy.

Zuzu: Betty! Betty!

She shouts as she made her way up.

Sonto: Ma Betty said you here to see me.

Zee: Hey ...umm yes it about the funeral tomorrow. I have everything organised; the catering and the tent people will drive there early morning.

Sonto: Thank you.

Zee: It nothing basically everything is ready for tomorrow and my husband told me Bukhosi will be driving you there tomorrow.



Sonto: Yes their bodies will also be taken there tomorrow morning.

Zee: Okay ...I have to go now wish you everything go well tomorrow.

I nod my head she hug me then left.

Tomorrow I am finally laying my siblings to rest I am supposed to be there today but I just couldn't leave today I don't even think I want to be there; I hate my village so much what if the King find out I am the reason behind all the shooting is he even still alive?

I cleaned up the mess Zuzu made and drunk my pain killers Bukhosi walked in.

Bukhosi: Hey I just got a call from the hospital your sister is up.

Sonto: Oh ...

Bukhosi: I can drive you there to see her.

Sonto: I don't want to see her

Bukhosi: Okay.

I honestly don't want to talk to Zamo nor see her.

The following day we woke early and left for the village the mortuary catering and tent people were following behind us at the gate where I usually hid from the guards there was no one so we just passed without any problems. Ma Betty has insisted on coming with me. Upon arriving at the village it was raining for the first time in a long time in this village there was rain. I was

both shocked and happy. Rain is a blessing our village is finally blessed the plants will grow and the people won't starve it was quiet though the moment people saw cars approaching they just run away I think they are still scared we got to my house. The last time I was here I watched my sibling's life being taken the last time I was here all of me was taken and I was left with a broken heart. Our house was too small for four coffins; the tent people quickly set the tent. Ma Betty was holding me while Bukhosi and his brother went to dig the graves. No one from my village showed up. Ma Betty and I just sit at the tent with her holding me I had no tears left. We heard more voices outside some people did come.

I was wondering where is Zinhle when she walked in with other ladies from my village. My tears fall the moment I saw her.

Zinhle: Sonto thank God I was so worried about you.

We hugged.

Zinhle: I am so sorry about your siblings I know exactly how you feeling.

I just cried in her arms.

sans-serif; background-color: transparent; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; vertical-align: baseline; white-space: pre-wrap;">Zinhle: I have no one left even Bandile died during the ambush at the Palace. I remember you telling me one day our tears will become a river and everything that has his name will drown. It happened Sonto the Palace was burnt down me and other King's wives managed to run but everyone else died there and I couldn't even save my brother.

This was sadder; Zinhle was left all alone at least I still have Zamo even though I feel like I'm left alone.

Sonto: I'm so sorry Zinhle.

Zinhle: It took our loved ones in order for us to be free from that slavery and miserable of our lives.

More people came in and started singing. Ma Betty and Zinhle were there for me.

Sonto: How are things here with the King gone?

Zinhle: Better everyone is trying to stand on their own feet again. The land will be given back to its rightful owners; hopefully everything will be back to normal. It even rains now.

She said and chuckled.

Zinhle: It sad how we are left alone.

Sonto: I still got Zamo

Zinhle: She pulled through.

I nod.

Betty: Sonto I will go get you something to eat so you will drink your pills before the burrier

Sonto: No Ma I am n-

Betty: You have to eat even yesterday you hardly ate. I will be right back okay.

I just nod my head.

Zinhle: You have support

Sonto: If it wasn't for her I would be more depressed she is an amazing woman.

We sit there and all i could think is why didn't I just die with my family. Why God took the twins and left me with Zamo.

Their funeral was dignified; they were buried in casket everything looked so expensive people ate. Bukhosi had bought a goat for cleansing. After the funeral Zinhle accompanied me to the river to bath. A huge part of me still couldn't believe it but I knew they were gone I did saw their coffins being buried even Slindile was buried on our yard.

After we came back from the river I just wanted to be alone I went to sit under the mango tree. The same tree Sizwe was beaten to death. I sit there and let the tears fall it finally sink in they're really gone I will never see them again.

Someone settled beside me I just stare into space with tears streaming down my eyes.

“I am sorry Sonto”

He shouldn't he warned us. We should've done things differently but we didn't it my fault and carelessness and my damn good heart.

Sonto: They are gone Mzamo and I can't help but blame myself.

Mzamo: You freed us Sonto; we are free because of you. It was never your fault.

Sonto: At what cost though? Everyone is gone. I am left with nothing.

He hugged me.



Mzamo: I am so sorry this happened to you but I know you will pull through; you are a strong woman Sonto nothing ever brings you down. Don't let this get to you.

I couldn't help but cry.

Mzamo: It okay takes this as a blessing. It was a big price to pay but we are free. It was worth it.

No I don't care about being free; this freedom is a sacrifice of my siblings.

Mzamo: Even the forefathers have blessed us with the rain they are happy.

He brushed my back still hugging me.

Mzamo: One day you will look back and see it was worth is.

“That enough hugging for one day don’t you think”

He spoke behind us Mzamo jumped up.

Mzamo: I ... I ... I will see you Sonto

He said and run away everyone seems to be very scared of Bukhosi who am I fooling I am also scared of him.

He came and sat beside me.

Bukhosi: How you feeling?

Sonto: Like my world just ended.

Bukhosi: You know I am here for you right.

He took my face in his hands and wiped my tears.

Bukhosi: I will always be here if you need me.

He made me lie on his chest and hugged me tight.

Bukhosi: Always.

I relaxed and lay on him. Twenty nine

TWENTY NINE

NOMASONTO NKOMO

We are back at the city the house is buzzing Zuzu was right. She is indeed marrying Bukhosi I was really hurt. I didn't know why but I was hurt he didn't even bother telling me he is getting married of all people he chose Zuzu he could've married anyone but not Zuzu.

She walked in my room; I was just sitting on the floor staring outside the window.

Zuzu: I am here to make you an offer a fair offer and you would be a fool if you don't take it.

I just ignored her and stare out the window maybe I should go back to the village once Zamo is out of the hospital.

Zuzu: Here this is 50k you can get your own place and leave me and my husband alone.

She threw a brown envelop next to me that was full of money money I never held before.

Zuzu: Think about it I can help you get an affordable place. Amanda's mother has back rooms for rental somewhere at Mlazi. You could get your own place with that money there is a lot you could do plus you still got your job at Zee's place. Girl there is nothing for you here.

She could be right.

Zuzu: Let me go and get my man you can start packing but do come to the wedding first okay sweetie.

She smiled and blows a kiss for me then left. I looked at the money I was really tempted to take it and just leave this house. She is right there is nothing for me here and she is even giving me money.

Their wedding was to be held the back yard from what I heard Bukhosi refused to have the wedding anywhere else other than his house. The flowers were beautiful; they have decorated everything very nicely.

There was a knock on my door.

Sonto: Come in

Ma Betty walked in.

Betty: Even though Bukhosi is marrying that witch you will attend the wedding and you going to look so pretty in this.

She said handing me a dress. The last time I wore a dress she gave me I got insulted.

Betty: It will make you look like a Princess baby and I have someone who will style your afro hair I want you to be more stunning then the bride.

Sonto: But Ma i-

Betty: No no come let bath you I bought that dress for you.

I sigh as she helps me up she helped me with bathing. The dress is beautiful long and yellow in colour. I loved it. A lady walked in and styled my hair nicely she even put a flower on my hair. Ma Betty told her not to put make up on my face. I was stunning no lie there.

She started ululating.

Betty: wow! My baby you so beautiful look at you.

I loved what I was seeing I loved the girl that was staring back at me on the mirror with a broken arm and a new dress and as much as I was broken inside on the outside I looked beautiful.

Betty: Come I need to show you off. Let challenge them with natural beauty my angel.

I turn to her and attacked her with a hug.

Sonto: Thank you for everything Ma you are the best thing that has ever happened in my life.

Betty: You my baby and I love you.

She hugged me back.

Betty: Now stop before you make me cry come.

Sonto: Wait.

I took the money Zuzu gave me and put it under the pillow then left with Ma Betty we walked passing people all the way to the back where most people were already there. Bukhosi was at the altar he had no grooms' man not even a best man. Ma Betty ushered me to the front seat and we sits next to Amanda Zee her husband and the kids.



Zee: You look stunning Sonto.

Sonto: Thank you.

Only few people were around I'm guessing it family and close friends. The other side were the bride's family and friends; they all looked so fancy and beautiful. Bukhosi was staring at me as he stood there at the altar he looked handsome as always. Our eyes lock and I felt tears burning my eyes I was in a verge of tears but I blinked them away I was hurt so hurt that I felt a big lump on my throat and all I wanted to do was scream out loud.

Music started playing the bride and her father walked down the aisle Bukhosi's eyes never left mine. I blinked few more times and turned to watch her she was smiling from ear to ear and she looked so beautiful. Her dress looked so good on her; she indeed looked like an evil beautiful princess. Ma Betty held my hand I turned my head and watched our interconnected hands. I looked

down till the pastor announces we can all be sited. I still didn't look up.

Betty: Be brave my baby she wants to break you don't allow her. Look up with your chest held high and show no emotion at all.

She whispered in my ear. I took several deep breaths before looking up. Lihle and some other two girls were her bridesmaids; Amanda and Zee were just sitting here next to us. I was sort of shocked when I look up and found Bukhosi still staring at me.

Pastor: We are gathered here today in matrimony of-

Bukhosi: Get to the fucking point.

Is he even allowed to swear in front of a pastor worse when marrying the girl he chose for himself?

People started mumbling to themselves.

Pastor: ...ah Very well seems like someone can't wait to tie the knot.

Everyone laughed me and Bukhosi seems to have a staring concert.

Pastor: Bukhosibemvelo do you ta-

Bukhosi: I do

He didn't wait for him to finish he took the ring from one of the bride maids and put it on her finger. I tried I really tried to keep calm and act as if this whole thing is not affecting me. But I failed dismally; I stood up as tears gushed down.

Sonto: Sorry sorry

I said and rushed out people must have thought I am losing it or I am a bitter ex but I didn't care I am sure Zuzu was standing there with a ring on her finger and smiling happily celebrating but still I didn't care.

I run to my room and just lay on my bed then let the tears flow.

I wanted to pack what is mine then leave yet I was worried about Zamo me and her should leave the moment she get discharged. We can go back to the village we have enough money to build a house or renovate the one we have.

There is nothing for me here; there is nothing for us here.

A moment later the door opened Bukhosi walked in and stood beside me.

Bukhosi: Get up and go wash your face then come down stairs.

I ignored him. And just lay there.

Bukhosi: Nomasonto don't test me.

I still didn't move he lifted me up and I pushed him. He held my hand roughly.

Bukhosi: I said get the fuck up and go wash those stupid tears off your face and come down stairs right now at this moment.

He roared making me freak out. He let go of my arm and he didn't need to repeat himself I literally run to the bathroom and washed my face my eyes were red. I tried my best to fix myself up even after washing my face I felt like crying.

