

THE HANDS OF TIME

PROLOGUE

>>>34 years ago<<<

“You have to do this Baba. If you don't, everything will be pinned on me. You know that they won't say you are the main problem we have no kids,” Thando Dladla says to Mzikayifani Nxumalo, her husband.

It is said that a woman is married to a family to grow her husband's family's name. But it has been more than 2 years that MaDladla has been married off to Nxumalo, and she still doesn't have a child. People have started to talk, they have small

talks and giggles behind her back. The fact that Mzikayifani was the only surviving child of the Nxumalos in this Village doesn't make this any better, if they happen to die, it will be the end of the Nxumalos and that would mean she would have failed to fulfill her duties as a wife.

"I won't, I won't sleep with your sister!"

Nxumalo says, he has a calm face mask on, even though he is angry, his blood is boiling. How could she? How could she tell him to sleep with her sister when it's her that he loves. And besides all of that, Lahliwe is only 18, how can a 25 year old sleep with an 18 year old child.

“Nxumalo, you have to do this, for me, or they will give you another wife! And that would kill me,” he exercises deep breaths. This has become the topic they discuss before bedtime and when they wake up, Thando is so obsessed with having a child, she doesn't even let her rest. He has even started to regret his decisions. Maybe marrying her at a young age was wrong, maybe he should have waited until he felt ready, but the only time the chief would give him rights over his legacy was after he got married, he decided to marry the love of his life. He had her already, so marrying her would mean he would have the love of

his wife as his wife and he would get his father's money, but now? He regrets it!

"You don't have to make love to her, just make sure you cum in her," she continues to plead. This pleading thing is actually taking a lot from her, she doesn't understand why Mzikayifani is making things hard for her, doesn't he want a child?

"How does she feel about this?" he asks.

MaDladla almost rolls her eyes, Lahliwe has no right to feel! She has been taking care of her since their parents died, so now it's time to return the favor. And that favor will be returned by her sleeping with her husband.

“She badly wants to help us,” she says. She also doesn’t like the idea of her husband on top of her sister, but this is the only option they have. All Lahliwe has to do is to carry the child and hand him to them. They will probably give her money to start her life over somewhere else.

“This is wrong,” Nxumalo sighs.

“It doesn’t have to be right baba, we need to do this,” MaDladla begs, Mzikayifani is starting to get on her nerves.

“Okay, you’ll tell me the date and time,” Mzikayifani says and releases a sigh before heading to their bedroom he’s drained.

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Lahliwe was different, he never felt his sex being hugged by soft walls so tightly, it felt heavenly; although he couldn't stop asking whether she was okay or not.

They kept on having sex until they were sure that she was pregnant.

After being sure that Lahliwe was pregnant, they isolated her and Thando would pretend to be pregnant. When Lahliwe finally gave birth, he gave birth to a son, a son that they had always yearned for, but the problem was that Thando had

discovered that she was one month pregnant.

“Take this thing of yours and leave my house!” she uttered to Lahliwe.

“Mthombowolwazi is not mine,”

Mthombowolwazi, that’s what his father named him. “You said I would not have to carry him as my own once he is given birth to,” Lahliwe cried to her sister. Thando was unfazed.

“Plans have changed darli, take this, you’ll sort yourself out” she handed her a bottle of water!

“Where is sbali?” Lahliwe asked, crying.

“Hey, that one won’t help you with anything, leave!” Thando screamed. With tears streaming down her face, Lahliwe took her child and left, she has no plan, at all.

She walked, with tears streaming down her face, and took breaks so she could make her son drink water. Who would get to KZN for her? She was living alone there but her sister came to fetch selling her meaningless dreams. Now she had to walk from EmaDzedzeni to... wherever God will lead her.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 01

***Sponsored by MaPhingoshe Lindi

Msomi***

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

This is your story, we are sending you and your team to work on it I'm reading this message for the hundredth time right now, or more than that. I'm excited and nervous at the same time.

Excited because I get to interview one of the wealthiest men here, Mr

Mthombowolwazi Dladla. A man that came from nothing to something and then from something to nothing again because apparently he used his power and raped one of his workers. Media says that he did, and I hate myself for thinking that he didn't, my heart just can't accept. We don't know much about him, all we know is he was raised by his mother in the bhundus, he left school in grade 10 and ran away from home to hustle for his mother. And then a few years later he owns farms. They said education is the key to success, here I am with a degree but I'm still not successful.

I'm nervous because, why the hell would my boss trust me with this? It's not that I don't trust myself, I'm just surprised that Ms. Mnisi would give me such a huge story to handle, they don't take me seriously at work, so it's kind of eye brow raising.

Oh and I'm going to Johannesburg for the first time in my life.

I was born and bred here in Mpumalanga, in a small village called kwaHoyi in Komatipoort, I studied in UMP and I also got a job here in Mpumalanga, at Mnisi Media. All my 29 years of life, I never thought that I would have to go Johannesburg to meet up with Mr

Mthombo, not only do I meet up with him, I'll be interviewing him. He is not in prison, he is still home. I'm yet to find his address, I feel like posting on social media, 'do not talk to me, I'm friends with Dldadla,' but I know I'd be dragged, dragged because I don't stand up for women.

The fact that he raped a woman when he could afford to pay a prostitute puzzles me, totally. I'm angry on behalf of his victim, but it doesn't take away the excitement of Mr finally meeting him. He's a legend, although I'm angry at him.

I've been working as a journalist for 5 years now, but I still use taxis; it's because I have

to pay my mother's nurse, I'd rather pay that than to take her to an old age home, where she'd have to wait for her turn to have breakfast, at least with someone I pay monthly, she does her things on her time.

I'm her last born, all her children are scattered, somewhere in Johannesburg, I don't remember the last time I saw my sisters. There's three of us, and we are all girls. My father died when I was young, I don't really remember him, I know him from his photos.

I'm on a taxi now, it drops me off at the stop and I start walking my short distance to our office. I have my small bag with my

clothes neatly packed inside. We are leaving today, I'm just going to the office to confirm a few stuff and then we'll be off to Johannesburg.

"Babe," (sir) I greet our security, Bab' Dlamini.

"Ndvodzakati," (my daughter) he says, I smile at him. He's the closest thing I have to a father. I do have uncle's from both my maternal and paternal family, I'm just not close with them because we don't really get time to bond, I go to their homes once a year, our relationship is not that tight, even with my cousins, we are not close.

“How are you babe,” I still have time, I can make small talks before leaving to the city of Gold! Or rather, the city of Gold diggers.

That’s what people who work in Johannesburg tell us. They say it’s a lot different to what it was when white people were in charge. Now it’s just a smelly place full of prostitutes. I don’t know how I feel about that, our people are letting us down, even so I will never ever vouch for a white. People go to Johannesburg for a 'good' job then come back home after years of disappearing

“I’m good my daughter, lembi kute, singeva kuwe,” (there’s nothing bad upon us, how

are you?) That's how we are, we drag things unnecessarily. I mean if you say you are good, it automatically means that there's nothing bad upon you. But it's our tradition here.

