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PROLOGUE

I hold on to the flowers and i hand them over to her. She takes off her glasses and she wipes a drop of her tear that was escaping her marble eyes. I went down on my knees in front of the grave and ran my fingers on the granite designed tombstone and my fingers glide smoothly with no worry or any hassle like I rubbed butter under my fingers. I hear her sniff and footsteps behind us but I smile , I have cried enough and it won't bring back my Bestfriend , my friend , my lover , my husband.

"He lived He loved , He laughed and he left. "

Bonga's voice smoothly says behind me yet I haven't left the eyes of his tomb stone.

" Mama , I am sorry "

She always says that but yet she doesn't seem to know i have made peace with his departure. I have good and bad memories of us together but one thing I know is that his soul still lives in inside of me. I can still feel him when I am all alone in the house while everyone is away , we had big dreams together but his time had came and you can't argue with God's will.

Me : "Thambo lam lekhentaki

Sambulela sam

Sambulela sam selanga

Sthuthuthu sami

Sokujika emadrayini ah we mama..."

I chuckled and She cried behind me .

Me : " you have always been soft like me my darling "

I turned to them.

Me : " and wena Siyabonga , you are just like your father "

He kept quiet.

I turned back to the grave and laid my head on the tombstone and carried on singing.

I AM ZOBUHLE AND THIS IS MY STORY

1

INSERT 1

[-A FEW YEARS EARLIER -]

"Ahhh kwenzenjani

Nsizwa

Nsizwa

Yangakithi vele bayakwazi..."

He chuckled softly.

Me : " Kwenzenjani ?(What's wrong ?)"

He sighed and i put the bucket next to me and joined him on the rock. I waited for him a bit before he lifted his head up to me and looked at me and I looked down and fiddled with my fingers.

Bangizwe : " Into encane (it's something small)"

Me : " like ? "

Bangizwe : " do you ever think I will ever be like Those people we see in town on those tv boxes. ?"

Me : " angazi ukhuluma ngani (I dont know what you are talking about)"

I kept on looking down. He sighed.

Me : " I have never seen them. "

Bangizwe : " I will take you to town with me when I have to collect the money that baba sends. "

Me : " ok "

Bangizwe : " I have to go "

He stood up. I didn't want him to go as yet so I stood up as well.

Me : " Bangi "

He stops his tracks and turns to me.

Me : " ngingangazi ukhuluma ngani kodwa (I may not know what you are talking about but ..)"

He looked at me waiting for my answer.

Me : " You will succeed if you put your mind to it. "

Bangi : " Thank you , that means alot. You are a very good friend Zozo"

I faintly smiled.

Bangi : " inkomo zababa zingilindile (my dad's cows are waiting for me.) See you tomorrow "

I nodded and he smiled and walked off. When he was out of sight i sighed and sat down on the rock. I took small stones and I started throwing them in the water while singing.

Me : " And every smile isn't a smile of happiness

And every tear thats shed is not a tear of joy

I'd like to take a little time.... "

" Uhleli engabe ukha amanzi (you are sitting when you are supposed to be getting water) "

I stood up quickly and it was my brother.

Me : " I am sorry "

Zizwe : " Mom is waiting hurry up "

I nodded and I took the bucket and I made my way to the river. I went on my knees and put the bucket inside. I felt a hand go onto my butt and I froze.

Zizwe : " (whispering) How are you feeling ? "

A lump was stuck on my throat shouting to be set free yet I am scared.

Me : " It's still sore. "

Zizwe : " it will get better next time. "

I nodded.

Zizwe : " hurry on. I am waiting "

I nodded and he let go of my butt and I wiped my tears and I collected the water. I got the amount I needed and I put the bucket on my head before I made my way to him before we left the river.

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Zizwe : " Did you tell anyone ? "

Me : " no "

He nodded. He told me I shouldn't tell anyone about our little secret but why does it feel wrong ?

Me : " Won't I have a baby like mama ? "

Zizwe : " Have you started your periods ? "

I shook my head. I am 16 and i haven't gone on my periods as yet.

Azizwe : " if you haven't gone on your periods you won't have a baby "

I nodded.

Me : " it feels wrong Bhuti "

He stopped his tracks.

Zizwe : " Don't , I mean don't anger me "

I nodded. He clicked his tongue and we carried on with our journey. We reached home and my little sister was out chasing the chickens , mama was cooking by the fire. She got off from her knees and ran to take the bucket from my head.

Mama: " Finally you come back "

Zizwe: " we got delayed. "

Me : " I have homework "

Mama : " Go and bath your sister first "

Me : " ok mama "

She weak smiled. I could see the hurt in her eyes but she always musked a smile on her face. Why couldn't she leave our father ? I really don't understand

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he even married our nextdoor neighbor last year and sometimes he would go there or come here. He always hits mama when ever he is here but it is when Zizwe is not around because that turns into the most biggest fight in the world.

Me : " Zandile ! "

I call out for my little sister and she comes to me.

Me : " asambe siyogeza (let's go bath) "

She wobbles her way to me running and follows me inside. I take the bathing basin and I walk out to take the pot full of hot water and I went inside and poured in the basin before I put in cold water. I stripped her and she giggled. I smiled , I wish to protect her . From every bad thing in the world and how our world is like at the moment.

Me : " you will grow up and be a star like those tv people Bangi always talks about "

She splashes the water as I bath her. I am at peace and I smile . I finish bathing her and get her dressed and I go throw the water away. I walk back inside and Zizwe is with her. I rush to snatch her from his arms.

Me : " ungamlimazi (don't hurt her) "

Tears stream down my eyes.

Zizwe: " I won't. I would never , it's you who is taking it in for now "

He brushes my cheek and wipes my tears , mom rushes in.

Mom : " your father is coming. Please behave "

Zizwe: " why don't you leave him ? "

Mom : " i will forever be married to your father Bongizizwe "

He shook his head and walked out.

Me : " I will prepare his plates. "

Mom nodded and I went to the hug outside and I took our tinned plates and cups and I took a towel and strapped my little sister on my back and made my way out.

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INSERT 2

I fed Zandile some potatoes and then looked at mama who was rushing up and down just to prepare for her husband.

Mama : " where is Zizwe ? "

I shrugged and she sighed. She placed the plates on the table and I wiped Zandile's face and fingers and I put her down and she wobbles her way around the kitchen before finding a spot by the corner and she sat down. I folded the towel and placed it on the table before going under it and fixing the stone that is keeping the table stable.

"MaGasa!"

Dad's voice roared through the house all the way to the kitchen. I got up and she looked at me. She masked her smile but fear was visible in her eyes.

Mom : " Singapha baba !(We are in here)"

He walked in the kitchen and I looked at him. An older version of my brother.

Dad : " Zobuhle "

Me : " Gatseni "

Dad : " how is school ? "

Me : " very well "

I looked between him and my mother.

Mom : " the food is ready. You can sit down. Ngiyazi kunzima ezintsimini. Ukukhathala kukhona (I know that's it's hard work at the fields. You must be tired)"

He sat down on the chair mom pulled.

Dad : " I am tired "

Mom rushed to take the pots and she pulled me so I can help. I helped her and she would give me a small smile once in a while and then carry on with her duties.

Me : " mama. "

She looks at me and I turn behind me and see if dad is focusing on us but he is just looking at Zandile who is constantly talking rubbish.