I walked out slowly he took me by my hand and we walked out people were still around. Tables have been

set out side. We walked out and he made me sit next to Ma Betty on a table with Zee Ntando and Amanda.

Bukhosi: Stay here you move I break your second arm dare me.

He then walked away Zuzu was on a table with Lihle and her other two friends showing them her ring and laughing to what I don't know.

“So Spinach do you love him?”

Ntando asked bringing me back to reality.

Sonto: I ... i... sorry what?

Ntando: Do you love him?

They all stare at me and waited for me to answer. I composed myself and looked at him. I felt so cornered and I just didn't like being cornered like that.

Sonto: Why do you always call me that?

He laughed. This is me trying to dodge his question.

Ntando: I'm sorry sometimes I forget your name.

Betty: Stop calling my baby Spinach Ntando.

Everyone laughed.

Zee: But it really is so hard to call her by her name now I mean we are used to Spinach.

Betty: Out of all the names in the world why Spinach.

Sonto: Exactly mama

Ntando: It suits her.

Amanda: And it unique kind of sexy if you ask me.

Ntando: Exactly she is Nkosi's Spinach.

They laughed even more.

Zee: So sweet I always have to stop myself whenever I want to call you that.

Ntando: As for me you can go lick the white man's ass if you like I will never stop calling you spinach. You are the first person I ever named for crying out loud.

I ended up laughing with them.



Betty: You are not doing a great job at naming people  
Zee be he happy he is not the one who named Junior and  
Quinton.

Zee: You have no idea how happy I am with that.

She said laughing.

Amanda: But Bhuti Ntando couldn't you come up with a  
better name.

She asked laughing.

Ntando: No leave Spinach alone it perfect.

“Your naming game sucks shit”

Lihle said taking a chair on a table beside us and settled  
in between me and Zee. Ntando rolled his eyes.

Lihle: Who is cracking jokes here without me the badass around?

Amanda: Who called you over?

Lihle: Take a chill will you I am tired of faking a laugh or smile. Jeez Zuzu get married then the world have to stop and admire her stupid ring like wtf! Is she the first person to ever get married?

Ntando: I am out of here.

He stood up and walked away bumped into some guy they fist bump and pat shoulders then the guy walked up to our table and took a sit where Ntando was sitting.

Him: Ladies.

Lihle: hey Vee I always thought you are handsome.

This guys was scary Bukhosi and Ntando's scary combined. He was so dark and I didn't find him handsome at all his eyes were so red and he was fit than Bukhosi or Ntando.

Him: My name is Vusi not Vee now don't fuck with me.

Lihle: I love it more when you act all tough can I get a job at your club. I would like to take care of your needs.

She said then bit her lower lip.

Betty: Ai this child!

She stood up and walked away.

Vusi: I am glad you okay and kicking Vusi is the name.

He said looking at me and extending his hand for a hand shake completely ignoring Lihle.

I don't know him. Have never seen him before he must be friends with Bukhosi.

Sonto: Hi I am Sonto.

He took my hand in his strong hand and kissed it.

Vusi: You are beautiful they should've named you Nobuhle.

I blushed.

Sonto: Thank you.

Lihle: Are you seriously flirting with her gosh see why I will never like you Sonto. You take all these men away.

Zee and Amanda laughed.

Amanda: You being dramatic now don't you think?

Lihle: Oh shut up where is your husband?

Amanda: He is home babysitting.

Lihle: Argh that husband of yours is full of himself.

Vusi: Can I take a walk around the garden with you Sonto.

The girls turned to me.

Sonto: Umm ...

Lihle: Come on go he is loaded I mean like really loaded.

She then winks at me.

Zee: Lihle!

Vusi: Don't worry I know she has a loose strew probably didn't even take her meds.

He extended his hand for me to take.

I took it and he helped me to stand then we started walking away.

Before we even reached far from the table I saw Bukhosi standing with Ntando and they were staring at us he looked really pissed and Ntando was holding his arm.

Vusi: So have you been good?

I looked away from Bukhosi and shrugged

Sonto: I have been trying.

Vusi: You will get there; it will get better with time.

I nod.

Sonto: I hope so

Vusi: Can I take you out some time just to get your mind off things.

Sonto: I ... I can't ...I

Vusi: Please miss please I will treat you really good we can go to the park or anywhere you like.

I thought for a while.

Vusi: I have a private jet; I can take you for a ride; Cape Town or joburgh your pick.

Sonto: Can I think about it.

Vusi: Yes beautiful

I smile he is sweet. Bukhosi cleared his throat behind us.

Bukhosi: You playing with fire Vusi

He smirks at him.

Vusi: No hard feelings Nkosi and besides you are a married man now.

He raised his hand in surrender.

Vusi: Take your time beautiful.

He said then walked away Bukhosi looked at him till he disappeared inside the house.



Bukhosi: Come with me.

He took my hand and we walked back inside all the way to his room where he attacked me with a kiss the moment we got inside while his hand gentled careless my body.

Bukhosi: You are beautiful

He whispered and licked my ear then bites it gentle.

Bukhosi: it my wedding night and I am going to have you.

He said kissing me all the way down to my neck.

Thirty

THIRTY

NOMASONTO NKOMO-

18SNL

Bukhosi's head was buried deep between my legs his index finger and middle finger were digging inside my honey pot and his tongue was licking every fold of my pussy with every lick came out a moan my head was spinning and my eyes rolled at the back of my head when he fingered me faster I lifted my upper body allowing my

toes to curl up he looked at me with his beautiful eyes while licking cum that was on his lips not losing his eye contact with me. For a moment there I even forget I have a broken painful arm I was feeling so good down there yet so painful at the same time I wanted him to stop but yet I dint feel like he should stop.

Sonto: Please ... sto ... plea...aaah

He got off me and took off his pants I almost stood up and run for my life when his huge gigantic member came out he looked at me as fear was written all over my face how is he in the world of Jesus going to enter that thing in me. All of the suddenly I wanted him to stop.

He climbed back on top of me and started kissing me again he kissed every spot on my body I was burning up and my clit was busy vibrating I wanted him to touch me down there but he kept touching my boobs body and ass neglecting my honey pot. I tried easing the ache down there by moving my hips but still it couldn't help I slowly moved my hand to touch my self but he took my hand

and pinned it on top of my head I have one working arm  
the other one was useless.

Sonto: Ple ...please ...I ...

He kissed me so deeply and passionate.

Bukhosi: Please what?

He asked going back to kissing and biting my nipples I  
could feel his dick poking me and all I wanted was him to  
touch me.

Sonto: Please ....

I pleaded again I have never felt like this before the eager  
to be touched was too much.

Bukhosi: Say it baby beg for it.

He continues with torturing me with his kisses going down and up.

Sonto: Ple ...

Bukhosi: Say it

He came back to my lips and kissed the day light living out of me.

Bukhosi: Beg for it come on say it.

He was frustrating; he was frustrating me so much.

Sonto: Please ... ple... just fucking touch me damned!

He stopped kissing my neck and looked at me with a smirk on his face.

Bukhosi: With pressure sweetie pie.

He inserted his finger and played with my pussy again just when I was enjoying the moment he inserted his member making me cry even more he was big too big he had to try more than once before he was able to enter my sacred place. The pain was unbearable and I regretted ever saying he should touch me I pushed him off but he just kissed me and stopped moving when I was at least expecting he moved in and out slowly. It went on for a while with him kissing and moving inside me slowly and gentle the pain was slowly fading away letting pressure took in. I had tears but yet I still didn't want him to stop he is strong very strong. He knows how to hold me; he knows where to touch me. He makes me feel good.

On his wedding night instead of making love with his wife he made love with me.

The following day he was not beside me on his bed I woke up and looked around. My pussy was still painful and burning I had one of the hell night. I lay with my back and stare at the ceiling with a ridiculous smile on my face finally I am a woman. He made me a woman he took my virginity I don't know how things are going to turn out after this but I will just enjoy the moment I will just be Sonto for once and live in a moment let me be selfish.

I woke up and pulled on his gown then sneaked out of his room to my room where I had a well-deserved bath I then went down stairs where I found Lihle wearing a really short dress she's sitting on the couch in lounge with a glass of juice in her hand.

Lihle: Hey hey bitch come here you such a sneaky ass where did you disappear too yesterday.

I blushed and looked away.

Lihle: Listen here leaves Vusi to me go take your man Bukhosi. He is yours and Girl that man is mad over heels in love with you.

I don't know about that but I know for the first time ever I am living for Sonto I am in love with a man and I am not worried about whether I will have food for tonight or not.

Sonto: You think so

Lihle: It either you are blind or plain stupid take it from your home girl he loves you and girl go get your man stop being this stupid gosh I have never met someone so stupid like you like jeez girl. He is yours all you have to do is stand up for yourself and tell that hoe Zuzu where to get off.

Sonto: He married her he doesn't love me.



Lihle: I did mention you are stupid right? Well I will say it again you are stupid he doesn't love her I just know that hoe has something against him. I don't know what but trust me he has never loved her. So baby girl put Zuzu in her place and stop being stupid I am saying this for a hundred times you are so stupid this is Durban wake up. Survival of the toughest remembers?

We heard shoes clicking Zuzu walked down the stairs in high heels and a short dress. I no longer mind Lihle with her insult maybe I am getting used to them.

Lihle: My bitch looks at you looking so damn sexy. Girl you even glowing your wedding night must have been lit.

She winked at me and I just shake my head and walked away towards the kitchen.

Zuzu: Sweetie you know how we roll I can't even walk that man is a beast.

I heard her say and wanted to laugh and call her out of her bullshit but I decided against it I just took the food I found inside the microwave Ma Betty has made for me.

The conversation went on in the lounge and I couldn't help but feed my ears.

Lihle: You finally got him

Zuzu: I always get what I want; right now I just need to get rid of that hippo.

Lihle: Umm ...how you planning on doing that?

Zuzu: Easy way but if she doesn't barge then we going to go for the hard way.

Lihle: For a man? Really Zuzu

Zuzu: Stop acting holly on me he is mine so she must be gone.

Lihle: Umm ...

The back door opened Ma Betty walked in.

Betty: Hello nana you looking better today.

I blushed.

Sonto: Thank you Ma

Betty: I am so glad you are eating; I was going to make sure I get my belt today if you don't eat.

I laughed.

Sonto: That won't be necessary Ma.

Betty: I am glad; your flowers are dying those people step on them yesterday.

She made an irritating sound; I had forgotten all about me taking care of the flowers. Watching flowers grow and flourishing has always made me feel better even after mama's passing I found peace in helping the flowers grow.

Sonto: Isn't Bhuti Mandla around.

Betty: No that one he went to the rural area visiting his family.

Sonto: Okay Ma I will work on them.

She kissed my forehead.

Betty: Take it easy okay; don't over work yourself.

She then walked away.