I tell him that I'm good, next thing I know we are talking about how much it's hot and its disadvantages on us and the crops.

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“Uyakwati kutsatsa sikhatsi sakho,” (you took your own time,) yep, that's my boss, Miss Mnisi, old and single lady, no wonder she's this bitter.

"I'm sorry ma'am, I'll do better," I'm a minute late. I got carried away downstairs discussing whether with bab' Dlamini.

"Here is the address, we've changed our minds, you will be going alone, he doesn't want to be seen on screen, so you'll just record him," Lord, how are they expecting me to be safe with an alleged rapist?

"Thank you, ma'am," I have no choice, I have to face my fears. She gives me the company's card, it will cover all my expenses while I'm there. But how will I even know where his place is.

"His numbers are on that paper." Oh I must thought out loud. I head out and wait for an

Uber, it will take me straight to the guesthouse they've rented for me in Hyde Park, I don't even know how to pronounce that word properly.

A four hours drive is not a joke! But I'm glad that I've arrived, this place is really beautiful, well there's that part of CBDs that I've seen on the internet, I want to see it though, and then there's Hyde Park, it's quiet and peaceful, you can even hear a bird chirping.

I need to call my mom to inform her that I arrived safely in Johannesburg.

"Tsandzekile," she always addresses me with my full name. No shortening.

Sometimes you'd think she's angry.

"Ma, how are you?" I ask.

"I'm okay my child, how are you?"

"I'm good how are you?"

"Beside my back pains, I'm okay." This is her line, always.

"Make sure you drink your pills, I can't afford to lose you. Also, I called to let you know that I've made it to Johannesburg safely," I inform her.

After talking to my mother, I don't know what else to do with myself, it's too late for me to shop for groceries, but I'm hungry. Sigh! I've always cooked for myself so I don't know how these online ordering

things work, I'm as clueless as they come. But Google comes to the rescue– he always does, I think of it being a man, I mean everyone can hear the masculinity in the word, so...

He tells me how all this works and I do exactly as he says. Within 30 minutes or so, I receive my pizza and juice.

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My mornings are always neutral, but today my anxiety levels are shooting up to 100. I'm nervous, but I know I need to get over and done with this thing. So I dial his number. It rings unanswered for the first

time, and answer when I call for the second time, he stays quiet on the line. Lord!

“Mr Dladla,” I say “this is Tsandzekile Nkhalanga from Mnisi Media, I was calling to ask if our meeting for today is not rescheduled,” I say, silence for a minute.

“Had it been that way, you would have been informed,” Tjo!

“Okay, thank you sir,” now I’m really not looking forward to seeing him.

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#unedited

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 02

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I tried representing myself and being formal, I'm in a suit. Yep, you heard that well, I mean I have to look a part if I'll be with Mr. Dladla, in one room having a conversation.

I've lost count of the cups of coffee I had before coming here. My hands are sweaty. I stand a little taking in my surroundings, he is a farmer, so the flowers that are outside are justified. His house is big, and people from my village would assume that he has

a snake or something. They don't believe in black people succeeding without performing black magic, it's absurd!

I blow out a sigh before I walk furtherly inside the yard. I expected a glass house, or maybe a glass sliding door; but nope his house is normal, it's just bigger and more beautiful, well I haven't seen the internal design, but the external already screams beauty. So the inside of the house cannot disappoint.

I knock my sweaty knuckles on the door, it opens. A beautiful elderly woman appears, it's not his mother, we know his mother, this is probably a helper.

“Good afternoon ma'am,” I say, Lord my voice is shaky.

“Hello Ms. Nkhalanga,” She knows me. Her warm smile gives me a sense of relief, I give her a smile too.

She leads me to his study, Lord how am I going to survive in here, it's too dark, I can't even see where my interviewee is. She leaves me inside the study telling me that she'll be preparing refreshments for us and that Mr Dladla will be with me soon. As soon as she leaves I send a text Dignity, my only friend.

If 2 hours pass by without me calling please kiss my mother goodbye I'm

really nervous, well I'm scared for my life more than anything, I don't really think he'd hurt a woman, but hey... this is South Africa. This country is like a Mr Bean show! "Ns Nkhalanga," Jesus, I startle! His voice is deeper than it is when he's speaking on TV interviews.

"Mr Dladla," Can God give me my voice back? I can surely do better.

"I'm sorry for the darkness, I just don't like wasting electricity," the lights come on, Jesus I can't even look back because he is there I'm scared of what he looks like. "It's Lwazi," he says.

“Ms. Nkhalanga? Do you need water,” I quickly clear my throat and chuckle my embarrassment away, how the hell did I just switch off like that?

“No, Sir,” I say and blow out a sigh, this is fucking harder than I had imagined.

“Are you okay?” He touches my shoulder. I close my eyes and nod.

“Let me take my seat,” Jesus, I shouldn’t be sitting, he is the one that should grant me permission to take a seat, how dumb could I be? And then I see him, I had not looked at him since he walked in here, but now I’m forced to, and isn’t he fucking beautiful? Lord! He has unibrows? I’ve never really

noticed that he did, I guess he used to shave the connector off, oh and he has light brown eyes. His skin is not too dark, neither is it too light, I don't know whether I should compare him to brown or what, okay I've got it he has a naturally brown skin.

"You are shaking, are you sure you are okay?" I'm not okay, but I nod my head. I thought I would interview him, with my own questions, I had my questions prepared, but I was emailed the questions I have to ask him on my way here. I don't know how I feel about those questions.

"I'm okay, it's just that... you are here with me and I just can't register it, you know," he gives me a small smile.

"Khayelihle, my brother, told me you called earlier," he says resting his head back on his chair. It wasn't him? I thought he was the rude guy, it explains why he is sweet, he was never rude.

"Oh, it's him that I spoke to? He's rude," I release a low chuckle, he smiles.

"He is, I'm sorry for that," he says. I nod my head.

"It's okay, can we start?" he blows out a sigh and nods, sitting up straight. Here it

goes! I turn on the Dictaphone. It's recording.

"Good afternoon, Mr Dladla..." he cuts me off.

"It's Nxumalo, Mr Nxumalo," he says, okay what a confusion. "My father is a Nxumalo, Dladla is my maternal surname, I prefer using Dladla, but on my Passport and in reality I'm Nxumalo," he explains it.

"Oh, so Dladla is like a stage name to you?" my second name should be stupid, because I am.

"Yeah, it's something like that," he says. I ask him basic questions like how it was growing up, he tells me what he tells

everyone that has interviewed him before, that it was just like any other children's upbringing. He had a protective mother, still does and that he had no siblings well, until his father introduced him to his brother's and sister, from his stepmom.

"Have you ever been in a situation where you tried having sexual intercourse with someone by threatening to use physical force," Lord, I'm definitely killing Lillian Mnisi for this, this question feels like I am accusing him.