Me : " why do you stay ? "

Mama : " I will forever be married to your father Zobuhle. Nothing changes ,besides we just have mis understandings "

I looked at her.

Me : " You remember what is always said at church "

Mama : " Zandile "

Me : " The white pastor once said that no weapon formed against you shall prosper "

She chuckled lightly.

Dad : " where is Zizwe ? "

Mama : " usathe shwii(he just went out)"

He nodded and stood up and took Zandile from the corner and held her. I turned back to mom.

Me : " Mama did you hear me ? "

Mama : " Zobuhle you are 15 "

Me : " 16 "

Mama : " it's still the same. "

Me : " Mama "

Mama : " let it go Zobuhle. The white pastor also said God doesn't put you in a test that you can't overcome. Nothing he puts us through is beyond our strength. This too shall pass.

Me : " But this is not a test ! "

I close my mouth and I dropped the spoon.

Dad : " why are you shouting ? "

He frowned. Mom was shaking.

Mama : " Lutho baba. Uvele waphathwa izinto zabelungu (nothing , she just gotten into white people's behaviour) "

Dad : " Zobuhle take your sister "

Me : " Baba "

Dad : " Now ! "

I walked to him and took Zandile and I made my way out. Sooner it was sounds off plates clashing with the floor and my mother's soft scream. I ran back inside holding Zandile tightly and my mother was on the floor sobbing and trying to clean the food that messed up the floor.

Dad : " you are disrespecting me with those kids ! "

He bashed her with his belt as she cried. Tears welded in my eyes. I wanted to go in but I was scared. Is this what love is ? I held Zandile close to mw before I ran out of the house going to the hut. I laid her on the mattress and I kissed her and pulled her to my chest and hushed her. I wiped my tears and plastered my mother's famous smile.

Me : " Thula thula Nana , Thula Sana

Thul'umama Uzobuya ekuseni ... "

I sighed. She smiled as well and I held her close to me.

Me : " No harm will come your way little one "

And I will make sure of it not dad or Zizwe will hurt her. I closed my eyes and dozed off after some time.

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I was woken up in the woken up in the morning by a heavy substance that was ontop of me. I opened my eyes and it was Zizwe.

Me : " Bhuti "

Zizwe : " It's our secret "

Me : " Kodwa iskole (but school) "

I was in tears. He opened my legs. I checked my side and zandile wasn't by my side.

Me : " Zandile "

Zizwe: " I took her to mama

don't worry I will be quick. "

He opened my legs and pulled my dress up. He took off my panties and he took of his pants and I could feel his private area on my thigh.

Zizwe : " It will be better "

He said breathing down my neck as he penetrated me and I wanted to scream but couldn't.

Zizwe : " Shhh "

He groaned my by ear and I felt disgusted with myself.

Zizwe : " I am the only one who touches you Zobuhle "

He says that.

Ziziwe : " Oh Nkosi yam "

Why isn't the Lord helping me ? Saving me from all of this ? Lord is this how it's supposed to be done ? It doesn't feel ok. Why is it hurting me ? Shouldn't people who love each other be doing this ? I just don't understand. He gets done and he gets off me and pulls his pants up. I am still paralyzed to the floor.

Zizwe : " I will see you after school "

He walks out and I sit up slowly and I cry myself. I get on my knees and I try to pray but nothing comes out. I feel defeated and I just get up on my feet and i take the bucket and i walked out and went to boil the bathing water for myself.

" Zobuhle ! "

I wiped my tears.

Me : " mama "

I turned.

Mama : " Go and set your uniform. I will carry on "

I nodded and looked at her. She had a blue eye.

Me : " Kuzolunga (it will be ok)"

She looked at me and smiled.

Mama : " Go and prepare "

I stood up and went to prepare my uniform before My mother came in with a basin that has water. She put it Infront of me.

Me : " Thank you "

She nodded before limping her way out. I looked at the door as it closed before I stripped and bathed. I made it minimum time and I was out and getting dressed. I went to discard the water and went to the kitchen to eat the porridge with sugar. I thanked mama when I was done and I made my way out of the house. The walk to school was about 12Km from home. I usually walk alone or walk with Bukisile.

" Zobuhle "

I stopped my tracks and it was Bangizwe . I became shy and looked down.

Me : " Bangi "

Bangi : " are you ok? "

Me : " why do you ask ? "

Bangi : " you are walking in pain. It's like there is pin between your thighs. "

I held my tears back.

Me : " I fell off a tree yesterday "

He chuckled.

Bangi : " You still play on trees "

I nodded.

Bangi : " Zobuhle "

Me : " yes "

Bangi : " You really helped me with what you said yesterday. "

Me : " Tell me about these tv people "

He seems excited.

Bangi : " they play movies or they appear on tv as activist like Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko .."

Me : " oh even our president as well "

He clenched his jaw .

Bangi : " yes "

Me : " I heard spies get better money "

Bangi : " never betray your people Buhle. Love us all but don't trust anyone. "

Me : " oh "

He held my hand and my heart skipped a beat.

Me : " uLinda ngeke ajabulele lento esiyenzayo (Linda wouldn't be happy with what we are doing)"

Bangi : " (smiling) senzani (what are we doing ?)"

I let go of his hand.

Me : " Angifuni ukuxabana nabantu Bangizwe (I don't want to squabble with anyone Bangizwe)"

I walked further ahead.

" Zobuhle !"

I kept on walking.

Bangi : " Siyabangani and uyazi nawe (we are friends and you know that)"

I felt my chest close in. I swallowed the lump and smiled at him.

Me : " I know "

He held my hand.

Bangi : " and we will be bestfriends forever"

Me : " until you go to your tv screen "

We laughed.

Bangi : " Till I die Buhle "

He looked at me and I shyed down. We carried on walking till we reached the school and we went to form lines for the assembly. Bangi went to his grade and I went to mine. I couldn't see Bukisile anywhere. The bell rang and silence filled the school. Our headmaster walked around holding a pipe behind him as we all formed straight lines.

Principal : " We lost 7 of our kids yesterday in the March for workers. I don't know how they suddenly became workers but we all know marches don't end well in our time....."

He carried on talking but my mind was somewhere else. I looked at Bangi and the thought of a bullet penetrating my body or his gave me cramps , I always ask the Lord to keep us . I really like him and I know he doesn't but I just wish he did for a little while then I can die. I have always been his friend but never his lover and I wonder is we are ment to be or not.

" Zobuhle "

Me : " Principal "

He was next to me after snapping me from my thoughts.

Principal : " The front. "

I got out of the line and made my way to the front.

Me : " may we all bow our heads in prayer "

Everyone did and I started praying with my broken English. No one had a perfect English back then and we were struggling and battling at times but we pushed just so we can get out of this bubble we were trapped in. I said amen and the bell rang and we were dismissed to classes. My first class was music class. Yes our school wasn't so wonderful but buckets and some deep voices and beautiful sweet ones together made beautiful music. If I could be one thing I would want to be a singer one day , I always listen to music from the radio yet mama says it wastes the battery and is only used for the news. I want to be rich and make money so I can listen to alot of music and have that tv box that Bangi will be in one day. I got in class and put my bag down on the table.

Cebo: " Zobuhle come here "

I went to them.

Cebo : " which political party would you vote for when you are older ?"

Me : " Cebo I..."

" Attention"

We all turned , we face him as he wrote on the board the song we will have to practice this time.