I finished eating then went to work on the flowers just like always I found peace working there. I don't mind getting my hands dirty to make something look as pretty as bright as flowers I picked different flowers and went inside the kitchen I found a vase and put water inside then the flowers Lihle and Zuzu were no longer around. Bukhosi walked in from the back door he found me putting the flowers in the vase and making sure they looked accurate and beautiful.

He held me from behind and kissed my cheek.

Bukhosi: Freshen up so I would take you for your check-ups.

I smiled and turned to him he pecked my nose.

Sonto: Okay.

He let me go and I rushed up stairs to clean myself up from all the mud I had then I rushed back to him we both left for hospital upon our arriving he was holding my hand. The doctor said my arm is coming pretty much good but I must get used to moving is every now and then he even said I can go back to work as long as I won't be lifting anything heavy.

Doctor: other than that Miss Nkomo we have no other problems

Sonto: Thank you doctor

Doctor: Would you like to see your sister she has been asking about you.

I looked the other way and answered.

Sonto: No

Doctor: It will mean a lot if yo-

Bukhosi: She said no tell her sister she is busy or something.

Doctor: Very well Mr Nkosi.

Bukhosi help me up and we walked out towards the parking.

Bukhosi: Why don't you want to see your sister?

Sonto: If I tell you will you tell me why you hate your mother.

He squeezed my hand so tightly while his jaws were clenched. And just like that we were back to square one. The close off Bukhosi was back.

THIRTY ONE

NOMASOMTO NKOMO

Bukhosi has hired someone a professional that comes over the house every day. It helping somehow but he is avoiding me as always he has been avoiding me ever since that day; I don't know what is happening in that house. Zuzu has been avoiding me which is super great also Bukhosi avoid me which is not cool at all. He took my virginity and split me out but what is new there he always let me close then push me again the only different this time is I thought things would be different



since we have done the deed I thought he won't ignore me and being ignored like that hurt I feel used. I spend most of my time locked in my room I have even neglected the flowers. Yesterday I started going to work it helping with distraction and help me forget about my miserable life. When I got to work Mbali was already there she has been early these days. I greeted her then started the cleaning we opened and the day went by as normal. Since I had one arm I was working behind the counter I enjoyed working there. I was busy recording a bought stock on the bookkeeper and counting how much we have made so far.

“Hello beautiful”

I looked up it Vusi he smiled but still the guy is just scary. What more scary about him is his eyes.

Sonto: Hello Vusi.

His smiles widen.

Vusi: And she remembers my name.

He said smiling I smiled back shyly.

Vusi: I bought you this and I want to take you on a lunch I hope you haven't eaten.

I was actually hungry so lunch can do. I smiled and took the flowers.

Sonto: They are beautiful thank you so much.

Vusi: Not as beautiful as you.

I blushed looking at the flowers and smelling them I couldn't help but smell them. They smell so divine. No one has ever bought me flowers before; I wonder how he knew I love flowers.

Vusi: You are even cuter when you smiling so lunch?

Sonto: I would love to have lunch with you please give me a minute.

He nods still smiling.

I went to put the flowers at the back I will take them home with me and I am going to take good care of them. My very ever first gift of something I love dearly. I went back to the front.

Sonto: Mbali I am off to have my lunch.

Mbali: Okay sis bring me something or maybe I can have your lunch box.

She sort of asked while smiling sweetly.

Sonto: You can have it.

Mbali: Yes thank enjoy your lunch with Mr Hunk.

That Mr Hunk was standing by the door waiting for me I bid good bye to Mbali then walked off.

He held my hand and we walked.

Vusi: So where would you like us to eat?

Sonto: Anywhere is fine with me.

Vusi: Mocha mamas it is my sister always drag me there.

Sonto: Oh you have a sister?

Vusi: Yes I have a little sister she is adorable.

I smile at him. He really seems like he loves his sister.

Sonto: That nice I loved my siblings too.

I said then got sad.

Vusi: Sorry sweetheart I am going to cheer you okay. We can go on weekend away just me and you this weekend.

Sonto: Ahh ...

Vusi: We can go anywhere you want to go; we can even extend our vacation to two weeks even a whole month as long as I am with you.

He said then brushed my cheek with his big fat strong hands.

We entered the fancy restaurants and he ordered for both of us.

Sonto: Can I think about it?

He laughed lightly.

Vusi: You always have to think but it cool. Can I at least have your number?

Sonto: I ... I ... I don't have a phone.

Vusi: What? Nkosi hasn't bought you a phone yet?

I shake my head no.

Vusi: When we done here I am going to buy you a phone iPhone babe best phone ever.

Sonto: I'm sorry I can't accept any more gi-

Vusi: Nonsense I have all the money in the world. I can even buy you this restaurant if you want. In fact if you were living under my roof I was not going to let you work especially at the shop. Sweetheart you deserve the finest things in life. You deserve to own your own shop and make people work for you.

Sonto: That nice of you.

Our food arrived and we both started digging in.

Vusi: You are a Queen therefore you must be treated like one.

He is sweet so sweet.

Vusi: You know I can buy you anything you want I will buy you a phone and I can give you money every Friday so you don't have to work.

Sonto: But I like working there.

Vusi: Then let me buy you your own shop maybe this restaurant.

Sonto: This restaurant? Yoo it looks too expensive.

Vusi: Money is not a problem just name whatever you want and I will make sure you have it. I told you I want to take care of you; I want to give you a best life.

He may look scary but he is very easy going he doesn't walk around like a robot.

Sonto: Thank you so much this is the first time someone ever interested in taking care of me. I have been taking care of everyone all my life.

Vusi: This is your chance to be happy to be taken care off. Allow me to take good care of you.



Sonto: That would be nice for a change.

He smiles.

Vusi: Come let get you a phone first then we will move into buying you some new clothes.

Oh well I was planning on using the money Bukhosi gave me to buy some clothes for me. He took my hand and we walked out we were done with eating anyway. We walked into a phone shop and he told them to give an iPhone and I should choose any model I like and any colour. I just picked a grey iPhone 11.

Vusi: You sure you like that one?

Sonto: It beautiful I love it.

Vusi: It all yours baby.

He then paid for it.

Vusi: Now I should get your bank account.

He said then kissed my forehead. I was so excited about owning a phone; I kept looking at it and smiling.

He laughed.

Vusi: You look happy.

He said smiling.

Sonto: I love my phone thank you.

Vusi: Anything for you. Once you have set up your phone send me your bank details.

He said handing me a card that had his number.

Sonto: I don't have a bank account.

Vusi: What? No man I will make sure you get one okay.

Sonto: I don't have an ID.'

Vusi: Worry not I will make that happen. You will be shocked what having money can do.

I just smile; he left me at the shop.

The whole day was spent with me smiling to myself.

Flowers then now a phone It might be my lucky day.

After work my driver picked me up when I got home I was holding my divine flowers and smiling I got in the house from the back door these flowers will be in my room. Ma Betty looked at me.

Betty: Someone looks happy.

I smile then smell my flowers.

Betty: Ummh flowers.

Sonto: Hello Ma today was a great day I got gifts and I had a very delicious meal. Some people are so good hearted out there.

Betty: Ummh if you are happy I am happy come give mommy a hug.

She said opening her arms wide I smile ear to ear and hugged her.

Sonto: Let me go freshen up before my doctor arrives

The therapist arrives every day after I knock off from work.

Betty: Okay my baby.

She squeezed my cheek gentle.

I smile and walked into my room with my flowers; instead of freshening up I took my phone and tried to operate it using the instruction given.

Thirty two

## THIRTY TWO

### NOMASONTO NKOMO

I ended up cancelling my session with the therapist today because I was so excited about my new phone; I was so obsessed with it and I spent my afternoon reading instructions and trying to use it. I manage to dial Vusi's number and called him. We talked for a while and he said he will load more airtime for me; I was even clueless when it came to those airtime things. I got so excited to a point of me missing the dinner. I put my phone on my pocket and went down stairs to get myself something to eat; I found the wife and the husband sitting on the dining table half way done with their dinner.

I took a deep sigh it hurt seeing both of them together.

Sonto: Hello

I greet them then made my way to the microwave to get myself food none of them responded. Maybe just maybe they deserve each other.

My phone started ringing on my pocket it startled me no lie and I jumped up a little and took it out. I tried answering it but I couldn't this phone is too complicated.

I groaned in frustration while still trying to answer it. Bukhosi snatched it out of my hands.

Bukhosi: Where did you fucking get this?

Sonto: Give it back!

Bukhosi: I fucking asked you a question!

He roared.

Zuzu: Oh ...Oh ...Oh is someone in shit?

Sonto: Give it back

Bukhosi is frustrating me now he ignore me then expect me to be okay with that he took my virginity and never talked to me like I am some piece of trash I also get hurt just in case he doesn't know. Look at him he use me then go back to sit on dinner tables with his wife.

He neared me looking scary as hell he corned me into a counter and took out my food in the microwave and he put my phone there inside the microwave then closed it.

Sonto: What are you doing? That mine.

He was looking me straight in the eyes as he switch on the microwave. I turned to open the microwave but he grabbed me.



Bukhosi: Who the fuck bought you that?

Sonto: Why did you do that? Why do you always hurt me? Why should I always have to tip toe around you? You are so selfish.

I pushed him and run off I saw Zuzu giving me a best smirk while sipping on her juice. The moment I got in my room I lay on my bed and cried.

I want to go back home yet I want to stay I love the city; it beautiful full of things that I would like to know and explore. I will take Zuzu's money and ask her to help me find my own place that what she want anyway I will leave Bukhosi alone because he doesn't deserve me or my kindness. Lihle was right men will use you and spit you out like a used chewing gum. Lihle has been right all along I have money; Bukhosi gave me money Lihle gave me money and I also got paid by Zee that a lot of money not to mention the one Zuzu gave me.

I woke up and went out if she want me out then she should help me out. I went to her room the door was slightly opened and she was on her phone.

Zuzu: Chommy it working like a charm i can't wait for him to kill her.

She laughed.

Zuzu: Girl I told you I got brains the girl is stupid and naïve it only a matter of time before she leave this house in a body bag.

She laughed again.

Zuzu: I am telling you soon my man will be eating on the palm of my hand and the fucking hippo would be gone.

She laughed and listens.

Zuzu: Argh oh please I told you she's stupid and very naïve this girl will never stand up for herself.

Did I say I was leaving this house? Scratch that I am not going anywhere if these people wants to see the other side of me then they should bring it on I am sick and tired of people walking on my head. I have been too nice.

It time I wipe these stupid tears and face them. I walked back to my room and sleep while thinking about what to do next. I will not let them take me for a fool just because I am a village girl.

I woke up the following day got ready for work then went to do my lunch box just when I was about to leave Bukhosi showed up all dressed and ready for work. I gave him a nasty look then left. My day went on fine; I was busy initiating a plan on my head when Vusi walked in.

Vusi: Beautiful I have been calling you what happened?

Sonto: He ... hey Vusi

I wanted my voice to sound sexy the way Lihle do it.