"No, I have never," he says raising his brow, rather, half of his brow.

“What made you hurt someone that way? What made you do it, Lord!” I’m not even asking him these questions, I’m shocked as to how these were added to the list of the questions. His face is still calm. I quickly turn off the Dictaphone. I give him an apologetic look.

“I didn’t do it,” I want to believe him, my heart and soul wants to, but my mind doesn’t allow me to, people out there use their power to take advantage of women, so I can’t really take his word for it.

“There’s no need to explain it to me,, Mr Dladla, I mean Nxumalo.” I say and release my shaky breath, “I swear I wasn’t the one

that prepared those questions, they were emailed to me earlier," I say. I feel he needs to know this, maybe to calm him down before he gets angry and does something to me too.

"I'll check on Mam'Bongi with the refreshments," I quickly dial Lillian she needs to explain this. Oh the white woman tells me to leave a message, fucking white woman!

"Good afternoon to you boss lady, well, it's not a good one to me. Firstly you sent me alone to a person that is being accused for rape, did you even think what would happen to me? I let it slide, and now you

order me to ask him accusing questions?
What the hell? Who knows what he does
when he is angry? If I become one of his
victims, I swear I will kill myself so that I
don't enter heaven and then I will come
back to haunt you," I grit, and send the
message.

"Well, I jog when I'm angry Thandekile," I
don't know what happens next because
black fill the room!

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 03

MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

She's fainted, and he finds it funny. At first, she was trembling, and now she's fainted.

Wonders of this world never ends. He scooped her up and places her in his bedroom. Khayelihle helped by covering her up with a comforter.

His interviewers often ask for pictures before they ask any questions he's been so used to that. They are often too confident, it feels nice to have someone trembling in his presence for once. Okay maybe her trembling is not nice, but he enjoys

watching her being shy, it's just funny and cute.

“Bafo, she's probably tired too, let her sleep,” Khayelihle, one of his brothers, says.

There is Khayelihle , Gcinulwazi, and Zanothando. Khayelihle is 9 months younger than him, Gcinulwazi is 30 years old which means he is 3 years younger than him, and Zanothando is 28. Then there's the apple of his eye, Slindokuhle. She's 24 but in his eyes she's 14. He loves her everyday. He loves her like he loves his mother, Lahliwe.

MaDladla and him are okay, he holds no grudges over her, he believes that whatever

happens, happens for a reason. He thinks that if his mother wasn't told to leave, he wouldn't have become what he is now.

"It's been hours, people will think that I did something to her as well," he says and sighs. He can't believe that they are accusing him of rape, he'd never hurt a woman that way, the fact that he doesn't know who set him up is really frustrating him, he wants to know.

"We don't care what people think, you know that everyone knows that you would never do that," Khayelihle says. Unfortunately he does care what people think of him, that's why he hasn't went all crazy about this, he's

trying to keep himself calm. "Hey, bafo you've been staring at her for hours," he adds chuckling

"Your wife is probably missing you," he says, he's changing the subject.

"You are trying to tell me to leave," Khayelihle laughs shaking his head.

"Yeah," Mthombo says and laughs.

Everyone of them gets along, well except Gcinulwazi, that boy has detachment issues. He holds grudges, Lord knows for what, against him, and Mthombowolwazi, being the man he is, is okay with that.

"Do you want to wake her up," Khayelihle asks his brother who shakes his head no.

“So you want to just stare at her, uysmsinda,” (you are heavy on her.) Mthombowolwazi sighs and scratches his head in frustration.

“It seems like you’ll bore me,” he gets feet and leaves the room, mumbling insults under his breath. Khayelihle laughs and follows him.

“You are doing Zanothando's job, do you realize that?” Mthombowolwazi asks annoyed.

“Aiii, wena you’ll end up insulting me, I’ll leave tomorrow ke,” Khayelihle says and rolls his eyes.

A knock is heard, they exchange looks
confused, who knocks when there's a bell?
Lord these people are living in ignorance,
also they are not expecting anyone, so who
could the person at the door be?

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I shoot my eyes open, I frown not because
of the darkness in the room but because of
the comfort of the bed and sheets I'm lying
on. I know I'm in Mthombo's house, but I'm
wondering how I got here.

I choose to keep calm, I get off the bed and fix it. I'm still in my pants that I was in when coming in here, and I don't feel any pain in my vagina, so I'm certain that nothing was done to me.

I get off the bedroom, I follow the voices I hear. I find myself in the kitchen, well there are police in here, I put my hands on my waist and watch them, they seem to be questioning Me Nxumalo. He's calm.

"I'll ask this for the last time, where is Thandekile," okay I know they are talking about me now. Tsandzekile and Thandekile is basically the same name in just different languages, I'm about to tell them that I'm

here when another version of Mthombo, I think it's Khayelihle, says "Ukwa Sathane," (she's with the devil) Lord!

"I'm here Mr police," I say and shrug. They all turn to me. I don't do well when the whole attention in a room is diverted to me. I cross my leg over the other and look down, I'm not scared.

"We got a call from Ms. Dignity, she said that we should look for you because you felt in danger," the police man says. I had forgotten that I texted her, how would I have remembered if I was out of it? Lord I fainted!

“I’m sorry sir, she must have misunderstood me, I didn’t say that I was in danger, I just...” I take in a breath, lying won’t hurt me, “I said I felt uncomfortable, I mean Mr. Mthombo is being investigated for rape, and I’m a woman,” the man nods. Mthombowolwazi and his brother are looking at me. My phone beeps. It’s my boss, she’s telling me that I need to be home by the end of the week and that I can’t be alone, I need to be there with a recording of myself and Mthombowolwazi.

“I don’t understand why she is here if she feels like you are a problem to her,”

Khayelihle is surely pissed, I can tell by the way he is looking at me.

“You won’t understand bhuti, I’m not trying to offend anyone, but your brother is being investigated for rape, whether he did it or not, until the court proves it that he is innocent, we will never really feel safe in his presence, as women,” I say and hate myself for looking at Mthombo's direction, he looks hurt by my statement. It’s the truth though. The policemen left about 20 minutes ago, and I haven’t even said anything about leaving. It’s late now.

“I’m sorry for messing up your day sir, but can we finish off with our interview?” I ask,

he nods multiple times. My words seem to have shut Khayelihle up because he hasn't said anything since then.

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I've just finished interviewing him, he has denied that he did all these things they are accusing him off, he didn't go much into detail but he says that there is someone who is trying to sabotage him. I believe him, although I hate myself for that, but I see it in his eyes, when he says it confidently that he would never hurt a woman. He's sweet and calm, he couldn't have done such a thing.

I'm being driven home by his brother,
Khayelihle.

"So, you are the one that was rude?" he
looks at me, then back to the road.

"That wasn't being rude, it was just the
truth, if he had wanted to reschedule, you
would have been told, don't you think so?"