Bangi : " Ms Nkomo is a bit delayed but this is the son we will be singing. "

Me : " aren't grade 12's not supposed to be in class? "

Bangi : " we are important here "

Cebo : " yes "

He came to us and took my hand and started singing .

Bangi : "Nomakanjani we dali wam'

Ngeke ngikushiye Siyofa silahlane

Nomakanjani we dali wam' Ngeke ngikushiye

Siyofa silahlane" I intervened.

Me:"Noma bekuthuka Bathi awugezi

Unuk'umlomo

Ngikuthanda unjalo ..."

Everyone laughed and he frowned and i joined in.

Me : " siyayenza lento ?(Are we doing this ?)"

He spun me around and everyone started singing.

INSERT 3

It was after school. I have already made my way out and started walking on my own. I am not sure if Bangi is still left at school or he went home early . They do that sometimes ,leave school early because they want to and there is a spot she they can escape. I take out a my school book and do homework while walking all the way home. I get home and Mama is sitting by the fire with Zandile sleeping next to her.

Me : " sawubona mah (hello mah) "

She smiled.

Mama : " I am glad you are home. "

I smiled and went to the hut. I changed and checks if my uniform is clean enough for tomorrow as well. I only have one pair of each so I have to make sure everything is well. I walk out and take the bucket and walk to the river. I finally reach the river and I sit down and I look at the water running and kids playing in the water and splashing themselves. The giggles and joys make me laugh and join in as well. I stand up from the rock and go put in my feet in the river before I took the bucket and filled the water inside and then made my way home.

" Zobuhle !"

I turned.

Me : " Bukisile. Indaba ungenzanga esikoleni ?(Bukisile why didn't you come to school?)" ,

She laughed.

Bukisile : " you an school. "

We started walking together.

Bukisile : " ,Zobuhle "

Me : " mmmh "

Bukisile : " ,Ngizithwele (I am pregnant)"

I put a hand over my mouth.

Me : " Ingane Bukisile (, a child Bukisile ?)"

She nodded and looked down. She then pressed her dress down on her stomach and it appeared.

Me : " ,Who is the father. ?"

Bukisile : " Lucky "

This is just shocking

Me : " Iskole?"

Bukisile : " Angazi. Ngizohlala ekhaya (, I don't know. I will stay at home)"

Me : " Mnganami (my friend)"

Bukisile : " yeah "

There was silence.

Bukisile : " Hee phela. "

She has started with the gossip.

Me : " Iza nazo (Bring them)"

Bukisile : " Linda "

Me : " What did she do ? "

Bukisile : " ume ehlahleni nengane zenduna (she is standing by the trees with the Induna's son)"

Me : " you lie ",

The tree were thee corners back where we lived.

Me : " you "

Bukisile : " tell Bangi "

Me : " No. He will be broken "

Bukisile : " Haibo you love him "

Me : " I am his friend. "

Bukisile : " bekumele kumithe wena ingane yakhe (you were supposed to get pregnant with his baby) "

Me : " sengifikile. Iyobonana (, I am home. See you later) "

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Bukisile : " Haibo I am still talking "

Me : " bye "

I walked off.

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*A few months later *

I looked at him. Throwing the rocks inside the river and not a single skip comes out of that and it frustrates him more. I am dressed up for our 'little practice ' I lied and said I needed help to find the right note when in all I wanted to see him. Seeing him makes me feel calm and see the world being alright. My heart beats slow and fast at the same time just by looking at him.

Me : " Bangi "

He turns and his trousers swift with the wind.

Bangi : " Ngiyaxolisa Also(, I am sorry Zozo)"

He sits down next to me and he rubbed his hands.

Bangi : " Linda left "

There was silence. My heart was jumping for joy but the sadness in his eyes made me feel sorry for him.

Me : " Ngiyaxolisa (, I am sorry)"

Bangi : " Yazi akashongo ngisho nokusho Buhle !(You know she didn't even tell me Buhle)"

He stood up and kicks the rocks.

Bangi : " I wonder if she ever loved me "

Me : " Someone loves you Bangi "

I closed my mouth and he turns to me.

Bangi : " I love you too Zobuhle "

My heart beat. He sat next to me and held my hands. I guess my Christmas dress didn't go to waste today.

Bangi : "I love you Zobuhle. You are a very great friend "

My heart sank and my smile started fading.

Me : " You are also a good friend Bangi "

I let go of his hands and this time I was the one who was playing with the rocks.

Bangi : " What's the matter ? "

Me : " nothing "

Bangi : " Are you sure ? "

I stood up "

Me : " ,,I am needed at home "

I took the bucket and filled it with water.

Bangi : " Also "

Me : " Bye Bangizwe. I will see you tomorrow "

He put his hands in his pocket and he nodded. I faintly smiled and I put the bucket in my head with his help and I made my way home. Tears left my eyes. I didn't know if I could carry on being his friend because I don't want to be one. I love him and I want to be MaBangizwe. I wiped my tears with my one hand and I got home and Zandile is playing with the soil. I put the bucket in the kitchen. Mama walks in.

Mama : " Wamuhle boh (, you are beautiful)" ,,

I looked at myself.

Me : " Ngiyabonga (thank you)"

Mama:" kodwa uswenkila imfula. Uyamazi uyihlo unjani (you are dressed up for the rivers. You know how your father is like)"

Me : " Ngiyaxolisa (I am sorry)"

Mama : " Go change then bath your sister "

I nodded and I walked out .I bumped into Zizwe.

Me : " Zizwe "

He looked at me up and down.

Zizwe:" Where are you coming from ?"

Me : " ,Be....be.. "

I ran to the hut and I closed the door and cried and the door opened and closed and I turned. He took off his belt.

Me : " Bhuti "

Zizwe : " Lala (lay down)",

Me : " Bhuti angisamthandi (I don't want this anymore)"

Zizwe : " uzothintwa imina Zobuhle ! (You will be touched by me)"

He grabbed my arm roughly and I cried.

Zizwe : " Shhh. Mawuyeka inkani ngeke kube buhlungu (if you stop being stubborn it wouldn't hurt)"

I sobbed. There was a knock on the door.

Mama : " Zobuhle geza umntwana ! (,Zobuhle bath the child !)"

Me: " I...I "

Zizwe : " you will sleep in my hut tonight "

He put on his belt and he opened the door and walked out. I sat down and looked at the door shaking. I looked at my thighs and I closed my legs and cried.

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To be continued

INSERT 4

I made my way outside to take Zandile and then went inside the hut with her. Mama walked in with bathing water and she placed the Bathing basin down and looked at me.

Mama : " Bukisile is pregnant "

I know , she is soon to be due.

Mama : " I don't want you having a baby as well Zobuhle. Stay away from boys. "

Me : " Ok mama "

I was lying through my teeth. Yes I know I said I wanted to stay away from Bangi but I don't want to. She turns and walks out before I undress Zandile and start to bath her. A usual she plays with water splashing it everywhere.

Me : " you are very naughty "

" Mmmh "

I looked behind me and its Zizwe. I take a blanket and get Zandile out who isn't pleased and I cover her up and hold her close to me.

Zizwe : " remember my hut "

He smiled.