I cleared my throat.

Sonto: I am so sorry Bukhosi microwaved my phone.

Vusi: He did what?

Sonto: I don't know what he wants from me he keeps using me then toss me then use me and toss me. I am so confused right now.

Vusi: I will get you a new one don't worry.

Sonto: I really loved that phone.

Vusi: Worry not sweetheart I told you I will take care of you.

I smile.

Sonto: Thank you is the weekend away offer still stand?

He looks at me smirking.

Vusi: Yes do you wanna go?

Sonto: I would love too.

Vusi: Perfect I will have someone come by later and take you shopping.

Sonto: I think I can spare a day for shopping; I honestly need a new wardrobe.

Vusi: That perfect let me call a lady to come and take you shopping.

Sonto: Thank you.

He walked out to make a call.

Sonto: Mbali do y-

Mbali: You can go shopping I will cover for you; you seriously need it I have been meaning to tell you all along but just didn't know how to do it.

Sonto: Oh wow I am hurt

Mbali: Sorry no offense intended but you have been wearing the same clothes ever since you got here changed of clothes would do you good.

I smile she is just so sweet.

Sonto: Okay I will hurry back.

Mbali: Enjoy.

I walked out of the shop.

Vusi: Well a lady to take you shopping is on her way; in the meantime let go get a quick lunch.

Indeed we went to have a lunch he kept talking about himself his cars his houses and his clubs private jet he didn't even bother asking me about me what I like or what I want in life. Finally the lady came and he gave her a card. She had too much make-up and was wearing the shortest of them all dress with very high heels.

We went store by store buying anything that I liked she would pick short butt showing dresses and I would

change them and pick decent dresses she even made me pick few jeans and shoes.

We shopped almost the whole day already my feet were killing me from going shop to shop finally we were done and I went back to work Mbali went to the back to look at all the clothes I bought.

After work I went straight home I couldn't wait to try on my new clothes and look pretty in them; I walked in busy humming a song while carrying shopping bags I had to even ask the driver to help me carry them.

My heart literally stopped for a second when I walked in the lounge and saw Zamo she is in a wheelchair and Ma Betty was putting a blanket on her helping her get comfortable.



Betty: Baby you are home look who got discharged. I stare at Zamo who looked at me with tears glassy eyes.

Zamo: Sonto ...I ...

Sonto: I can't do this

I run up the stairs with the driver following on my lead he put my bags beside the door inside then left; I threw myself on top of the bed and just cried.

I thought I was done crying but I am not Zuzu was right I am so stupid and naïve. No matter what people do to me I always try to find the good in them.

I lay there and just thought about my life.

Vusi did promise to take care of me he loves me. If he didn't he wouldn't have bought me all these things.

He loves me and Bukhosi is using me. He wants me near him when it will benefit him.

I lay there and just thought about all the things that are happening in my life right now everyone seems to take advantage of me except for Vusi. Instead of taking advantage of my kindness he shows kindness to me.

Someone knocked on my door before opening Ma Betty walked in.

Betty: Nana

Sonto: Ma

Betty: She needs you

Sonto: She doesn't Ma

Betty: Give her a chance.

Sonto: No Ma please.

I pleaded with her she came and hugged me.

Betty: Family is everything just remember that.

She held me into her arms; we stayed like that for a while.

Betty: Come let have dinner now.

M: Okay.

I took her hand and followed after her Bukhosi wasn't around Zuzu was sitting on the chair busy giving Zamo nasty looks.

Zuzu: Oh great how fucking wonderful two hippos in one house.

Zamo: Excuse me are you talking about me?

Zuzu: Wooh skinny bitch who the fuck is you again?

Zamo: Hahah very funny of you to call me a skinny bitch when you look like a dying dog with rabies.

I was so shocked that no wheelchair got Zamo down; if I were in her shoes I was going to be so depressed. Zuzu has met her match

I wanted to scream take that bitch! Give it to her sister give it to her! Everyone that my sister!

Zuzu: And this hippo has balls.

I could see Zuzu's face has turned red.

Zamo: Yoo sis I would rather be a hippo than have a flat ass like you I mean like have you seen yourself lately your ass is flat as a piece of paper. Real woman have curves.

I couldn't hold it I burst into a loud laughter and Zuzu turned red with anger.

Zuzu: I pray you stay on that wheelchair for the rest of your life

Zamo: If I were to stay on this wheelchair even after life I would still have fat ass than you; sorry does it hurt when you sit? I am asking for a friend.

Zuzu groaned and pushed back the chair then run up stairs. Me Ma Betty and Zamo were left laughing our ass off.

Betty: Umm Zuzu met her match; I am going to enjoy living in this house.

I was still laughing when Zamo and I locked eyes.

Thirty three

THIRTY THREE

NOMASONTO NKOMO

We all sat around the table and had our dinner Zamo kept stealing glances at me and I pretended not to see her. Ma Betty tried to break the ice and the awkwardness by offering to take us to the beach.

Betty: You will love the beach we should go this weekend.

Sonto: I can't I won't be around during the weekend

Betty: Oh are you working?

Sonto: No someone special is taking me on a weekend away

Betty: Weekend away? Who? Bukhosibemvelo and weekend away that impossible

Sonto: No Ma someone else.

Betty: Who?

Sonto: Just a friend of mine.

Betty: Ummh

Zamo: Can I also come with you Sonto?

I gave her a stare.

Sonto: No

Zamo: Oh

We went back to being silent Ma Betty excused herself.

Betty: Nana you will let me know if you need anything  
okay



She said looking at Zamo and Zamo nods.

Zamo: Okay Ma.

She walked out leaving me and Zamo.

Zamo: Sonto ...I am sorry

Sonto: For what Zamo? You should be happy go ahead and celebrate your wish came true Sizwe is no more so are the twins.

Zamo: Sonto ...

Sonto: No Zamo you lived to tell us how useless we are you wished death upon me and Sizwe all the time now he is gone be happy.

Zamo: I did-

Sonto: So now go on and tell me how you told me that Sizwe was putting our lives in danger. Go on Zamo I know you are aching to tell me you told me so.

Zamo: On a serious note I did warn you Sonto I told you Sizwe was putting our lives in danger but no you never listen to me no one ever listen to me because Sizwe never done wrong in your eyes. I was the bad evil sister if you want someone to blame for what happened then start looking on the mirror more often.

Sonto: I knew I just knew you were aching to tell me that.

Zamo: Had you and Sizwe listen to me none of this would've happened; the twins would still be alive and Sizwe would be alive too but no one listens to Zamo. Zamo is selfish and evil; Zamo has no say in the house because she doesn't contribute. It your fault I am sitting on this chair it your fault they are dead and it your damn fault you have a broken arm now instead of walking around sulking help me get my life back help me walk again just like you put me on this chair.

She then wheeled her wheelchair leaving me stunned.

She blame me I knew she was going to blame me I just knew it. I took the dishes and went to wash them; I cleaned then went to my room. I was laying there trying to get everything trying to figure out how to get my life on track the door bust open and Zuzu walked in.

Zuzu: I want my money you such a bitch you are supposed to be gone right now take your stupid scrap sister and leave but no your stupidest is too much for you to see light.

I took her money and threw it at her face.

Sonto: I am not going anywhere so get used to having us around

Zuzu: When I am done with you you will regret not taking the money.

Sonto: Try me.

She smirked.

Zuzu: We shall see.

She picked her money and left shaking her tinny ass.

I sigh and went back to lying on the bed.

The following day I left for work I was wearing one of my new clothes. I looked really pretty even Mbali said so. My hand was slowly allowing me to move it around I was taking it easy like the doctor has instructed. A guy walked in and asked for me.

“Nomasonto Nkomo?”

Sonto: That me.

“This is for you please sign here”

I took a paper and sign; he gave me a gift bag.

Mbali: Umm I wish I was you receiving gift left and right you one lucky lady Sonto.

I opened the gift bag inside was a phone same model and same colour like the one Bukhosi microwaved.

Mbali: You got another phone; oh wow Mr Hunk is definitely blessing you. I also need a blesser like him. Hook me up.

Sonto: Wow it the same as before.

I said smiling while admiring it.

Sonto: It so beautiful.

Mbali: let me set it up for you.

Mbali was more advanced when it came to these things it was easy for her to set everything up and she even took several pictures of us. I was excited I loved it and I know I will have to hide it from Bukhosi or else he might microwave it again that man is insane from my bag I took the card Vusi gave me the other day and dialled his number.

Sonto: Thank you so much I got the phone.

I said happily.

Vusi: The Phone? What phone?

Sonto: The one you bought me thank you so much you are so kind.

Vusi: Didn't Nkosi microwave it?

I was sort of confused.

Sonto: I just received a phone right now a new one.

Vusi: Not from me look I am busy I will talk to you later.

He dropped the call if he is not the one who bought me the phone then there is only one person who did; Bukhosibemvelo. He might feel bad for microwaving my phone good he should. I will thank him when I get home. Mbali and I worked had our lunch together then after work as usual I went straight home.

When I got there Zuzu and Zamo were at it Zamo was sitting on her wheelchair in lounge while Zuzu was

standing with her hands on her hips and they are arguing and insulting each other.

Zuzu: I am going to slap you bitch

Zuzu: I am going to slap you bitch

Zamo: Try me I will scrub this floor with your ugly face.

Zuzu slapped her across the face Zamo tried to fight back but she couldn't do anything on that wheelchair. I matched towards Zuzu and yank her off Zamo then made her turn and gave her a hot slap.

Sonto: Not my sister you can do all the shit you like to me but when you are touching my sibling I swear to god I will beat the hell out of you.

She tried to fight me but I just pushed her against the couch and gave her more slaps while yanking her hair; she screamed and tried to push me. We both fell but I



was quickly to be up I got on top of her and slap her across the face.

Sonto: Not my sister not even once in your life you should go anywhere nears my sister.

She screamed and kicked I even forget I had a broken arm.

She shouldn't have slapped her; no one is allowed to hurt my sibling.

Sonto: I am going to beat the hell out of you if you ever touch her again you hear me.

Someone yank me off her it Bukhosi I could feel his strong arm holding me back.

Sonto: Never again on your life you should touch her do you hear me. Not even once.

Bukhosi: Hey calm down.

Sonto: get a tight leash on your wife because I swear I will kill her she should never touch my little sister.

He picked me up leaving Zuzu laying on the floor crying and Zamo on her wheelchair laughing. We passed Ma Betty rushing down.

Betty: What is all this noise Nana are you okay.

Bukhosi: Go check on her sister.

He took me into his room then locked it I was so angry. I started pacing up and down; she should never lay her hand on my sister.

Sonto: She must not test me she must not test me. Not my sister.

I kept repeating one thing as I pace up and down.  
Bukhosi burst into a very loud laughter with his hand on his knees he laughed so hard.

I stop and look at him.

Bukhosi: I didn't know you got that in you.

He said and laughed again.