"Aii, but you didn't have to tell me like that,"
I say and rest my head back on the car
seat.

"I didn't have to, but I needed to. In life
wena Thandekile..." I'm about to be
lectured.

"Tsandzekile," I correct.

“Sane difference, as I was saying, in life you need people that are truthful like me, you’ll grow a backbone and be able to tell people off.” He says, I laugh. He smiles too, he’s funny.

“He didn’t do it, I promise you he didn’t,” we are now on the sensitive and serious topic.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 04

Sponsored by Kwanele Hlatshwayo

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I've copied the recording to my laptop and phone. I do that after all my interviews, incase I lose my Dictaphone, then I know I have two back ups.

I'm up and drinking coffee, it's the wee hours of the morning but I haven't slept a wink. What's on my mind? It's my boss not even caring to address the issue of me threatening her, she seems not to care. I hate her, and I think I'll look for a job or something around Joburg.

A call comes through, I check my phone, it's my mother. What is she doing, up at this

time?

“Hello,” I say.

“Ms. Nkhalanga, how are you?” it’s her nurse.

“Sesi, ngiyaphila ngingeva wena?” (I’m good, how are you?) I ask, she sniffs. I try to keep myself calm. “Kwentakalani sesi,” (What is happening sis?) I’m failing at keeping my voice neutral and calm, it’s breaking.

“Your mother has been taken to hospital,” she says, my heart sinks. No wonder I couldn’t sleep, I’ve been jumpy all night. It’s my mom.

“Is she breathing?” it’s old age, I know she has no condition. I don’t know why she is this sick yet she is not even 70 years old.

“Yes, she’s just gone mute and her temperature is really low,” Lord Jesus!

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I couldn’t wait, I took a bath. I knew that I wouldn’t be able to stomach anything, so I waited for the clock to hit 6am– it took forever– and I called a cap. I’m impatiently sitting, I want us to get to Town. We’ve been driving for almost four hours now.

“Tsandzi, when are we receiving our copy?”

“Good morning ma'am, I'm not sure how you want to publish this, I only have voice note, I would have liked to type it and send it to the editor today,” I don't know how I'll even do that when I have a sick mother, it's surely draining.

“We only need the recording, it will be played live on the radio,” I don't remember Mr Nxumalo giving us a right to do that.

“Alright, I'll send it right now,” I say.

“Thank you, cheers,” this is probably a story that will make or break Mnisi Media, she's so excited over this, it's weird! I quickly send the voice note to her. I'm so drained, she texts me and tells me that it will be

streamed tonight. What's the rush? Lord, I hope I'm not reading too much on this.

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GCINULWAZI NXUMALO

His heart has been heavy since he turned 2 years old. He was the one that led his father to his older brother, he was careful not to get too close to him, he had to be, otherwise one of them would have never lived to see the next day.

He is a special child, not to his parents but to his forefathers, he sees things before they happen. He's not really a spiritual

person, but he does see his people in his dreams and he hears their cries. It's a problem to him sometimes because he has to try putting on a heart of steel. He is angry, angry because he didn't see any of this shit that's happening to his brother coming.

He sighs, his hand pats the other side of the bed, it's empty. Keamogetswe, his wife is not here. He opens his eyes and scans the room. She's sitting on the chair, looking at him. He smiles nervously before he sits up.

"Mkami," (my wife) he says.

“Gcina, what’s wrong? It has been days now, and you’ve been mumbling your brother’s name, kwenzenjani?” (what’s wrong?) He closes his eyes. The main problem is that he doesn’t remember any dream every morning, and he doesn’t know what to do.

“I can’t remember my dreams,” he blurts out. In frustration, he scratched his head. This can only mean one thing, it has nothing to do with spiritual wars, it’s physical, but he has the ability to help, but how when he can’t remember any of his dreams.

“You’ve lost weight,” she says.

“You worry to much kaMailula, I’ll handle this,” he chuckles again. This time he is trying to hide the embarrassment that he feels.

“You need to have a conversation with him, before he starts hating you, he needs to know how much you love him,” that would be like taking a cocked loaded gun and pointing it on his head. Uttering those words would be like pulling the trigger. The time hasn’t come yet, when it does, he’ll tell his brother that he loves him, and knowing Mthombo, he’ll understand.

“It is sad that Bhuti’s interview will be played live in radio,” Keamogetswe

introduces a topic.

“Really? What time?” he asks getting off bed, he wants to hear him. It’s been long since they talked. The last time they did was in the family gathering, the only thing they exchanged was greetings. He is cold to every one of his brothers, it’s just worse with Mthombo.

“They said at 6pm,” she says. He nods at her and walks to the bathroom. He needs to bath.

She sighs and heads to the kitchen.

They’ve been married for one year now, they dated last year. He’s the best husband anyone could ever ask for, she had never

thought that she'd be married at 23. The initial plan was to get her degree and marry the man of her dreams. Now, she has her law degree, she is not looking for a job because her husband 'has it all under control', she's still thinking of a way of telling her that she wants to work.

Gcinulwazi works under Mthombo, they have the same interests in everything, she's puzzled as to why her husband doesn't want to let him know that he'd die for him. She prepares amabele porridge for him, and sighs after sitting down, this is by far his favorite meal, is it even a meal? He

won't eat it, she knows but she prepares it every time.

He appears looking dashing as he always does, he's faking a smile. She smiles back at him and tells him to eat, surprisingly, he takes a seat and takes two spoonful of the soft porridge before he tells her that he's full, she nods and takes it, it's better than not eating at all. It will get better with time, right?

"I love you mkami, and thank you for holding me down," he smiles.

"I lobe you too babe," she says and smiles at him too, she loves him but being his wife is draining sometimes, not that she's

complaining. Okay she is, and she is only complaining because he doesn't want to talk.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

She's okay, that's what they say.

It hasn't been long since I got here and I haven't even seen her. I yearn to do that.

They say that it's flu. I've heard of influenza in my life, I haven't heard of a type that makes someone be unable to speak. Either way I'm glad it's nothing bad. I'm angry at her nurse though, why wasn't she dressing

her well. She put my mother's life in danger. I'm currently not speaking to her and she knows itz that's why she's not pressing it.

"She's okay, but we'll keep her in for the night," that's what the doctor said before disappearing, and now I don't know where she is. I just want to see my mother, I miss her.

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I was just given permission to see my mother. She's really okay and I'm glad. We've had a conversation and now she's just smiling and staring at me.

“Mine sengitifunela mkhwenyana,” a drastic change of subject? I choke on my saliva, she giggles. I won’t grace her with a response, I just check my phone that keeps on beeping.

**So basically Mthombo is agreeing that he did this? What a pervert.” It’s a screenshot, Dignity just sent it to me, what the hell is she talking about? I call her.

“How were you able to sit with him in one room?” she says, no greeting whatsoever.