Me : " Bhuti ... "

Zizwe : " I am going stick fighting . When I come back I want you in my heart ok ? " "

I nodded with tears wanting to come out and he turns and walks out. I loosen my hold on Zandile and I look at her before I lay her on the sponge and I get her dressed with warm clothes and then put her on the sponge and I go and discard the water. I come back inside and I take her and we walk to the big house.

*PRESENT DAY *

She comes and kneels next to me as I keep on humming the song and she puts her hand on my shoulders .

Buyi : " Mama " "

She says and there is a bit of silence.

Me : " Don't cry my baby " "

I lift my head from the tombstone and I wipe her tears.

Buyi: " Mama after everything ? " "

Me : " it's love my baby " "

I turn to Siyabonga who is forever silent.

Me : " Siyabonga "

He turns his eyes from the grave and they land on me.

Me : "it's ok "

*BACK THEN *

The night came and I dared not to go to Zizwe's hut. Zandile is with mama in the big house and I feel better like that. I looked at the black wall as the lights have dimmed and I sigh before I turn and the door is open. His figure standing and a shadow filling the whole hut. I sat up as he walked inside.

Me : " Zizwe "

Zizwe : " what did I say ? "

I keep quiet .

Zizwe : " Zobuhle ! "

Me : " you said I must come to your hut "

Zizwe : " then why are you not in my hut ? "

I kept quiet. He marched closer to me and I tried to get up but he held me down.

Me : " Bhuti ! "

He closed my mouth.

Zizwe : " if you do as you are told "

He undressed his pants and he lifted my dress and did as he pleased. Always pleasuring himself , he always says it's nice but he is my brother . He shouldn't be doing such upon me. I looked around the room and tried to search for something but non was in reach. After he was done he laid next to me and held me.

Zizwe : " you should stop crying "

I sniffed

Zizwe : " I want to sleep Zobuhle you are making noise "

I tried to subside my noise and a few seconds he was snoring. I got off slowly from his embrace while trying to subside my cries. I left my underwear like that and made my way to the door and I opened it and closed it before I started running barefoot

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tears would hit the soil and wet my face while I tried to run but it was painful between my thighs. I got a bit tired and I stopped to take a breath before I carried on running and looking back if he would see me or is he following me. I finally reached my destination and got in the yard and there were three huts . I ran

around looking in each window just to find who I am looking for and I finally did in the second one. He is sleeping alone facing up. I went to the door and knocked softly and called out for him.

Me : " Bangi "

I said softly. I knocked once more and called out for him and still no response. I looked around and the night sky was very dark and so as the outside. I knocked again.

Me : " Bangizwe "

I sighed and still no sign. I turned to walk home and the door opened.

Bangi : " who is it ? "

I turned around and walked up to him.

Me : " it's...it's me "

I sniffed.

Bangi : " Zozo ? What are you doing here ? "

I went into his arms and hugged him before crying. He held me back.

Me : " He touched me Bangi it hurts down there "

Bangi : " Down where ? "

I shyed down.

Bangi : " zozo talk to me "

I kept quiet and cried.

Bangi : " who touched you ? "

Me : " He ..he has been sleeping with me Bangi "

He looks around before pulling me in.

Bangi: " you are sleeping now ? "

I looked down and cried.

Me : " I didn't want to "

Bangi: " Zozo who is touching you? "

Me : " Bhuti "

I look down.

Bangi : " come here "

I go to him and I feel safe.

Bangi : " I am here. It's ok , he won't touch you again Zozo "

I sniffed.

Me : " I don't want him to touch me Bangi.

Bangi : " he won't zozo. Come "

He pulled me inside and he closed the door pulled me to the mattress. We sat on it, I started fiddling with my fingers.

Bangi : "How long has he been"

Me : " He started earlier this year. "

He pulled me to him

Bangi : " you should have told me the first time Buhle I am your friend "

I shook my head.

Me : " I don't want you to be my friend anymore Bangi"

Bangi : " Why ?"

I get closer to him and kiss his lips and he responds though it's my first but I am taking my chances. I broke the kiss and Butterflies nested inside of my stomach.

Me : " I love you Bangi. Not as friend. I always have and I know that you and Linda just went your separate ways but I love you "

He is very silent .

Me : " Bangi "

Bangi : " I am leaving soon Zobuhle , to find work in town "

He looked at me and my heart was crushed.

Me : " oh "

Bangi : " I am sorry Zozo "

Me : " take me with you "

Bangi : " Zozo I can't you need school "

Tears left my eyes.

Me : " but I want to go with you Bangi. There are alot of schools and maybe in town there is a school. We can live together please take me with you "

He hold my cheek and kiss my lips and my heart is dancing.

Bangi : " It's a risk Zozo "

I looked at him and kissed him again and he responded. He held my waist and pulled me closer and I felt the warmth. I broke the kiss.

Me : " I love you Bangizwe take me with you "

He was silent for a while.

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To be continued

INSERT 5

I looked at him.

Me : "Bangji "

Bangi : " let's sleep Buhle we will talk later "

I could feel a lump in my throat but I just nod and he fixes the mattress for us. We rest on it and I am looking at the wall. The tears can't stop them selves anymore so they start to go down as I sniff and close my eyes while the night is filled with silence.

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The sound of the chickens was what woke me up. I opened my eyes and looked around and I wasn't home. I remember running away the night before but I will have to go back as well, there I nothing I can do anyway. I stretch myself and Bangji is not in the hut. I folded the blankets and put the pillows away and he walked in with two metal bowls and his mother followed inside. I was scared. Really scared.

MaNtuli : " unjani Mntanami ? (How are you my child ?) "

Me : " I am good mah "

She nodded.

MaNtuli : " Eat the both of you. I will prepare water for bathing before we go to your house "

My house ? To do what ? I simply nodded and she walked out. I looked at Bangi and he put the bowls down that had porridge and pulled me to sit on the bench.

Bangi : " I told Mama about what Zizwe is doing "

Me : " Bnagizwe how could you ? "

Bangi : " i couldn't keep quiet and let you suffered like that Zobuhle "

Me : " You had no right though , I confided in you because I trust you "

Bangi : " And trust me Zobuhle , I wouldn't let you suffer "

I wiped my tears.

Bangi : " eat "

This is going to be a mess. Maybe I should have stayed at home and not came here because it seems like it's going to be a mistake now that I regret. We carried on eating and after his mother came with my bath water and I bathed while he went outside. After I was done I got dressed in my dress and went to discard the water and stayed in the sun to feel warm while

Bangi went to bath and then after he came out and discarded the water and then came to sit next to me. He held my hand.

Bangi : " I will take you to town with me Zobuhle "

I smiled looking at him.

Me : " thank you "

His mother came out.

MaNtuli : " Asambeni (let's go) "

We stood up and she walked ahead of us while we walked behind. It was very silent. Bangi held my hand and I looked at it and smiled a little before returning the favour but then my smile fades at his last words when we held each other's hands and said I am his best friend. I will never be his lover. He didn't say he likes me back yesterday. We got to my house and already Mama , Gatseni (Dad)

Advertisement

Zizwe and Mancane (second wife) were outside . Baba was shouting at mom and Zizwe was also trying to protect mom. I feel bad that I ran away it will earn mama a beating.

MaNtuli : " Sanibonani (greetings) "

She stood in front of them. I try to hide behind her.

Dad : " Zobuhle come here! "

I was scared. I moved slowly towards him letting go of Bangi .
The eye Zizwe gave to me would kill me straight.