Sonto: Your wife can do anything she wants to me but not to my little sister not uZamo kamama hell will break lose. Not to mtasekhaya shame never I refuse.

He laughed looked at me and laughed even more.

Bukhosi: So you fail to stand up for yourself but the moment someone touch your sister you go all jack Lee on them.

I do not know what he means by Jack lee but I will never let anyone do anything to Zamo never if I had power even those guards who killed my siblings were not going to touch them.

Sonto: She asked for it she shouldn't have touched her.

A massive pain shot through my arm.

Sonto: Ouch my arm.

I cried and he rushed to me.

Bukhosi: Fuck! Fuck! We should take you to the hospital to have it checked.

Sonto: Ouch! Ouch.

He held me.

Bukhosi: Where is the sling?

Sonto: I took it off.

Bukhosi: Ok ...umm hold it like that I will carry you okay?

I nod. He picked me up and rushed me to a car then we speed off to the hospital. The doctor checked my arm and said I twisted it a little but it will be fine I just need to take it easy he gave me more pain killers and we drove back home.

Bukhosi: So cat fight.

I ignore him and look outside the window. He touched my thighs then out of the suddenly he hit the brakes.

Bukhosi: You better tell me he did not buy you that dress.

I ignored him again and didn't even bother looking at him because I knew I will shit myself. Cars behind us started hooting.

Bukhosi: Fucking son of a bitch! I am going to kill him

He hit the steering wheel and clenches his jaws tight.

He drove in silent the moment we got home he rushed up stairs and I followed after him he got in my room and went straight to my closet.

Bukhosi: I am going to burn everything he bought for you.

Sonto: What? No you can't do that I love those clothes. I am not going to allow you to control me Vusi is nice and I like him unlike you he doesn't scare me off.

He turned in a speed of lighting and walked to me.

Bukhosi: Excuse me? Did you say you like him?

Sonto: Yes I like him he cares about me and he is willing to take care of me unlike someone who chose to marry someone else and then took my virginity on their wedding night then tossed me like a used tampon.

He grabbed me by my neck and I struggled to breath.

Bukhosi: I am going to kill you

He said then let go of my neck I cough and rubbed it his eyes were so stormy that I even felt like shitting myself.

Bukhosi: I am taking you back to that fucking village I got you from

Sonto: No

I stood my ground.

Sonto: I am not going back; in fact I am not going anywhere. You said it yourself there is nothing for mahhala and you slept with me you took my virginity and where I come from virginity is worth nine cows so I paid staying here I paid you with my virginity I will only leave this house when I feel like leaving or when you decide to pay nine cows for my virginity.

For the first time I looked at him in the eyes and told him where to get off he was also shocked; he got too used to me being scared of him.

Sonto: This is my life I am going to do whatever I like and I am done letting you control me I paid my price so guess what I will be accepting more gift from Vusi I will be doing anything I like with him till I feel like I had enough and I should stop.

He chuckled bitter.



Bukhosi: She has a back bone after all I give you a dick and you think you are superior now.

Sonto: Excused me

He neared me even more getting on my space.

Bukhosi: Don't test me Nomasonto

Sonto: Maybe you should sit back and thought about not testing me on a second thought I will tell Vusi to get me my own place I can't be living with an animal. I know he will happily do it cause he cares about me.

He raised his hand in attempt to hit me; I hid my face with my one arm and waited for the slap that never came. When I looked up he look at me with in an intense way then pushed past me and left I took a deep sigh and sat down because my legs were shaking.

Thirty four

THIRTY FOUR

NOMASONTO NKOMO

I know Bukhosi enough to know he would leave here and go to his study and break all the furniture there including his fists and I care about him way too much to let that happen. I stood up from the floor and went after him but when I reached the passage he was jogging down the stairs with a gun on his hand.

I freaked out and shout after him.

Sonto: Bukhosi! Bukhosi!

He ignored me I run after him.

Sonto: Where are you going? Why are you carrying a gun?

He turns and looks at me.

Bukhosi: You want to know where I am going. Why don't you damn come with me he is fucking shitting me and you keep on letting him I am going to blow his brains out.

Ma Betty and Zamo were just standing there watching us.

Sonto: No you wouldn't dare

He ignored me and walked away; I run and stood on the door.

Sonto: You can't do that you can't go around killing people; I will return his clothes I will not talk to him again please don't kill him.

He pushed me out of his way he was so angry and I knew he will kill him if I don't do something.

Sonto: ouch ... ouch ... aaah

I cried holding my arm; I thought that will get to him but no he just walked as if I didn't cry. I looked at Ma Betty and pleaded with my eyes for her to do something.

She shrugged her shoulders.

Sonto: Ma please what if he get killed and if he kill Vusi I will never forgive myself.

Betty: He won't listen to me Sonto I am sorry.

Sonto: he has to listen to someone.

Betty: Ntando

She said and took out her phone then dialled a number and gave me a phone.

It rings for some time before he picked up.

Ntando: Betty is everything okay?

Sonto: Ntando ... Ntando please help he is going to kill him he is so angry please help

Ntando: Woah woah calm down and tell me what going on who is going to kill who?

Sonto: Bukhosi ...Bukhosi is going to kill Vusi please do something

Ntando: Where is he?

Sonto: He is on his way to Vusi.

Ntando: Okay ...okay where are you now?

Sonto: I am home ... he ... he just left now with a gun.

Ntando: Ok Spinach I need you to calm down I am going there now okay keep calm.

Sonto: Please ...Please

Ntando: Don't worry okay he won't kill him.

Sonto: Okay

He dropped the call and I just slide down and sit there on the floor butt flat.

Zamo: Sonto are you okay? What going on?

Sonto: That none of your business.

Zamo: Yoo

She wheeled herself to her room which was down stairs. Ma Betty came and help me up; she made me sit on the couch.

Sonto: What have I done Ma?

Betty: Shh don't cry baby you are growing up. Make all the mistakes and you will learn from them one day you will look back to this moment and laugh it off.

Sonto: I don't want to learn like this it hurting Ma.

Betty: Shh it okay sweetheart remember when you first arrived I told you the city is cruel. People here don't just do things for you out of their kindness you have to be picky when it comes to trusting.

Sonto: How to know who to trust.

Betty: You never know honey you just have to look at their actions and go with your gut.

Sonto: Maybe city life is not for people like me.

Betty: You are just too kind Sonto and there is nothing wrong with that but don't let people play you.



Sonto: I no longer know what to do I try being kind to avoid such things having to talk arguing and crying but still people go all out to step on my kind heart.

Betty: I am sorry my baby that life for you.

I sigh and lay on her lap. She brushed me gentle

We waited for Bukhosi till Ma Betty had to go and check up on Zamo.

Betty: You should go to sleep.

Sonto: No I will wait for him

She kissed my forehead and left the gate phone ringed I woke up and went to pick it up.

A crying girl's voice is all I could hear she even had hiccups.

Sonto: hello ...who is there? Hello

She kept sniffing and crying.

Sonto: Hello ...are you okay?

“Please ...hi ...”

Sonto: Sis please try to calm down and talk to me.

“I ne... it mom where ...is Bhuti Bukhosi I need his help”

Sonto: who are you?

“Naledi ...my name is Naledi”

“Naledi ...my name is Naledi”

Sonto: Okay Naledi I am going to let you in okay.

“Okay ...okay”

I hung up and pressed the button to open the gate shortly she knocked on the door I open and she walked in looking like a mess. I recognise she is that girl Bukhosi’s sister.

Sonto: Come in Naledi who are you with this late?

Naledi: A ... alone

She said and wiped tears that kept screaming down. I took her hand and made her sit on the couch then went to get her water.

Sonto: Here drink this.

Her shaking hands took the glass and she drunk the water.

Sonto: Bukhosi is not home right now you will have to wait if it urgent.

Naledi: I will wait.

We sit there in silent for hours it getting really late and I couldn't help but worry after a while the back door open I stood up and rushed towards the kitchen.

Sonto: He ...

He has blood on his fist and shirt did he hurt himself again or did he hurt someone else.

Sonto: Bukhosi ...

I said in more like a pleading cry he walked past me but got stunned when he saw his sister on the couch.

Bukhosi: Wtf!

He roared startling me.

Bukhosi: Who the fuck let her in?

He asked turning to me i got so scared to a point of me shaking.

Naledi: Bhuti Bukhosi please I ... I ... need ...I ...need your help please.

Naledi: Get the fuck out of my house!

He roared again matching towards her I swear even the walls shake a little and I knew he will hurt her. I rushed and stood in front of him.

Sonto: Please calm down you are scaring me and her.

Bukhosi: Get the fuck out of my way.

Sonto: Bukhosi please

I pleaded with tears on my eyes.

Bukhosi: Tell her to fucking leave or else I will throw her out myself.

Naledi: Please Bhuti I can't go back there please help me.

She cried pleading and I felt really bad even though I do not know what is happening.

Bukhosi: I said fucking leave!

Sonto: Bukhosi wait ...please wait

He pushed me aside and marched to her he grabbed her roughly and drags her all the way towards the front the door the kid cried and pleaded.

Sonto: Bukhosi please ...please stop

Bukhosi: She should fucking leave and go to her mother she has a mother right? She chose them over me right? Then I don't fucking want to see her I don't fucking want her.

He opens the door and threw her out like a sack of potatoes then slammed the door shut.

She cried slamming the door and pleading.

Sonto: Please let her in; please at least hear her out. She needs you please or at least let her sleep for the night.

Bukhosi: Do you want to follow her? Should I also throw you out?

Sonto: Please Ndlangamandla please I am begging you.

I pleaded holding his hand and I wasn't happy at all with how his fist looked. He just pushed me off him and walked away.

I wiped my tears and went to the kitchen and ignored the girl crying outside I made warm water with salt and followed after him when I entered his room he was busy pacing up and down with a glass of brandy in his hand. He didn't look at me he kept pacing. If the glass could break it would break the way he is holding it. I walked to his dressing table and took the first aid kit.

Sonto: Can I at least treat your fist.

Bukhosi: Leave my fucking room



He roared looking at me. Tears fall again.

Sonto: I am not going anywhere I will not go. So go ahead and beat me if you want too.

I said with tears streaming down.

Sonto: In fact why don't you take your gun and shoot me.

Bukhosi: Leave! Nomasonto go to him go nurse him you said it yourself you like him.

Sonto: Yes I like him because he is a nice person I have no reason to not like him.

He threw the glass on the wall and it shattered into pieces making me flinch.

Sonto: But I love you I love you so much and when you ignore me it hurt.

He looks at me with his intense stare. There I said it now let him take it.

Bukhosi: You love me?

Sonto: I love you I love you so much now would you let me treat your fists please.

He slowly made that defeated walked and sit on top of the bed. I walked up to him and kneel down.

Sonto: Your hand is bad; you should go to the doctor.

He just stares into space without saying anything.

Sonto: Bukh-

Bukhosi: Do you want me in your life?