“What did you guys hear in that interview kani, because I don’t remember him admitting anything, he didn’t do anything.” I say.

“He said it himself that he did it,” she says,
how? She needs to explain. “Check on
YouTube, there are podcasts there, you’ll
find your answers,” she says.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 05

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

The heavens are turning their back on me!

Does heaven even have a back! Aiii

whatever.

My head is buzzing. I don't know why Lillian would want to sabotage Mthombo, now it's not even a matter of my heart and brain fighting because I chose to believe him instead of believing a woman, I am now sure that he didn't do it. But what does Lillian have to do with this? I don't even think they are enemies, because if they were Mthombo would know, so it's one-sided hatred. I'm tagged in Facebook, people are asking how it felt interviewing a rapist. I'm now a victim! I wonder what he must be going through. I call Dignity back. I'm so sad.

“I’m really sorry for what you went through friend,” she says. I’m crying boy because Mthombo touched or whatever stories people on Facebook are making up in their heads. I’m crying because .. why? He’s just a good guy that doesn’t seem like he’d hurt a fly.

“He is a great guy, I’ll send you the original recording of the interview, I saw it in his eyes, he didn’t rape that girl, what’s her name again?”

“Londeka, but if he didn’t why did they broadcast a recording of him admitting?” is she slow or is she dumb?

“They must have edited it, I’ll find out,” I say and sigh.

“Kani kwentakalani lana?” (what’s happening here) she’s as drained as me, Dignity loves gossiping so the fact that she doesn’t have facts is draining her, I on the other hand am worried about a man that is about to be destroyed by lies.

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I’m only leaving the hospital now because mom is asleep. I have deactivated my social media accounts because I can’t deal with half the things that are being posted about Mthombo.

I haven't tried calling Lillian, if I happen to call her now, I know I will lose my job, I can't afford to lose my job, I'm planning my own Investigation in my head.

Again, I dial Mthombo's number. He isn't saying anything, he just answered and kept quiet.

"Mthombo, I swear I had nothing to do with what was broadcasted." I say.

"It's Mr Nxumalo," he's angry and I understand.

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"They tricked me too, please..." Jesus! I'm out of airtime. Life is really not fair!

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GCINULWAZI NXUMALO

He's been staring at the blank TV for far too long. Everything is replaying in his head, he knows that there's something that's not right, someone is playing someone and he'll definitely find out because out of all his brothers, he knows these things better.

"Your eyes haven't left that blank TV,"

Keamogetswe says, he sighs.

"There's a lot I'm thinking about, my brother's hard work will crumble to shit if I don't act out," he says.

“What do you want to do?” Good question, but he doesn’t have an answer... or maybe he does.

“Finding Tsandzekile will help a lot,” he says, his wife’s eyes bulge, she knows who she married, and she hopes what she is thinking is not really what Gcina wants.

“I was born so that he lives, I’ll do anything to protect him.” He says and shrugs his shoulders.

“What do you mean you want to find Tsandzekile? Do you want to kill her?”

“What? No! I wouldn’t kill women...” he says and chuckles a little before he gets up and leaves before Detective Keamogetswe

bombards him with more questions. He remembers that he needs to ask her to pack his bags, he is heading to Mpumalanga tomorrow morning, so he walks back “Babe can you please pack my clothes, I’m leaving tomorrow morning,” she nods her head and looks away, they are drifting apart.

He ignores the sadness in his wife’s eyes and walks out. He finds a spot under the tree, there’s a chair he sits down. He comes here whenever his heart is heavy. 30 years ago, he was born. He has a purpose already, to protect his brother, not only that but he is his better half. Mthombowolwazi

was sick when he turned 3 years old, Lahliwe had no means to look take care if him, so he was born to take all that pain, because his parents had the money and means to take him to the doctor.

Gcinulwazi was born six months as free he was conceived, they could have waited but waiting would mean that Mthombo would die. He was sickly from birth, it's funny how he is connected to Mthombo more than he is to his brothers that he shared a womb with. His mother told him that he can't have a close relationship with Mthombo, it made sense so he loved and still loves him from

afar. It hurts sometimes, but he is a man he can't dwell in pain.

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SAMKELISIWE ZWANE-NXUMALO

My biggest mistake was allowing my parents to marry me off to a man that doesn't even look at me. Everyday I try new things as an attempt please Khayelihle, but he's just not there. He doesn't love me, and he doesn't even try hiding it. I swear I'm tired right now. He takes every chance he has to move away from me with both hands.

He got here in the wee hours of the morning, and already he is packing his bags and going back to his brother's home. I'm not saying he shouldn't be there for his brother, but I'm a woman, a young woman and I need to be touched. I need to be cuddled to sleep, but not with Khaya as my husband, we hardly even converse.

'Arranged marriages often work sometimes,' that's what they said to me and, I've seen some work, but it's been over 3 years and we've never even kissed. They said I should give him time to mourn his son and girlfriend, I did, it's enough now, I don't even have a say.

“Hambo gqoka, siyahamba,” (Go and change we are leaving) oh I’m also leaving? I nod and go to change.

I quickly change into a long skirt and a jacket. I put on a head wrap like a makoti should.

“Change into tracksuits, it’s cold outside,” I nod again. He’s not leaving? “Why are you staring at me?” he asks.

“I want to change,” I mean we do have sex, but it only happens if he’s in the mood, we just don’t kiss. He does satisfy me, but I need more. I need him to leave though, he’s be Dr really seen me naked.

“I’ve seen you naked,” he says raising his brows, only him and Zanothando have two brows, well their sister too. Mthombo and Gcina are the ones with unibrows.

“I need to dress,” he chuckles and shakes his head.

“I’ll close my eyes,” he says, I can work with that.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 06

NARRATED

Gcinumthombowolwazi, that's what he was told to name his son, it was a clear instruction given to him in his dream. And it was also a revelation to him, he was told that Lahliwe ran away with his Mthombo, he didn't know whether his son was alive or not, it killed him inside. But he had to act okay for Khayelihle and his wife, because at that time they only had Khayelihle.

The name was really nice and meaningful, but it was just too long it would be a problem for Gcina's teachers and it would be too obvious, so he named him Gcinulwazi, but everyone knew, even now,

what the actual meaning of Gcinulwazi's name is, well only the elders, Gcina too knows what he is, it actually means that he should keep Mthombowolwazi alive.

30 years ago, Mthombo was sick, he was a slow child so he couldn't speak at 3, he'd utter some words here and there, it was really hard for Lahliwe because she didn't really know what was wrong with her son, she was alone and raising a child that she never planned to have, it hurt her but it made her strong. Maybe it is the cause of the hatred she today.

Mthombowolwazi would cry at night, she would cry too because she grew fond of

her baby and the fact that he was hurting hurt her too, she would take him to the clinic but they couldn't help him, she gave up and accepted his death, she knew he would eventually die.

It wasn't a medical problem, he had to be brought back home so that he could be introduced to his family, but how would Lahliwe have known when she was a child herself, she was still yet to find out about what life had in store for her when she was told to sleep with her brother in law.