Dad : " Where do you come from ? "

Me: " II "

He slapped me and I held my cheek and he removed my hands. I wanted to cry.

Dad : " Where do you come from? "

Me: " I ..."

He slapped the other cheek and I could feel it throbbing

Dad: " Khuluma man !!!(Talk man !)"

Bangi : " Kwanele !(that's enough)"

Zizwe: " Ngeke sizwe ngawe Mfana (we won't hear from you boy !)"

MaNtuli : " Thula wena (you keep quiet)"

Dad : " Uphumaphi Zobuhle!?(Where do you come fromZobuhle !?)"

He slaps me again and tears stream down my cheeks and he hits my neck and started to hit me.

Me : " ngiyaxolisa baba !(I am sorry dad)"

I say trying to protect myself. Bangi stands in front of me.

Bangi : " Uphuma ekhaya. (She comes from my house)"

Dad: " Uyadelela mfana (you are disrespectful boy)"

MaNtuli : " hayi ngeyami ingane ungalinge (not with my child , don't you dare)"

Bangi: " I impregnated her "

What the hell ? Haibo

Me : " Ba...."

Dad: " Uzongihlanyela ,uzongihlanyela !!(Don't drive me crazy , don't drive me crazy !!)"

He takes the sjambok and he moves behind Bangi and started to whip me and I cry. Bangi tries to protect me but gets a hitting as well. MaNtuli intervenes and she holds Baba's hand that he is whipping us with and he tries to resist.

MaNtuli: "don't think about trying "

Dad : " Phuma lay'khaya Zobuhle ungaphinde ubuye(Leave my house Zobuhle and don't ever come back)"

I cried.

Mama : " Baba Please"

Dad : " Shut up !"

She keeps quiet.

Zizwe : " She can't leave "

Dad: " will you feed the baby ? "

He kept quiet.

Dad: " Ngikukalela isikhathi ngifuna uphumule lah (I am timing you. I want you out of here)"

He walked off. I stayed on the ground and cried.

Bangi : " Come Zobuhle "

Me : " Why ? "

Bangi : " come Zozo come "

He pulls me up. My dress is torn and my body hurts. We limp our way to my hut to get my things. I feel hurt , where am I gonna stay now and I don't even have a baby in me let alone periods. I don't know what I will do and why did Bangi say that ?

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To be continued

INSERT 6

I packed my clothes and books that I had in the big plastic bag while I was crying. Why , really why did Bangi lie about me being pregnant. Why is he doing me like that ? It really hurts

" Sheshisa lapho ! (Hurry up)"

I try to hurry but my heart is very heavy and my body is painful. I finish up and I get up and take the bag and I walk out slowly out of the hut. Mama is crying while on her knees begging dad so that I can stay , I have to stay . Who will protect Zandile if I am away ?

Dad : " Out ! I don't ever want to see you here Zobuhle you hear me ? "

Me : " baba "

Dad : " out !"

Bangi : "come Zozo"

He takes my bag and I weep as we are walking away from home.

MaNtuli : " Nizongifica phambili (you will catch me home)"

She walks off ahead of us and we are at the bag.

Bangi : " don't cry Zozo "

Me : " why did you lie Bangi ? Why did you lie like that ? "

Bangi : " I did that because he will continue what he was doing , did you like it Zozo ? "

Me : " ofcause not Bangizwe how can you ask that ? He is my brother "

Bangi : " He didn't act like one "

He held my hand.

Me : " what now ? I am not pregnant , I haven't went on my periods as yet "

Bangi : " you will stay with me at my hut and when I am done with school we will run to town. I will take you with me "

I wiped my tears .

Me : " really ? "

He looked at me.

Bangi : " really Zobuhle "

I smiled and he laughed.

Bangi : " You are my friend Also. I have to take care of you "

My heart shattered once more.

Me : " yes Bangi "

We kept on walking in silence after that until we got to his home. We got in his hut and he put the bag down. I sat on the bench and his mother came in the hut all changed in iphinifa .

MaNtuli : " nidlala ngami

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umithisile Bangizwe !! (You played with me , you impregnated her Bangizwe !!)"

She was fuming in anger. I stood up and Bangi weny closer to his mother.

Bangi: " Cha ma angizange (no ma I didn't) I was protecting Zobuhle "

MaNtuli : " Protecting what !? Do we have money to feed another mouth Bangizwe !? You are stupid !"

She walked out stomping her feet. I was scared, this backfired so quickly. I looked at him.

Bangi : " don't worry "

Me : " I am worrying. "

I don't know what I will do.

" Zobuhle woza uyokha amanzi ngeke uhlale ungenzi lutho lah !!!!(Zobuhle come and go fetch water , you won't sit and do nothing !!!)"

I looked at Bangi before making my way out of the hut and MaNtuli was holding a 20L bucket.

MaNtuli : " go fetch water "

Me : " yes ma "

She gave me a stare and I took the bucket and I made my way out to the river along the way I was crying.

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I reached the river and I went to get some water and I sat down and washed my body in the cold water as it was aching. I wonder how I am going to carry the bucket in this pain.

Me : " ouch ! "

I cry as the cold water tries to sooth my pains.

Buyi : " Why are you smiling ? "

Me : " Your father was a wonderful man. "

Bonga : " How ? It's not what we saw "

I turned to him.

Me : " i know. I know Siyabonga "

I looked at the tombstone as the warm breeze hugged my body in warmth.

" Zobuhle ! "

He picked me up from the waters and I tried to catch my breath as he held my body in his arms.

Bangi : " Are you trying to kill yourself ? "

Me : " no , I am trying to sooth my pains "

Bangi : " you are even wet. Come "

We got off the river and went to sit on the big rock. He held my hand.

Bangi : " Zobuhle it's not an option "

Me : " to what ? "

Bangi : " you have alot more to live for "

Me : " what is that ? "

Bangi : " seeing me on those tv boxes as a star and you as a singer or we will be together "

Me : " Bangi do you love me ? "

I looked at him.

Bangi : " ofcause. You know that "

Me : " as a friend you do "

Bangi : " Zobuhle "

Me : " it's ok. It's ok , let's get going before your mother cuts our heads off "

He chuckled.

Bangi : " I will catch you at home. Ngisayothatha inkomo zababa (I am going to get dad's cows)"

Me : " ok "

I nodded and we got up. He helped me with the bucket on my head and I headed off .

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To be continued

INSERT 7

I got to the Zikode home and MaNtuli was outside by the fire while stirring in the pot. I put the bucket down and she looked at me.

MaNtuli : " lalelake Ntombi , uyavuka uyasebenza uyezwa (Listen here girly. You wake up and work do you hear me ?)"

Me : " yebo mah (yes ma)"

MaNtuli : " abafowabo ka Bangizwe bayeza maduze. Hamba uyolungisa (Bangizwe's brothers will be here soon. Go and prepare)"

I nodded and walked to go and do some cleaning in the main house and the other hut as well. I wish I could rest a bit because my body is not looking ok , I would take some breaks and stop just because my body was aching and then I would carry on.

" Oh "

I turned around. It was Bangi's bigger brother. He is the youngest.

Me : " Sawubona (greetings)

Him : " Unjani ntokazi ?(How are you ?)"

Me : " I am good "

I turned back to my work.

Him : " Umnangi ka Bangizwe angithi ? (You are Bangizwe's friend isn't it ?) "

I turned and nodded.