Sonto: Of course I do you are the one who keep pushing me.

I sat beside him.

Sonto: Mtungwa you will need to see a doctor.

He ignored me again and stares into space I let him have his moment and tried to treat his fist and this time it look bad broken bad.

Thirty five

THIRTY FIVE

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

I was still at the office trying to get my head off things I didn't want to go home early that house is full of drama lately and Mabandla is enjoying it the son of a bitch is even thinking of making my life a reality show he sure is enjoying this. My personally phone rings and it Betty.

Bukhosi: Betty

I said picking up.

Betty: Bukhosi Nomasonto is not back from work is she with you?

Bukhosi: What? No.

I checked my wrist watch; she should have been home by now.

Bukhosi: Let me call her driver and see what the hold up.

Betty: Okay

I dropped the call and dialled her driver's number.

It rings unanswered I called again still no answer. I got worked up and took my phone then left the office and drove straight to the mall of course they are closed. I called Zee.

Bukhosi: Zee has you perhaps seen Spinach today?

Zee: No

Bukhosi: Shit!

I cursed; I don't have a good feeling about this.

Bukhosi: Can you give me that girl's number the one she works with.

Zee: What going on?

Bukhosi: Just send me the damn number.

Zee: Yoo okay.

She drops the call and sent the number I called her instantly.

Bukhosi: Where is Spinach?

"Umm ...Who the fuck is this?"

Bukhosi: Yoo girly don't waste my fucking time I want to know where Sonto is?

"I don't know she went home"

Bukhosi: When was the last time you saw her?

"When we were closing up then she went home"

Bukhosi: She didn't say anything about passing somewhere.

"No is she okay?"

I drop the call and called Betty just maybe she is home now and she was just stuck in traffic.

Bukhosi: Betty hasn't she arrived?

Betty: No oh God where could she be?

Bukhosi: Did she take her phone?

Betty: I don't know

Bukhosi: Okay

I drop the call and rushed back to my car my phone ring.

Bukhosi: Mabandla

Mabandla: What going on?

Bukhosi: I think Spinach is missing

Mabandla: Woah what do you mean you think?



Bukhosi: She is not home I am handing to the office now I will try to track down her phone and that is if she is even carrying it.

Mabandla: Shit let me know how it going and where I can meet you.

Bukhosi: Sure bro.

I drop the call and speed to my office I immediately went to my PC and tried to track down her phone of which I manage pretty well and easy but the phone was in the house meaning she left her phone this morning.

Bukhosi: Shit!

I said and pushed off the PC and it fell on the floor breaking at the process this is about three PC that I would've to replace ever since Spinach came into my life she frustrate me to a point of me not knowing what to do.

I took the phone and called Mabandla while rushing out if she is kidnaped she won't even know what to do she won't even know where she is even if she were to see the buildings she still wouldn't know she will be scared.

Mabandla: Sure

Bukhosi: Vusi have her'

That son of a bitch is the only person I could think of right now.

Mabandla: I will drive there right now

Bukhosi: I am also on my way there

Mabandla: Don't do anything stupid wait for me.

Bukhosi: He fucking took my girl

Mabandla: Nkosi!

Bukhosi: I will try

I drop the call and speed off; I know he is at his club. He is usually there all the time. After hitting the brakes I didn't bother with waiting for Mabandla I walked past his bouncer all the way to his office where I found him relaxed on his chair with his feet on top of the table.

Bukhosi: You son of the bitch where the fuck is she?

He took his feet off the table and looked at me with a smirk.

Vusi: Where is who?

Bukhosi: You never learn do you?

I charged towards him ready to swallow him alive.

He stood up with his hands in surrender.

Vusi: Whoah chill Nkosi what going on?

Bukhosi: Don't fuck with me you know very well what going on.

My fist were still bruised from punching him the other day but that didn't stop me from leaning on the table and send a fist on his nose making him bleed.

He jump off and punch me on my stomach making me bend when I rose up I send another fist on his mouth and blood gushed out. We started throwing fists on each other when Mabandla walked and held me back.

Bukhosi: I am going to fucking kill him

Mabandla: Wait calm down we still need to know where is Spinach.

Vusi started splitting blood on the floor.

Vusi: you son of bitch you will fucking pay for this.

He charged towards us Mabandla let go of me and got in front of me blocked Vusi's fist and pushed him off he almost fall but he balance himself with the table.

Mabandla: Where the fuck is the girl

Vusi: I don't know what you talking about what the fuck did you do to her.

He said looking at me.

Vusi: You finally pushed her away did you beat her up?  
Did the pictures I sent you of us having lunch set you off?

He asked with almost a smirk.

Vusi: I knew she wasn't for you I knew it only a matter of time before she saw you for who you are and leave your sorry ass I mean like did you honestly think a girl like her will love you even your own mother doesn't love you.

He said and laughed a very irritating laugh.

Vusi: She loves me Nkosi let her go you are not worth of love.

He laughed bitter.

Vusi: Even your own mother doesn't love you for crying out loud.

I tried to charge into him again but Mabandla held me back.

Mabandla: He is a sick bastard let go find Spinach.

I blow my nose in anger gave him a murderous look and walked out with Mabandla following me.

I was busy pacing up and down at the parking.

Mabandla: Will you fucking calm down we need to come up with a strategy to find her get in the car I will drive.

We left my car there and drove off in his car.

NOMASONTO NKOMO

My head was heavy and pounding I slowly open my eyes. I was in an unfamiliar room I was tied into a chair I couldn't move. I tried screaming but my mouth was covered with clothing I looked around panicking.

Sonto: Umm ...umm ...umm

That all I could do since I couldn't cry out loud.

I tried to move the chair with no luck; I was now scared so scared.

The room was small with a bed only.

And the door was closed; I tried to listen to the voices outside.

“No man you cheating that not how card are played I will teach you cheese boy”



“I just beat you up for the third time and you saying you will teach me”

More voices laughed. A phone rings and they all went quite.

“The boss is calling”

“Pick up moroon”

“Boss ...Yes she is here ... no ...let me check”

The door open and a guy with so many tattoos wearing a vest poke his head I don't know him and I have never seen him before.

“Yes she is up boss ... okay we will wait for you ...ok boss”

He drop the call and came towards me.

“Baby girl you so fine”

Sonto: Umm ...umm

I cried as tears scream down what do they want from me? I never hurt anyone I didn't even do anything.

He came closer and started touching my thighs in a creepy way while smiling showing off his too many gold teethes.

Tears poured out and I tried pleading with him not to hurt me.

“Fresh fish from the sea”

“Cheese boy!”

Someone else called out standing on the door.

“What is the boss say?”

“The boss is coming over”

“And what the fuck you doing? The boss said not to touch her”

“Ei relax Nduna I was just checking her out”

He said then came even closer and licked my cheek bone making me flinch even more.

“Umm taste so good”

He said smirking and I just closed my eyes and cried while praying with my heart.

I felt him walking away then closed the door behind him.

I don't remember how I got here all I remember is me leaving the store I walked to the mall parking where the car usually wait for me and just when I was about to get in someone held my mouth with a clothing and pointed a gun on my driver. I tried to fight it off but I ran out of energy and that was it. Light out for me.

Thirty six

THIRTY SIX

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

I was running out of options I didn't know what to do anymore and I was so defeated. I felt so useless; Mabandla and I sat on my office and tried to go through people we have wronged just to see who would kidnap her. I was so worried about her not to mention it already dark outside and I still didn't know where she is she could be anywhere dead or on her way to whichever country they might transport her too but I doubt it human trafficking this got to do with someone who is after me and that my worry.

Someone knocked on the door.

Me: Come in

Mabandla took a deep sigh and lean back I know he feel useless and drained just like me. Zuzu walked in a tinny dress.

Bukhosi: What the fuck you want?

I can't stand Zuzu and if she provokes me today I might lose my cool and kill her for real.

Zuzu: Hey Ntando sorry Hun is this bad timing? I wanted to talk to you.

Mabandla: Nx

Zuzu walked towards the table.

Zuzu: Hubby we didn't take our honey moon so I was th-

Bukhosi: Get the fuck out!

Zuzu: Bu-

Bukhosi: Get the fuck out!

She ran out almost falling in those high shoes she's wearing.

Bukhosi: I am going to kill her; I am so going to kill her.

The way this girl disgust me I can't stand her. She has tried more than once to seduce me but I always throw her out of my room. I would never touch her not after tasting Spinach.

Bukhosi: Fuck! Fuck I have an idea ...

I quickly took my computer I was lucky I owed a computer in my house or else this was not going to work.

Mabandla: What's up?

I started typing clicking as fast as I could I don't know why I didn't think of this in the first place.

Bukhosi: I'm tracking the driver's phone.

We have tried to track the car but we found the track removed and thrown around South beach it obvious we dealing with a professional here.

Mabandla: Fuck why we didn't think of that.

I tracked the phone and luckily got a signal and it pointed me at Umlazi.

Bukhosi: It points me at Umlazi.

Mabandla: What are we waiting for?

We both took our guns and run out we got in one car and I was the one who is driving I hit the brakes pretty much hard. On N2 there was traffic and it made me more frustrated. Mabandla would even hit the hooter every now and then. We were both frustrated. Finally we pass mega city still following the GPS that was pointing us to



the signal. When we got at V section the signal pointed us towards the police station and that where I saw the car my car that always drives her to work it was not far from the police station. Mabandla and I got off the car and we walked towards the car.

Mabandla: What if we are being framed.

We both stop and thought about it he is right this could be a trap.

Bukhosi: You are right

We back off a little. Hoods always has people walking up and down the street even during the night Mabandla whistle for some two guys to come over.

“Sure sure razo”

Mabandla: here I want you to go to that car and check if there is anyone there.

He gave them R100 each.

“Sure razo”

They said smiling they walked to the car and checked the front they got freaked out and started running away without even looking back. I rushed there only to see a dead driver with a note on his head instructed to me.

“You will never find her alive Nkosi”

Bukhosi: Shit! Shit!

I said and kicked the car.

Bukhosi: Ouch! Fuck! Fuck.

My foot hurt like shit.

Mabandla: let get out of here I don't have a good feeling about this whole thing.

We both run back to the car and this time he was the one driving.

Bukhosi: Someone is fucking with me! And I fucking hate not knowing who it is.

He drove back to my house when we got to the gate someone was curled up beside the gate the moment Mabandla hit the brakes I rushed out thinking it might be Spinach only to find out it Naledi.

Bukhosi: What the fuck you doing here at night?

Naledi: Please Please help .... Ples...

She cried and I actually felt bad what if her mother did the same shit she did to me.

Bukhosi: Mabandla do something about her.

I said and walked inside the house feeling so frustrated.

## NOMASONTO NKOMO

I was so thirsty and hungry I last ate during lunch time and I am sure it way late right now. The door open and some guy with gold rings on his fingers walked in he looked so creepy and I was actually so scared. He came towards me and look down at me; I was shaking like a leaf.

“Nomasonto! Nomasonto!”