Gcinulwazi, was brought to life, he was born six months after being conceived, and all the ceremonies that had to take place

took place, only he stood for Mthombowolwazi. All the pain that was meant for Mthombo was felt by him.

As soon as Mthombo was brought home, Gcina was to be taken back where he came from, he wasn't meant to live; Mzikayifani made peace with that that's why in his arms he held every one of his sons and daughter, except Gcina. With Thando, it was a different story, how was she expected to carry a child and understand that he'd die? She had to breastfeed him so obviously there would be a bond between them, losing any of them wasn't an option, she had to make a plan.

Thando cried herself to sleep all night because the thought of losing her son was really horrifying. So she did something, she went to see a traditional healer, they begged for Gcinulwazi's life. Gcinulwazi would only live if he doesn't get close to his brother otherwise one of them would die.

She made sure that Gcinulwazi doesn't get near his brother, she didn't want any of them to pass on, she still doesn't want that, it would be a disaster.

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SAMKELISIWE ZWANE-NXUMALO

We've never travelled together, this is our first time travelling together, it's awkward. Not only is the travelling together awkward, the fact that we are holding hands is more awkward. I keep stealing glances of our fingers intertwined, I won't lie, they look good. My yellow skin complements his dark skin.

"MaZwane, are you okay," he asks, of course I'm not okay, I'm surprised, what are we doing? Acting for the cameras? We can't do what lovers do because he is suddenly in the mood to do that, what about me, what about what I want?

“Why are you taking me with?” I’m really, really curious about this. I don’t want to get used to having him around only for him to break my heart, I am used to keeping to myself, I don’t need any drama in my life.

“Because you are my wife,” he says. I chuckle. It’s not funny!

“You are only realizing that now?” I ask.

“I’ve always known, what kind of question is that?” I yank my hand from his and sink back on the car seat, Lord I’m so over this.

“I want a divorce,” I say, hhay and then?

What am I saying? I really didn’t want to say it out loud, although it was in my mind for so long. I fell in love with him, yes. I love

him even now, but he doesn't feel the same way, so I don't think it's fair for the both of us to be in this marriage.

I don't know when the car stopped, but it has, and I'm being stared at. "It's clear that you don't love me nje," I say, he heaves a sigh.

"Do you know who I love and who I don't?" he asks me, I nod my head.

"You love your siblings and your parents," I shrug my shoulder.

"I love you," he says. I laugh, it's a mocking laugh. This man doesn't love me, he is just saying what I want to hear.

“No you don’t,” I say and roll my eyes. My heart is bleeding honestly, I just wish I had someone who would value me.

“I do, more than you think I do, and I’m sorry for being an ass, I promise to be a husband you want me to be,” mxm!

“Drive on, we need to get to your brother’s,” I say, honestly if he really wants to do better, his actions will tell. I know I was a wife brought to him by his mother, but if he didn’t want me he could have told me from day one.

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GCINULWAZI NXUMALO

He's leaving tonight, he has no plan whatsoever, everything will fall into place after he takes that girl.

"I'll miss you," he says, he will. He loves this woman to death. He loved her from the very first time he saw her. She was a varsity student by then, Mthombowolwazi dragged him from the Bhundus to work for him in his dairy farm as a punishment because he was starting to get out of line, and surprisingly he fell in love with everything there that I'd why he is the one managing that farm. He asked her out, she tried playing hard to get, but he proved that

he really liked her, so she gave him a chance, they've been together since then until now. There are just disturbances here and there, he tends to zone out, sometimes he doesn't give his attention to her, it's not because he doesn't love her but because of the pain he feels, sometimes he doesn't even know what the main cause of it is, but she knows that he loves her.

"I'll miss you too," she smiles at him. She has so many questions and she wants to tell him that he should come back in one piece, she wants to ask him not to kill the poor girl because Gcina might look

harmless, but he is more than that, sometimes she feels as if he is heartless. "My contacts say that they have leads of that girl, Londeka," Gcina changes the topic. Now Keamogetswe hates that girl too, she portrayed herself like someone who was interested in Mthombo. They dated for a year and now she is laying charges of rape against him? If she wasn't the sweetheart she is, she would want to kill her herself, because what kind of a woman is she?

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#BonusInsert

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 07

GCINULWAZI NXUMALO

Maybe being accused of murder is better than this. A rapist? A fucking rapist? That's what his brother is being reduced to. It angers him more than it hurts him because there are women out there who get raped for real and not get justice, but his brother's case is being placed as the number one priority because well... he is successful and

black. He won't let it happen, this is bullshit, even an infant would back him up.

Getting her here was not as easy as he thought it would be. It took him 3 hours, imagine what he could have done with those three hours, but he had to dodge men in black, they were too obvious, not too obvious for Tsandzekile though, or maybe she's just dumb... and naïve that's why she agreed to go and interview a 'rapist' alone, in his house. Jesus, if Mthombo was a real serial rapist, what would have happened to her, clap once! She's not a mayor's daughter that is surrounded by body guards hired by her

father, but there are definitely people that are guarding her; it took time, but he managed to get them distracted and got her in the car, basically, he kidnapped her. They are driving back to Johannesburg. Their father's home in Fine Town— EmaDzedzeni— will come in handy, it always does. Most blood is spilt there.

“So you are being looked over yet you are innocent?” There are two things; she's either in on this or she's been played too but is feared because she knows something, he knows that it's the latter. “I left my wife home, I need you to speak,” Gcina says clenching his jaws, honestly

he's trying to scare her, this girl is just too sweet, he would never harm her, her aura is just... different. He wouldn't kill her even if he hadn't promised his wife not to. God himself would come down and strangle him, she looks like an angel!

"I didn't do anything, I swear," rivers of Jordan start to flow, she's been doing this since he took her and put her inside the taxi.

"Zano, how far are we," he might be killed for including his little brother in this, but they can't afford to involve outsiders. And besides, it's not like this is a dirty job, Zanothando is just a driver for tonight.

“2 hours away,” Zano says.

“Did you hear that? We are two hours away from your death,” he takes out his handkerchief and polishes his pistol. He’s not a thug nor a criminal, but he’s spilt a lot of blood. He is just daring, he’d do anything to make sure that they are all okay, especially Mthombo. And killing is definitely in that list of “anything.” But this is just an act, he’s trying to get the girl to talk.

“I didn’t do anything though,” she says in-between her sobs, now he is convinced that she is not lying, but he sure is pissed by her crying!

“Then I need you to talk to me, Tsandzekile, help me clear my brother’s name,” he begs, putting away his gun.

“I have the original recording sent to my friend, my phone’s data has been cleared, I don’t know how and why?” Lord, now they can only hope that the friend is not in on this too.

“At least we have something,” he’s trying to convince himself. “What’s your friend’s name?”