Him : " ok "

He walked out. I am kind of scared. What if the things that happened back home happens here ? I don't know but I am just thinking.

MaNtuli : " Zobuhle !!! "

I walked out as quickly as possible .

MaNtuli : " Hamba uyolanda uBangi (go and fetch Bangiziwe) "

Me : " ok ma "

I walked out of the yard and went in search for Bangi.

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Me : " Mmmmh Sthandwa Sam "

Bonga chuckled and I looked at him ,he kept quiet. Buyi laid her head on my shoulder.

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Me : " Bangizwe ! "

I called out for him when I saw the cows.

Me : " Bangi ! "

He was standing with Bukisile

Advertisement

she was holding a little plastic.

Bukisile : " oh Zobuhle how are you ? "

Me : " Bukisile unjani ? (How are you ?) "

Bukisile : " I am good. "

Me : " me too "

Bukisile : " othi ngihambe. Iyobonana Zobuhle (let me leave , I will see you Zobuhle) "

Me : " I will come visit. "

Bukisile : " ok "

She walked off.

Bangi : " Something wrong ? "

Me : " your mother said I must call you "

Bangi : " oh. Let me get my stick and then we can go "

He went to get his stick. I can't seem to undo the feelings I have for him even after so long. How can I undo them because I don't want to , it makes me feel happy just to think of us being together. He comes back .

Bangi : " Asambe "

We started walking side by side and he would hold my hand. The cows were walking in a ok manner as well and Bangi would direct them. His father has many cows .

Me : " your father has many cows. "

Bangi : " I will lobola someone with them "

I smiled .

Me : " she will be lucky. "

Bangi : " And you will be there at my wedding calming me down "

I nodded.

Me : " yeah "

This friendship keeps on breaking my heart into more pieces than before.

Bangi : " I hope I find Linda one day "

I felt a lump in my throat and I just removed my hand and looked away.

Bangi : " what's wrong ? "

Me : " nothing "

Bangi : " don't tell me that "

Me : " I just miss Zandile that's all "

He nodded. It breaks my heart to see him love another woman. Maybe it's because of what Zizwe has been doing to me that he doesn't like me , that I am not pure anymore . Maybe that's the reason I feel tears stream down my face and he looks worried.

Bangi: " Zozo talk to me "

I look at him and it's paining before I ran off and he shouted after me .

Bangi : " Zobuhle !!"

I kept on running while tears blinded my eyes. I am not pure anymore and no one will love me. No one will ever love me.

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To be continued

INSERT 8

I kept on running while hearing him call out for me until his voice faded , I was crying and tears didn't seem to stop. I wiped them and ran into his yard and went to his hut as I sat in the corner and cried. My whole body wasn't stoping from aching and when Iran I made things worse and that also contribute into me crying in the process. Why am. I still here? I am here because I am pitied as well from my situation. I rested a bit on the floor while crying and closed my eyes.

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" Zozo"

Someone shook me out of my newly found sleep. I was at peace as well and didn't feel any amount of pain in my heart or body.

Bangi : " Zozo "

I opened my eyes and I sat up while trying to gain my will to see once more.

Bangi : " Zobuhle are you ok ? You got me worried "

I nodded and sat against the wall.

Bangi : " I brought food for you since you were asleep "

He took the bowl and gave it to me.

Me : " thank you "

I started eating and silence consumed the whole heart

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I am trying to detach myself from him so I wouldn't be hurting anymore. It hurts to see him love someone who won't always be there for him as I would and it hurts that no one will ever love me in that manner.

Bangi : " Zozo "

Me : " Mmh "

Bangi : " are you mad at me for something ? "

Me : " no Bangizwe I am not "

I carried on eating and he was silent.

Bangi : " ok , I hear you then "

I nod.

Bangi : " everything will be ok "

Will it be ok ?

The next morning I woke up early as I had to fetch some water before going to school. We cleaned ourselves up with Bangi and we then started off our journey to school. It was silent on the walk to school. He was talking but I just remained silent till he also saw it fit to do the same. It wasn't even half way to school when he started again and held my hand.

Bangi : " what song do you think we will get this time in music class ? " I took my hand back from his. Me : " I don't know "

Bangi : " Zozo what's the matter really cause I am trying here "

Me : " I am the matter ok ? I a! The issue here "

I started walking faster but he caught up with me.

Bangi : " What do you mean ? "

I shook my head while trying to suppress my tears.

Me : " I hope you find Linda one day Bangizwe "

I walked further leaving him stand there and I got in the school premises. Bukisile wasn't allowed back because she was starting to show so today I am all alone at school.

INSERT 9

The year ended and a new one started. Bangi found work at the City in some shop and was quiet happy and content with that. He took me with him and his mother was not happy at all. I was happy to go into a new environment. As soon as the Taxi entered the town it had beautiful big buildings around

Advertisement

something I didn't know or was used to. This was my first time here in town and I hope it all goes well for us. He holds my hand and I look at him and he has a slight smile and I put out mine also and he smiles better. I look out the window and he taxi comes to a halt and we step out of the taxi. He holds his bag and I hold mine and he tightens his grip around my hand.

Me : " Where are we ? "

Bangi : " Durban "

I nodded as we walked through the city.

Bangi : " let's go get some food with the money baba sent "

I nodded and we walked to some shop and an Indian man was selling. He bought some small stuff we needed and things to bath and lotion with and added pads.

Me : " why are you putting these for ? "

Bangi : " Incase you start your periods and don't use a cloth. "

I nodded while biting my bottom lip. He paid and we took the things and we made our way in the street.

Bangi : " we have to get another taxi to our new home. You will love it Zozo "

Already I am loving it by the sounds of things. We find another taxi and get on and it drives off. I am excited and happy about it. I hope my new school has Music class as well because I would love to join one. The drive is a bit shorter than the one we took from home to here . We get to the place that Bangi said we are heading and exited the taxi and walked the distance to the house. The houses are closer than the ones back at home. Their yards are no where to be seen as the houses are closer together.

Me : " where is the river ? "

He chuckled.

Bangi : " there is no river here Zozo water comes from taps "

Oh I feel embarrassed about that. I decided that I should keep quiet. We got in the place we are going and he opened the door and we got in. It was empty and not furnished . I turned to Bangi who put his bags down and the plastics.

Bangi : " it has this room only. "

I nodded.

Bangi : " don't worry. When I get my first pay I will buy a bed for us to sleep in. "

I smiled.

Me : "we are used to the floor so it's ok.thank you "

Bangi : " It's ok. That's what's friends are for "

I just nodded and kept on looking around this tin made place . I put my bag down as well and hugged him.

Me : " thank you "

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A few weeks passed and I got to start at school. Bangi got me bits of what's needed for the school uniform and it was very helpful as well. I really appreciate him. I have made a friend and she lives around where I live. Her name is Hlanziwe and she is very nice person as well. School is not that long distance I

used to walk back at home. It seems to be much shorter as well. We have just come out of school and we are walking back home with Hlanziwe .

Hlanziwe : " you love this music. You have been asking where is the music class since you came. "

I laugh.

Me : " well we did have it at my old school back at home . "

Hlanziwe : " too bad "

We kept on walking and talking till we got home. I said my good byes and I walked inside our home and found Bangi sitting on the floor. It had the sponge that we sleep in and a paraffin stove and two pots only . I put my bag down and went to him.