Sonto: Umm ...umm

I pleaded shaking my head.

Him: See what it does mixing yourself with the wrong crowd now you are paying for Nkosi's sin.

He looked at me in a very creepy disturbing way and tears just streamed down.

Him: You see I got you and you going to pay for the things you don't know shame life is not fair don't you think? But that life for you I will chop you piece by piece and send every piece to him.

Sonto: Umm ...umm

Him: Oh wait you want to say something your last few words anything before I slaughter your throat like a chicken.

He untied the clothing around my mouth and I took a deepest breath of them all.

Sonto: Please please don't kill me ...I am begging you.

Him: So sweet maybe I should record you.

He said then laughed; he went on his pocket and came out with a knife.

Sonto: Please ...please no! Please.

He neared me and put the cold blade of knife on my neck.

Him: I will enjoy cutting every piece of your body.

He moved the knife around all the way down to my boobs and I just peed myself.

Him: Bitch did you just pee yourself.

He said laughing so hard.

He said laughing so hard.

Him: I should've definitely recorded you.

He said laughing more hard

Sonto: Please ... I am ...

He moved his knife around my neck up my cheek.

Him: Maybe I should give you a permanent scar first then send the picture to your lover man.

He places his knife on my cheek and toyed with it.

Him: umm or maybe I should start by cutting your fingers one by one.

He laughed a loud scary laugh.

Him: I am a genius don't you think.

He moved the knife to my ear.

Him: Or cut your ear either way all part of your body will teach that bloody cow a lesson.

I closed my eyes and just let tears fall.



Him: He put your life in a lot of danger it a shame what love does to people. You are Juliet dying for Romeo.

The door burst opened making me open my eyes and Vusi came into view when the guy turned Vusi held him by his neck and grab the knife from him.

I sigh and cried relieved he saved me.

Vusi: You touched a wrong girl deal with him boys.

Two buff guys he was with went to take the guy who wanted to kill me Vusi curled next to me.

Vusi: Are you okay beautiful? Did he hurt you?

I shake my head no as he unties me.

Vusi: It alright now don't cry I got you okay.

He hugged me and I cried on his shoulder.

Vusi: I am your knight in shining armour. I will always protect you beautiful.

I just cried and let it all he help me up. I was so embarrassed since I had peed myself. He took me to his car and drove off.

Vusi: Are you okay?

I nodded staring outside the window as he drives.

Sonto: Thank you for saving my life.

Vusi: It okay I knew Bukhosi was not good for you. Look what kind of danger he has put you.

I looked at him then out the window I am confused I never told him what that guy wanted or said but then

again maybe he knows about that guy or maybe he knows that guy have a beef with Bukhosi.

Vusi: You should leave him come and stay with me he is not a guy for you.

Sonto: Thank you but I would rather go back to the village; this city life is not for me. I will take my sister and leave.

He went quite for a while.

Vusi: Your sister is hurt right?

Sonto: Yes she is in a wheelchair.

Vusi: She will need medical care; you can't go back to the village until she recovers

He is right there but I have to go I have to leave this place or at least I need to get out of Bukhosi's life he put my life in danger and didn't even bother to find me. Maybe he hasn't even noticed that I went missing.

Vusi: Look I will tell you this again Bukhosi is not good for you he is bad news. He sells drugs and traffic girls for money now he has pissed lot of people and they are all coming for revenge if you don't leave his house you will be the target again.

No I refused to believe that Bukhosi is a good man. Or he is not? I just wish he had told me more about him I just wish I know more about him. But I refused he would sell girls he is anything but not that bad.

Vusi: I can provide you with a place to stay both you and your sister think about what would happen next if you don't move out.

Sonto: Please take me to Bukhosi's house.

Vusi: beautiful he will hav-

Sonto: I want to fetch my clothes and my sister.

I said looking at him he smile and held my hand.

Vusi: I am going to be there for you okay?

I nod my head and looked out the window then wipe the tears off.

It was late; he drove to Bukhosi's house and pressed the button on the gate.

Vusi: See he is sleeping peacefully with his wife not even caring if you are alive or not.

He said as no one responded. He pressed the button again.

“Yes”

Bukhosi is the one who picked.

Vusi: I have the girl open up.

He said and drops the gate opens Vusi drove in.

I made my way inside with Vusi following behind me I was wet and cold. I hugged myself and walked in Bukhosi was standing there staring my way he looked like a mess and I doubt he was sleeping.

Bukhosi: Spinach

He walked up to me but stop when he saw Vusi following behind me and closing the door.

Bukhosi: You so-

He charged to him.

Sonto: He saved my life the same life you put in danger so now please I am so tired.

I walked past him.

Sonto: Zamo and I are leaving your house.

Bukhosi: What? You fucking crazy.

I walked up the stairs with him following me.

Vusi: Should I come up beautiful?

Vusi shout.

Bukhosi: Not in my fucking house you ass hole.

Sonto: No I will be fine.

I walked off to my room with Bukhosi still on my tail. He slammed the door behind us and made me turn.

Bukhosi: What going on?

Sonto: How could you do this? You put my life in danger; I almost died because of you.

I walked up to him and started poking his chest.

Sonto: I almost died I ... I ...how could you? You are a criminal and your criminal ways are affecting me.



I cried and started hitting his chest but it was like I was hitting a big wall.

Sonto: How could you? Trafficking girls that so cruel ...that ...you cruel ... I hate ...I ... I hate that I love you ... I hate that ... I hate that I love you so much. I shouldn't love you ... you ... you are an animal ... I shouldn't love you ... you don't deserve my ... you don't deserve my love.

I hit him with my fists while crying he yank me towards him and just wrapped his big arm around me I cried and tried to push him off me but he just held be tight I ended up melting and just cried on the comfort of his strong arm.

Thirty seven

THIRTY SEVEN

NOMASONTO NKOMO

He hugged me till I cool off; I slowly got off his hold.

Sonto: I need to pack.

Bukhosi: Don't go with him.

Sonto: Bukhosi please ...

Bukhosi: I will get to the bottom of this you are being fed  
shit don't go with him. If you want to be away from me

at least go to Zee's house. I would sleep better knowing you are safe there please.

For the first time ever since I met Bukhosi he beg me and he is calm so calm for Bukhosi and to be honest his calm side scary me more than his mad side.

Sonto: You are calm that not like you.

Bukhosi: Pack up I will drop you there.

He said and walked out; he looks like he is carrying the whole world on his shoulder and I actually felt bad. I love this man; he put his own life in danger to save mine. Why would he save me only to have me killed? If his enemy want him dead then they should start with me he saved my life now I would do the same with him. I may not hold any power but I won't let him go down on his own.

I made my way out of the room to down stairs where I found Vusi sitting on a couch still waiting for me; I was

shocked Bukhosi isn't here punching him to death.  
Bukhosi is too calm and I am scared.

I cleared my throat.

Sonto: Vusi ...

He turned to me and stood up.

Vusi: Beautiful where are your bags?

I played with my fingers.

Sonto: I ... look ...eh thank you thank you so much for  
saving me but I can't leave.

Vusi: Did he threaten you? I swear I am going to kill him.

Sonto: No ... I can't leave him okay.

Vusi: I don't understand he put your life in danger he abuse you.

Sonto: That the thing he doesn't abuse me he didn't put my life in danger he put his own life in danger he saved my life not once but many times. He saved me from hunger he saved me from my King he has done a lot for me and putting his own life in danger at the process; he took me out of the village knowing very well we were not allowed to leave the village and had the King caught him he was going to be killed but he risked it for me. I owe him I owe him my life my sister's life and everything he had done for me and my siblings I owe it to him to be loyal to him and stay by his side.

Vusi: he is not good for you okay he did all of that for his own selfish reasons he wanted to traffic you he wants to use you he is in love with Zuzu and not you. You don't owe him anything.

He said his voice raising.

Sonto: I don't ..... I don't care! I don't care I love him okay  
... I love him.

He neared me looking darker and his red eyes looks  
scarier I got so scared.

Vusi: What about me? What about what I have done for  
you?

Sonto: I ... I will return everything you bought for me.

Vusi: I saved your life you bloody bitch!

If I ever said Bukhosi is scary then he has nothing on this  
man he looks like an animal right now.

Sonto: I'm s-

Vusi: You bloody ungrateful bitch!

Bukhosi: Get the fuck out my house.

Bukhosi spoke behind us. Vusi fixed his stare on me; he gave me a very intense stare. He then looked up and at Bukhosi.

Vusi: This is not over.

He fixed his jacket and went out slamming the door at the process.

I took a sigh and sit down on an arm of the couch.

Bukhosi: You okay

I nod my head.

Bukhosi: Let me know when you done with packing.

He said then walked towards the stairs.

Sonto: Bukhosi ...

He turned.

Bukhosi: Spinach

For some reason I smiled at the nick name that has stuck with me.

Sonto: I ... I am not leaving; if they are your enemies if someone is out there to get you then I want to be here with you. You saved my life more than once; I won't leave you when you need me.

Bukhosi: No one is out to get me.

He walked back to me.



Bukhosi: I will get to the bottom of this; you just need to tell me what those people said to you.

I nod my head.

Bukhosi: You need to rest we will talk tomorrow okay.

Sonto: Okay.

He took my and we walk up the stairs still he was so calm I went to take a long well deserved bath when I came out of the bathroom on top of the bed was food.

I silently thank him for being considerate. He walked back in and just sat on top of the bed and watched me eat.

Bukhosi: Did they hurt you?

He asked with his jaws clenched.

Sonto: No ...but I was so scared he ...

Bukhosi: it okay eats and rest we will talk tomorrow.

Sonto: Why are you so calm?

Bukhosi: Trust me I am nothing close to calm.

I just nod my head and finished eating and got under the covers he also got in and held me and I lay my head on his chest.

Bukhosi: I'm sorry I couldn't protect you.

He held me tight. I have no doubt when it comes to protecting me; he has been doing that for as long as I have known him. He always stood by me; he even defended me from Zuzu and Lihle when they were

insulting me. He may have a strange way of showing he cares for me but I know he do.

Sonto: Thank you for always being there for me.

He just held me without saying anything.

Sonto: Do you ... do you traffic girls?

His hold around me tightens.

Bukhosi: If I do would you still be here?

I didn't say anything to that because it true if he traffic girls then why haven't he trafficked me.

Sonto: Could you please tell me more about you anything I just want to know something about you hearing it from you.

He kept quiet for a while.

Bukhosi: Mabandla and I are not biologically brothers; we just met at the military.

Sonto: Oh wow but you almost look alike.

Bukhosi: That what happens when you spend most of your time with some people.

That means I don't know anyone from his family that he actually get along with.

Me: That nice anything else like where you grew up where you went to school?

He kept quiet for a very long time to a point of me almost falling asleep.

Bukhosi: I grew up at an orphanage.

Sonto: Oh ...I ...

Bukhosi: Go to sleep sweetheart.