“Dignity,” he almost cracks up, but there are serious situations that he needs to attend to, maybe he can laugh later when his

brother's name is cleared. But some parents are not serious, 'Sithunzi?'

"I'm sorry about how I took you, but I had to, I hope you understand," he feels the need to apologise.

"It's okay," she says and nods her head. Her phone beeps, it's with him.

You dare say anything to that motherfucker, your mother will die, for real this time Gcina reads the message internally and swallows. She looks too distracted by her tears to even notice that her phone had just beeped.

Now he has to choose between an elder's life and his brother's reputation, not only

his reputation will be at stake, but his whole life.

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

Even if he were to explain it to her, she wouldn't understand– he really wasn't fair, but he's willing to fix all that shit and be what she wants. He just wants to clear his brother's name so that he can apologize to her correctly. Well, for now all he can do is tell her how sorry he is and that he needed time to accept that he'll never, ever see his son and the love of his life. Not only that, loving someone else just felt like he would

be betraying both his late baby Mama and son. He knows better now and he wants to make up for the three years that he wasted. They arrived here earlier today, Mthombo was as calm as someone who does yoga, it puzzles him sometime. He doesn't seem like someone whose character is being defamed.

They are in bed, and she feels so right in his arms, this is the closest to romantic they've been since his mother forced them to get married. They've had sex, they've both made each other cum, but it lacked love. They've never even shared a hug, let alone a kiss.

She's softly snoring, it's not annoying, it's a sound he'd like to hear until the his last day on earth. He kisses the top of her head and sighs, he lets sleep takeover.

There's commotion outside, people are singing.

Khayelihle and Samkelisiwe jolt awake!

"What's that?" Samkelisiwe asks. They were sleeping here together, how is he supposed to know? Khayelihle checks the time, it's 1am, God it's too early for him to wake up.

"I don't know, let me go check," he says.

Samkelisiwe sits up with her knees up to her chin, her hands are hugging her knees.

Khayelihle peeps through the window, there are so many people outside, what is this? He expected them to do this, really he did, but at this time? South Africans are not serious.

Why would they waste their night, only to do a protest strike outside his brother's house? Thank God they only have boards, for now.

Who are they even expecting to read all that shit in the dark! Jesus, he's done being a human, maybe aliens are better; because these are just a waste of breath... oh also, they are a waste of his sleep.

“There’s no danger here, the serious ones will probably come tomorrow, and we’ll be gone, let’s sleep,” Samke is shaken, but she abides.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 08

WANDILE MNISI

Every day is a new day to orchestrate new ways of making a rape case stronger– and that’s all for Mthombowolwazi's Downfall.

That man took away the woman he loved from him. Yes, he gave the Londeka to Mthombo willingly, but he didn't expect Londeka to fall for Mthombo, the plan was to make him love her and marry her, then they would kill him and take all his wealth. But she ruined it and fell in love with him, not only did she do that, she's also carrying his seed, bloody crooked seed.

There was a time where Wandile liked and looked up to Mthombo, they were friends, or maybe he was a friend to Mthombo while Mthombo wasn't even interested any form of friendship with him. There were some Whites he had to kill all in the name

of helping Mthombo get what he's always wanted— a farm— and when they finally did, the only thing he asked for was for Mthombo to at least give him 50% ownership of the farm. Mthombo straight up told him that he wouldn't do that shit.

“Wake up,” he roughly pulls the comforter covering Londeka's body. She pats her mouth after yawning and sits up. Her tummy is growing bigger, she's probably 3 months, why is it growing so fast! They need to get Mthombo arrested before it's too late to abort the thing growing in her body. “Here, I brought you food,” Londeka looks at what Wandile just called food.

How will she be able to eat Biltong and bread? This is really frustrating her, it's not like he's poor and stuff.

"How am I supposed to eat this thing?" she asks, clearly annoyed. Wandile chuckles, bitterly.

"This is not food? Do you forever that you come from a home where they eat pap and salt as dinner?" she wasn't keen on doing this, until he found out that she was pregnant. She huffs and starts fighting with the Biltong, it's too hard to bite it.

She doesn't want to be here, she doesn't want to do any of the things that she's doing. He threatened to kill the baby, so

she had no choice, she had to do whatever he instructs her to do.

“That’s my girl, eat and bath, you are going out today. Gcinulwazi found your location, so he’ll probably follow you...” he says, grinning. What an ugly grin!

“What??? Do you know how cruel Gcina is? He’ll probably kill me?” She’s lost her appetite.

“Relax, I’m not a fool, everything going according to plan, that boy thinks he is smart,” he says and shakes his head. This is a really interesting and nice game.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I was kidnapped by a younger version Mthombo! This house was probably a home to someone because there furniture, just that it's old, but it doesn't change the fact that, it feels like a home. He didn't chain me, but I still feel kidnapped.

If I thought Khayelihle looked exactly like Mthombo then I was lying, this one even has the same eye shape, I also don't know how I studied their eyes. He has light brown eyes too. Mthombo's energy is light and this one's is heavy.

I cried and begged for my life, he spared me and I'm thankful. Lillian will pay for all the shit she's put me through. You know, I saw the red flags, and I did think that there was something wrong about all this, I just chose to ignore it.

"I've contacted your friend and she forwarded it to me," He says and leans back to his chair. How many hours have I been here with him? I don't know. I'm ready to go home, I just want to take a long bath and sleep in my mother's arms.

"She gave it to you just like that?", I ask.

"No, she told me that she didn't have it with her until I sent to her a picture of you, a

bloody you?" for a minute I scan myself, I'm not touched though. How the hell do I have blood when I'm not even touched. And then it clicks... Photoshop. "She cares about you," he says and chuckles. What's funny about that.

"It's really nice having people who care about you, not people who use you for their own benefits," he smiles, though I can see the hurt in his eyes.

"Are you okay?" I ask, well I don't care if I'm the one who should be asked questions. I'm a journalist, I am the one with a right to ask.

“Who me?” who does he think I’m asking?

His shadow?

“Yes, you,” I say.

“I’m okay,” he says and heaves a heavy sigh. My phone rings in his hands, I look at him. He frowns and looks at me, and then back to the phone. He extends his hand and gives me my phone. It’s Mthombo?

“Hey,” I say, Gcinulwazi disappears to another room.

“Thandekile,” I corrected him once, I won’t do it again.

“You hung up on me the other day,” I’m petty, the man is going through a lot, and I don’t even ask how he is doing.

"I heard you are in Johannesburg, I'd like to see you," Gcina must have told him.

"Please tell Gcina to bring you here, there are so many things I'd like to talk to you about." He says. I sigh, I do want to see him too so I tell him that I'll pass on the message to his brother.

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Gcina is driving silently, there's something heavy about his presence, I can't pin point it. He's just too much for a human being.

"Your car is beautiful," I'm trying to make a conversation, the way his is so focused on

clenching his, I think he might even lose focus on the road and crash us.

“Really?” he’s chuckling.