Me : " Bangi what's wrong "

I am worried. He has never come home at this time. He always comes when I am doing my homework late at night.

Bangi : " I lost my job Zobuhle "

That was just only the start to our long thornful journey.

Me : " why ? "

Bangi : " I don't know. "

Me : " we will find something "

He nodded and I hugged him.

Me : " it will be ok. I will leave school and help as well. "

Bangi : " no , carry on with school. I will find work Zozo don't worry "

I nodded. I am a bit worried if maybe will he get another job or not.

Me : " I should take off my uniform and cook "

He nodded. I stood up and stopped my tracks then turned to him and stood there.

Bangi : " why are you looking at me like I did something wrong to you ? "

Me : " I would like to change "

Bangi : " you can change Zozo "

I was uncomfortable. I turned around and took out my dress and I slowly took off my uniform. Just imagine that he is not here and everything will be ok. Bangi is not Zizwe. He is Bangi the man I foolishly love. As the dress dropped to my ankles I felt warm hands around me and I jumped a bit.

Bangi : " relax. I won't hurt you Zozo "

The sound of his voice soothed me and made me calm down. I feel him kiss my neck and shivers go down my spine.

Me : " let me get dressed Bangi "

He kisses my neck again before turning me around and kisses my lips and I respond as best as I can. He nods my waist and brings me closer to him and I am enjoying the kiss as well. We land on the sponge and my back is on it and he is ontop of me. I put my hands on his chest just to stop him and my breathing has quickened.

Me : " Bangi "

Bangi : " I won't hurt you Zozo. I will never hurt you. If you don't feel ok you can tell me "

I nodded slowly before letting go of his chest. He kisses my neck and plays with my breasts a bit and it feels nice as well. He kisses my lips and slowly he takes off his top and I helped him and his trousers are soon off and he is on his underwear and I am still in mine. He takes off mine and my heart is beating very fast and I am scared and want him to stop but I don't want to at the same time. He takes off his underwear as well.

Bangi : " Zozo please open for me "

I open my legs for him while closing my eyes and I feel him rub himself before he entered my private area slowly and gently as well. He started moving and I held on him as the pleasure kicked in. A pleasure I never knew.

Bangi : " Oh My Zozo "

He kisses my lips and I return it and he starts to increase his pace . It's very pleasurable at this moment as well.

Me : " Bangi "

I let out of soft moan before I close my eyes.

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To be continued

INSERT 10

I woke up early in the morning and Bangi was holding me. We were both naked but then it clicked to me that we slept together . What does this all mean ? Does he love me the same way I love him ? I got up and went to boil bathing water and just looked at him before I started rushing to do my homework while eating bread at the same time. My water was done and I started bathing.

Bangi : " good morning "

I almost fell out of the bathing basin.

Me : " uhm good morning. "

I carried on bathing trying to avoid any eye contact.

Bangi : " Zozo about last night "

I could already feel the tears. How can I be so stupid ?

Me : " Bangi you don't have to say anything. "

Bangi : " but I want to "

I shook my head and he sighed.

Bangi : " ok "

I nodded and got out of the bathing basin and I then wiped myself and lotioned and all this time he is watching me. Usually by this time Bangi is already gone to work. I finished getting dressed and brushed my teeth before I took the water and went to discard it and he was packing the blanket and cleaning up. I went to close my homework book and I shoved it in my bag.

Bangi : " I will accompany you to school "

I smiled.

Me : " ,,thank you "

He got dressed and then he took my bag and we started walking out making our way to school , he held my hand and my blood rushed.

Bangi : " Zobuhle "

I looked at him and he stopped us and he kissed my cheek before we carried on with the journey.

Bangi : " speak to me "

Me : " what does all this mean ? "

Bangi : " I don't know "

I nodded.

Bangi : " we will see where it takes us "

Buyi : " I want to hate him ",

Me : " rather dont. He is still your father even inside the grave "

I kept on brushing her hair and she sniffed.

Buyi : " It hurts that he is gone mama "

Me : " I know baby "

I kept on hushing her .

*BACK THEN *

The school bell rang and I walked out my classroom and Hlanziwe bumped her way to me.

Hlanziwe : " eh I saw you this morning with your boyfriend. "

Me : " he is not my boyfriend Hlanziwe "

Hlanziwe : " mmh ok. Then I want him then "

Me : " you wouldn't get him. He loves only one person "

Hlanziwe : " and that is you. "

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Me : " not it's not "

We kept on walking out of the school premises.

Hlanziwe : " you don't seem ok ? "

Me : " would you love me ? "

Hlanziwe : " ofcourse I love you in a short space of time. I love you Nana "

I smiled.

Me : " thank you , "

Hlanziwe : " now stop looking sad and get to your boyfriend "

I rolled my eyes as she laughs to my irritation. Music comes from somewhere and a car slows down next to us.

Guy : " Ma ladies (ladies) "

We kept on walking.

Guy : " short one. Why don't you and me talk huh ? "

I ignored him.

Guy : " mxm "

He pressed on his car and drove off.

Hlanziwe : " you did good. Don't trust strangers "

I nodded. We got home and went our seperate ways. I got in and Bangi was inside with changed clothes .

Me : " hi "

I closed the door and he stood up as I put my bag and hugged me.

Me : " are you ok ? "

Bangi : " we will be ok Zozo "

I hugged him back.

Me : " I know "

He broke the hug.

Bangi : " I went job hunting and I found out that there is an audition for a show tomorrow "

Me : " that's wonderful. "

Bangi : " I want to do it. If I get it we will have proper money then go and live in white neighbourhoods , drive a nice red car . "

Me : " The car is nice. "

He looked at me.

Bangi : " all off that. "

I nodded.

Me : " you can go for it ",

Bangi : " thank you Zozo",

He kissed my forehead then went to my lips and I responded to him and broke it.

Bangi : " we are gonna be ok Zozo"

,I hope so. I really hope we will be ok. One day.

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To be continued

INSERT 11

Bangi was very excited about the audition that will be happening tomorrow. I decided to accompany him and skip school that day. We slept peacefully and the next morning we woke up and bathed , wore our best clothes and he was ready. He was singing around while I packed the blankets away.

Me : " you seem excited. "

Bangi : " I am. "

He held my waist and kissed me again. I love kissing him, I love him so much . I bit my bottom lip

Me : " Bangi "

Bangi : " let's leave now Zozo "

I nodded and he took my hand as we walked out of the place and got on the street and we took a taxi. I looked out the window just passing time

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we need anything that will come our way . I know Bangi will get it , he loves this acting tv things. I hold his hand and he smiles at me.

Me : " It will all be ok "

Bangi : " I know "

We keep quiet and the taxi reaches town and we get off and walk down the street through the buildings. He seems to know this city more than I do and I don't go to town.

Bangi : " I will be on that Zozo "

He pointed inside an Indian shop where there is a black tv box.

Me : " wow thats amazing "

Bangi : " it will be "

We carried on walking. I want to be on that one day as well just like Bangi. We got to a place and there was a line. A number of different people, it was scary.

Me : " what is the show about ? "

Bangi : " it's a musical. About a young man going to The city of Gold "

Me : " oh I see "

He nodded. A white woman came out with a black man.

Woman : " welcome. "

Everyone clapped their hands. "

Woman : " we have got our cast for the play and there won't be any more auditions I am sorry. "

My heart broke.