That just means shut up it enough for the day I relaxed on his arms and let nature to take over.

Thirty eight

THIRTY EIGHT

BUKHOSIBEMVELO NKOSI

I kept her in my arms till I was sure she was fast asleep I slowly put her on the bed gentle and just watched her sleeping. Right there and then I made a vow that I will never rest until Vusi paid for all the shit he has been doing I kissed her forehead and left her sleeping. I walked into my study and called Mabandla.

Mabandla: Sure

Bukhosi: I am going to kill that son of a bitch

Mabandla: Who?

Bukhosi: Vusi I am going there right now. He staged this all this whole kidnapping shit was his entire plan.

Mabandla: I don't follow

Bukhosi: He kidnapped Spinach so he would play hero

Mabandla: Sound like that scumbag but you can't go there now he is sure waiting on you

Bukhosi: I am only going there to deal with that village mother fucker what I have planned for Vusi will need time I will teach him a lesson he would never forget even after life

Mabandla: Who?

Bukhosi: The village King

Mabandla: I long forget about him damn I am coming with you.

Bukhosi: You have a wife

Mabandla: She will understand and last time I checked you are also a married man.

Bukhosi: Mxm I will meet you there

I drop the call and took my tool box then made my way out I drove to his club. His bouncers didn't let me in they called him down.

Vusi: So what can I do for you Nkosi?

Bukhosi: I am here for the Village Chief

Vusi: Oooh him ...well I kind of let him go.

I gave him a murderous look.

Bukhosi: What?

Vusi: The deal was I will help you at the village not keep people hostage.



Bukhosi: You got to be fucking kidding me.

He smirked clearly enjoying this. Mabandla showed up behind me.

Vusi: Ops it looks like I am not sorry to burst your bubbles boys.

He wink

Vusi: You interrupted me I was about to fuck some bitch while imagining that village hoe.

I charged towards him but the bouncers stood in my way and Mabandla held me back.

Vusi: Tell her I will be thinking of her while fucking someone else.

Mabandla: He is provoking you on purpose let go.

I gave him one just one last murderous look.

Bukhosi: This is not over.

Vusi: Wuuh I am scared.

He said then laughed and walked away.

Mabandla: Why the fuck did you leave Sengwayo with him?

Bukhosi: Fuck! Fuck! I wasn't thinking I wasn't fucking thinking at all but I doubt he let him go.

Mabandla: Fuck.

Bukhosi: Let deal with this in the morning I need to do some thinking

Mabandla: Sure

We did a fist bump I got in my car and drove back home.

## NOMASONTO NKOMO

The follow morning I woke up with no sight of Bukhosi I was still disturb by him saying he grew up at an orphanage. How since he had a mother? Could this be a reason why he hates his mother? I woke up and went to take a bath then went down stairs I wasn't going to work Zee will have to understand. I am scared of going outside; I am even more scared of going to work. I went straight to the kitchen.

Betty: Oh my baby I was so worried about you

She said and hugged me tight.

Betty: Are you okay?

Bukhosi: I am okay Ma.

Betty: Thank God you are home safe sit down I will make you some coffee.

I nod and took a sit while she made me coffee.

Zamo wheeled herself in.

Zamo: Oh thank God Sonto I was so worried about you.

Zuzu also came in busy humming a song; she looked at us one by one.

Zuzu: Betty where the fuck is breakfast?

Zamo: Yoo and you all say I am rude

Zuzu: I wasn't talking to you four legs.

Zamo: Fuck you

Betty: Sonto here is your tea my baby what would you like to eat.

Sonto: I ...

Bukhosi walked in before I responded.

Bukhosi: Can we talk now.

He said looking at me. I swallowed hard took my coffee and followed after him.

He walked up to his study I also got in and closed the door behind me.

Bukhosi: I want you to stay away from Vusi; do you think you can do that?

I nod my head.

Sonto: Yes ...

Bukhosi: Good don't talk to him nor take his things and you won't be going to work for some few days till I have someone I trust to take care of you.

I nod again.

Sonto: Thank you.

Bukhosi: I need you to talk to Naledi for me.

I blinked few times.

Sonto: Yes of course.

I was happy that he asked me to do something for him I was so happy that he trust me enough to ask me to talk with one of his family that he deeply hate.

Forty

FORTY

## NOMASONTO NKOMO

We were still waiting for the doctor when Bukhosi's phone rings; he picked up and walked away from us. Ma Betty kept brushing my back. Bukhosi kept making endless calls then he left and came back with some guy and a coffee for me and Ma Betty.

Bukhosi: Can we talk.

I put the coffee down then stood up and followed after him.

Bukhosi: I have to be somewhere else that man will drive you and Betty back home. He should never leave your sight.



Sonto: Okay ...umm Bukhosi I think you should also check-up on Naledi she said your mo-

Bukhosi: She's not my fucking mother.

He hissed angrily and people who were passing by us turned to look.

I took a deep sigh.

Sonto: Her mother has cancer.

Bukhosi: Good then she can die why the fuck she came to my house for?

Sonto: She need a place to stay her ...her father ...is ...well he forces himself on her.

Bukhosi: Still how is that any of my business?

Sonto: Bukhosi!

Bukhosi: No why the fuck should I care about them when they never cared about me fuck them I got far more important things to deal with.

He then left me standing there and walks away; I am done trying to understand this man. I will never understand him.

He is just too complicated.

“Nomzamo Nkomo”

I turn and walk back towards Ma Betty when I heard the doctor call out Zamo’s name.

Sonto: How is she doctor?

Doctor: Your sister is okay she lost lot of blood but she will be fine her wrists were cut really deep so it might take some time for them to heal.

Sonto: Oh thank god.

Doctor: Miss Nkomo I would suggest your sister seeks some profession help she was shot and now she's in wheelchair depending on someone to take care of her always. That can be very depressing.

Sonto: Thank you so much I will make sure she get the help she need can we see her.

Doctor: She is resting right now please come back tomorrow.

I nod my head.

Sonto: Thank you so much doctor.

Doctor: very well have a great day.

He bid goodbye and left Ma Betty held my hand tight and prayed then we went back home.

Ma: Ma go lie down I will make you something to eat.

Betty: I just need to bath first and please baby makes me some coffee with biscuits.

Sonto: Okay Ma.

She walks up the stairs while I boiled water for her coffee and got the biscuits. I took everything up to her room but I found her already fast asleep. I left her to rest and went back downstairs I was not in the mood to eat; in fact I had no appetite at all I was just worried about Zamo. I clean the house and started to get ready for cooking dinner.

Zuzu: Well! Well! Sonto or should I say Spinach?

She said leaning on the kitchen door frame I just ignored her.

Zuzu: You know I gave you so many options to leave but no you didn't leave I even offered you money lot of money that could have help you start over but still you here.

Sonto: Zuzu I am not in the mood.

Zuzu: This is my house with my husband not some charity case that keep orphans.

She made her way in and I just continue with chopping the carrots.

Zuzu: Now you have made me go the high hard way.

I turn to look at her and to tell her where to get off but my eyes popped out and my heart almost stopped beating. Zuzu had a Gun pointed at me.

Sonto: Zu- ...zu

Zuzu: Oh now look who is scared.

She laughed out loud with a gun still pointed on me.

Sonto: What are you doing?

Zuzu: What does it seems like I am doing?

She laughed.

Zuzu: Gosh you so slow I am getting rid of the problem.

Sonto: Zuzu!

No lie I was so scared.

Zuzu: Well you could have made things easier you could've just left and no one was going to get hurt but again you are stupid now I will have to kill you.

Sonto: No ... no you don't I will leave I promise I will leave.

Zuzu: Too late for that sweetheart don't you think.

Sonto: Zuzu please.

Zuzu: Turn around.

I look at her then the knife on the counter.

Zuzu: Don't even think about it I will shoot you before you even move turn the fuck around with your hands on your back.

Sonto: Okay ...okay please don't hurt me.

Zuzu: Turn around bitch.

I turn slowly with my hands on my back as instructed before I could make out what was happening she hit me on my head with the gun and I fell then it was light out.

I woke up to a sound of Zuzu talking with someone.

Zuzu: We fucking had a deal ... what? ... okay when can you come and get her ...are you kidding me it only Thursday Monday is to far come and get her on Saturday ...then send fucking someone ...okay ...okay Monday is fine .



She groaned and drop the call.

I was in a room look like a basement; it had an old washing machine that I doubt it works two old fridges a dinner table and some other things that were on boxes.

Sonto: Zuzu ...what ...

She had me tied on a chair.

Zuzu: Oh you are awake.

She was sitting not far from me.

Sonto: Zuzu please you don't have to do this I will leave I swear.

Zuzu: Shut the fuck up.

Sonto: You are crazy if he loves you he will choose you it doesn't matter if I am around or not and he married you meaning he wants you not me.

Zuzu: Oh that why he slept with you on my wedding night? Now shut the fuck up before I blow our brains.

Sonto: Zuzu he chose you he ch-

She charged towards me and slapped me across my face.

Zuzu: This should teach you not to mess with me never mess with what is mine. I will make sure you suffer in every possible way I will make your life a living hell and you will beg me to kill you you will go on your knees and beg me to end your life and trust me I will be enjoying every minutes of it.

Sonto: for a man Zuzu all this for a man.

Zuzu: Yes my man I will do anything for my man bitch and right now you are standing on my way. I mean like before you showed up he enjoyed fucking me he fucked me so hard and good and I loved every minutes of it but you decided to ruin all of that now he doesn't even look my way because of you. I swear you have been provoking me for so long now and I will make you die a very slow painful death.

I don't get Zuzu why is she going all this trouble for a man who doesn't love her enough to be with her why is she doing all of this if Bukhosi love her he will be with her whether I am around or not. Zuzu is very beautiful she can have any man.

She smirked.

Zuzu: Is that fear I see.

She started rounding me while whispers weird shit on my ears.

Zuzu: Maybe I should organise some men to fuck you; rough fast and skin to skin.

She round me till she was in front she kneel in front of me and look at me in the eyes.

Zuzu: and with all that happening I would sit there and watch watch as they do as they please with you and trust me I will be enjoying every part of it.

She touched my chin and forcefully made me look at her.

Zuzu: You and I are going to have lot of fun; while they are fucking you I will record everything then open an account online where the whole world can see how much of a hoe you are.

She round me again went on my behind she lean next to my ear.

Zuzu: You will pay for fucking what is mine for touching what is mine. I will make sure of it.

She moved to another ear.

Zuzu: It a pity that hoe sister of yours didn't die I was really hoping she will die first then you would follow her.

She gave me a back slap. It hurt how I got kidnapped in two days. I got saved the first time then got kidnapped again.

Zuzu: And I love how no one will never found you here you can scream all you like but no one will hear you.

She laughs and walks towards the door.

Zuzu: Behave pat I will see you later

she blow a kiss then shake her small ass and left.

I just closed my eyes and let the tears stream down ever since my siblings passed I cry more than I use too.

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