Bangi : " there has to be something "

He ran towards the man as people started moving off.

Bangi : " Hi , I am Bangizwe . I need this sir please give me a chance "

Woman : "we have got our cast. There is nothing we can do "

Bangi : " please. I can sing and dance. "

Man : " we are sorry. Maybe next time "

Woman : " come "

They turned and walked off. I held on my dress looking at him.

Me : " Bangi "

He looked at me. He swallowed.

Me : " Kuzolunga (it will be ok)"

He came to me and took my hand.

Me : " we can go find something while we are here "

Bangi : " I saw myself Zozo"

Me : " you will. I am here to help you "

He faint smiled but you could see he was hurt. We walked around the city going shop to shop and he would go beg for anything but nothing popped up. It was blazing hot and we walked to the beach and I sat down with him . He was silent. The amount of rejections we got.

Me : " bangi "

Bangi : " ngingahluleka Zozo(I am failing Zozo) "

Me : " Sokwenza (we will do it) "

He was silent and he took my hand.

Bangi : " I love you Zobuhle " I looked at him.

Me : " I love you too Bangi "

I know he means it as a friend but I am so glad to hear him say that to me. Me : " we should go home "

Bangi : " I want to stay here a bit " I nodded.

Me : " this reminds me of the river back home " Bangi : " me too I played with the sand and he hugged me. We need this new breakthrough. We Definitely need it.

INSERT 12

[A FEW YEARS LATER]

"Pearl , Pearl !"

I rush quickly to the other room and I get in and find Mrs Baca holding her hips.

Me : " Madam "

Mrs Baca : " Where did you put my dress ? "

Me : " in the closet Madam "

Mrs Baca : " ok. Have the kids bathed ? "

Me : " yes Madam I bathed them before I leave. "

Mrs Baca : " ,ok. You may go "

Me : " thank you "

I walked out of the room and I went to change and I took my bag. My feet were killing me from standing the whole day. I was tired and hungry as well and I don't know if the Taxi's are still available. I walked out the gate with the dog following me and stopped . I closed the gate and walked off the quiet road. Dogs barking from houses. I wasn't alone when I reached

the usual spot where we can catch the taxi. It was getting dark at 17h00. The taxi arrived and we all hopped in. I took out a reading book and started with reading as I always do when I hop inside a taxi to relax. The other older women than me are speaking amongst each other. Either about their kids or their Boss's kids and the Boss's as well. We reach town and I hop out of the taxi and walk to one of the Indian shops and I take some Potatoes and cabbage and some Maize meal as well and I look at my money before I buy the food and I get my change. I put it in my bag and take out my money for the taxi and walk out. I go and catch a taxi home at the moment and soon I enter the door and it smells. He turns and looks at me and I smile.

Bangi : " I cooked "

Me : " you got off early ? "

Bangi : " yes "

I go to the kitchen and I place the food and walk to the lounge and I sit next to him and he stands up and goes to the bedroom and comes back and places the money ontop of the coffee table. I do the same as well.

Bangi: " I got it today "

Me : " you still have transport money ? "

Bangi : " yes "

I nodded and I took his money and I took out R400 and I placed it Infront of him.

Me : " transport "

I took out R300.

Me: " grocery "

I took out R200.

Me : " savings "

I then placed his money. I took mine. It was R500. He earned more than me. I took out R200 for transport and put the rest together. I sighed.

Bangi : " You will buy the grocery "

I nodded.

Me : " I had a long day today "

I took the money and put it in an envelope and I stood up and went to put away under the mattress in the bedroom and he walked in.

Bangi : " Thank you for staying "

Me : " its ok "

I passed my matric with a star next to it. Which means that I got Bachelor

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I applied to varsities and for bursaries and I got accepted in Ndumiso collage now Known as DUT. It was R 1 500 for the whole year in teaching but I didn't have that kind of money so I stayed. Already we are struggling as it is. Bangi hugged me and I hugged him back. I still love him and it gets stronger and stronger over the years we have been together. I am 22 years of age now and it's like the first time I am falling for him.

He then kissed my lips.

Bangi : " I love you "

Me : " I love you too "

Nothing warms my heart than hearing him say that to me .

He kisses me again and lays me on the bed and gets ontop of me and I hold onto him. He kisses my neck and undressed me and I did the same with him. I haven't been feeling ok these days. When he opens my legs and enters me I gasp and he holds me tightly and close to him. I cry tears of how much I love him.

Bangi : " I love you Zozo "

I nod and we kiss.

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The next morning I woke up and Bangi was not here. He must have gone to work. The Baca family is going today to Rustenburg for a family festive season with their family that side , so I won't be working. I got off the bed and searched for a bucket and I throw up in it. I think it's inyongo .I went to wash it before I made the bed and cleaned up the house and then I went to bath as well.

"Makhi !"

Me : " yebo Makhelwane (Yes Neighbor)"

She knocks

Her : " qonqo !(knock knock)"

I wear a dress and I wrap my head and go open the door.

Me : " hi "

Nelisiwe : " eyi bengibhaka lapha ekhaya ngathi eyi angilethele ubaba walaykhaya muphi ? (I was baking at home and I thought I should bring some for the man of this house , where is he ?)"

Me : " emsebenzini (at work)"

Nelisiwe : "umuphe Ke. (Give it to him)"

I nodded.

Me : " ngiyambongela (thank you)"

She smiled.

Nelisiwe: " usale kahle makhelwane (stay well neighbour)"

Me : " you go well "

Nelisiwe : " you should go to the clinic"

She walks off and I close the door and go put the I cream tub on the table and I opened it and there were cakes. I closed it and put it ontop of the fridge . I stood there thinking. Maybe I will get some pills. I sighed.

Me : " let me go wear shoes "

I go and wear some shoes and take my bag and I walk out locking and walked down the road and went to the clinic. It was around the area. When I got there , there was a line. . I signed up and sat down waiting for my turn. Bit by bit it moved and the woman next to me was pregnant. I was scared and swallowed. The nurse shouted for her to go in and she did and I was next after her.

Me : " if you vomit only it could be ?"

Nurse : " I am not a Dr we will check you "

I nodded. My turn came and I was taken blood and was checked. She touched my stomach and it was painful. The old woman looked at me.

Nurse : " Ukahle (you are ok) "

Me : " what is it ? "

Nurse : " ngokubona kwami ukhulekwe kodwa solinda imphumela (by what I am observing you are pregnant but we will wait) "

My world stopped. My heart was beating.

Nurse : " sesiqedile. Ubuye emvakwezintsuku (we are done. Come back after a few days) "

I nodded and took my bag and I walked out wiping my tears. I walked back home and I kept my self busy with cleaning and then I cooked after.

Time for Bangi to come back came and he walked in holding his cap from work and he sat down on the couch. He is a security guard.

Bangi : " Zozo "

I faint smiled.

Bangi : " Yindaba ?(What wrong ?) "

Tears prickled my eyes.

Me : " I am sick "

He pulled me to him.

Bangi: " uyile eclinic?(Did you go to the clinic ?)"

I nodded

Bangi : " what did they say ?"

Me : " I am pregnant"

He looked at me.

Bangi : " Zozo"

Me : " Ngiyaxolisa (I am sorry)"

He stood up and walked to the other room and I wiped my tears but they kept flowing. I wasn't ready. We are not ready.

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To be continued

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