“You are too quiet, do you know how expensive toothpaste is?” I really don’t get why people waste their money on toothpaste if they’ll spend the rest of their days mum, it’s useless.

“Why do you have siphandla,” I saw the same traditional bracelet made of a goat’s skin around Mthombo’s wrist.

“I’m Zulu,” I’m really dumb aren’t I? “It connects me to him, it connects me to Mthombo,” he says. He’s cementing the

topic, he doesn't want to talk about this any further.

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I'm back here. A week hasn't even passed, I can only hope that I don't pass out. Gcina walked me to the door and went back to his car. I find it weird, really weird, but who am I to judge, I don't even remember how any of my sisters looked.

"Wamuhle," (you are beautiful) he says coming from the passage, I'm in the dining room. He's saying this to be a gentleman, I know this because I wear cheap makeup from the Somali shop back home, it's

been hours since I've worn it, it's probably wearing off. I cried and sweated, I haven't even washed my face.

"That's funny, Mr Nxumalo," I say. I won't forget that he told me— in not so many words— that I can't address him with his name.

"Well, what can I say, you look beautiful to me," he says and sits down next to me.

Lord this man's scent is heavenly. I wonder why I'm here though.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 09

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA

I'm taking a shower.

It's a way to relieve my stress, Gcinulwazi has been gone since morning, he hasn't called. I miss him, I tried calling him and his phone took me straight to voicemail.

I'm afraid something might have happened.

The fact that I don't have bhut' Mthombo's numbers kills me, because he's the one that I get along with, Khayelihle doesn't like

me, I've inherited the beef, I don't like him too.

I'm letting water hit my skin, it's kind of relieving the tension.

"Baby," he is back? As wet as I am, I get off the shower and wrap a towel around myself and rush out.

"You are back," I say. I don't want to get too close, I don't know if he went on a killing spree or not, so I'd rather keep to myself, if he didn't do anything wrong he'll do the first move.

"I'm back Sthandwa Sami, I missed you," I smile, days like these are very few, where he is free and all smiles, I love this man,

and he loves me too, with no doubt. I stare at him, his brown eyes are lighter.

He removes his beany and folds it, he places it on the bed and gets off his jacket. I'm watching him undress. I just wish one day, he could open up, I just want to know what goes through his mind.

"You are staring," he is butt naked now! Jesus, I'm staring. I don't dare move my eyes, he's my husband, I shouldn't be scared not reprimanded for looking at him.

"Is it a crime?" I ask, he chuckles and quickly shakes his head no.

"Please join me, I'm taking a shower," he says and walks in the direction of the

bathroom. I follow behind him. He's fit

He shuts the door of the bathroom after I get in. He pushes me against the door and pins me on it. "What's eating you up?" he asks, and then he breathes on my ear, his breath is warm. It sends shivers down my spine.

"You are absent, sometimes I feel like you don't love me," I'm honest, I've always been an honest person. Probably why his brother, Khayelihle, doesn't like me. He says I'm too sharp to be with his brother, he thought I'd cheat on his brother.

"I'm sorry, but I love you, today, forever, and always" he whispers and kisses my neck.

“Khumula leli thawula,” (remove this towel,) I obey and do as told. His cold hand finds my breast and squeezes it. I bite my lower lip, muffling a moan that escapes my lips.

He scoops me up, I wrap my legs around his torso, he is taking us to the shower. His shaft is poking my butt.

“I missed you themba lomphefumulo wam,” (hope of my soul) he says breathing heavily. The water and his touch, Lord they are so heavenly.

He takes a bathing towel and applies soap on it and helps me bath, he turns me and scrubs my back. My clit is throbbing. I love

these moments. They don't occur everyday, but when they do I'm at my happiest.

"Please wash my back," he says and turns. I scrub his back the way he did with mine, carefully. Water rinses him, like it me. "Buka ungenzeni," (look at what you've done to me) what have I done to him? He's done a lot of things to me, using his manly soap to bath me for starters, me making him hard is a good thing I he can't complain.

"I need to be buried deep inside you," his voice is husky and strained, his eyes have turned a darker shade of brown.

Again, he scoops me up and walks back to the bathroom, the fact that I'm thin works

on his favor I see. His lips are on mine. He's deepening the kiss, his fingers are rubbing my clit. He carefully places me on the bed. "I can't wait any longer..." he says and rubs his shaft on my wet opening.

Slowly, he pushes inside me until he is fully in. His shaft is thickening in me. I'm digging my nails in his back and moaning as he starts moving.

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We are catching our breath. My head is placed in his chest, I love the rhythm of his heart beating fast against his big chest. His arms are caging me.

“We’ve come too far, I love you themba lam,” he says, I’m blushing and it’s probably showing because I’m light in complexion.

“I love you even more,” I say snuggling closer to him.

“I’m leaving again tonight, I’ve gotten so many leads, I even know who the person behind all this is,” he says and brushes my arm. If there weren’t good news amongst these news, I would be sulking. “I think it would be better if I left you kwabhuti, you won’t be bored,” he intertwined his fingers with mine and kisses my forehead.

“Yeah, I know your brother is cool,” he is not, I’m being sarcastic. Mthombo hardly

ever says something.

“I’m serious though, Samke is there too,” I close my eyes. That couple! I just tolerate them. Samkelisiwe inherited my and her husband’s beef, she doesn’t like me, I don’t like her either. She should have welcomed me when I got here, because she’s the eldest wife in our generation– that will be until bhut’ Mthombo takes a wife– instead of welcoming me, she used to talk behind my back with her mother in law, “that pedi girl,” Lord!

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

“Why am I here?” I ask, the last time we spoke he was cold, so I want to know exactly, why the hell I am here.

“I don’t know, why are you here?” I sigh and shake my head, I’m angry he is wasting my time. Gcinulwazi was still interrogating me, we could have been very far now.

“You called me here,” I say, quietly.

“And you also came, aii nc,” I have no time for grown-ups games, I’m really old.

“Can I leave since you really don’t know why you called me here,” I’m pissed actually.

“There were things I had intended on asking you, they don’t matter now, I’ve seen

your beautiful face," this man! Shouldn't he be worried about being arrested? "I don't care about that, if they find me 'guilty' it won't matter," ohhh I said that aloud!

"Are you okay though?" I ask, he shrugs.

"This doesn't affect me," he smiles. I know it does affect him, he is the master of all good fronts.

"What was your relationship with that girl?"

I ask, she pisses me off really, how could she lie about such?

"She was my girl, soon to be fiance," again, he shrugs, I see he likes doing it.

"Oh," my heart feels like it has been stabbed a million times, she lied to people

about someone she dated?

“Who makes you smile,” he asks, his brow is raised. Next question please!

“What do you mean?” I can’t believe that I’m here to be asked who I’m dating, really Mthombo?

“Who makes you smile, that’s what I mean,” I clear my throat, shaking my head.

“Elvis,” who the fuck is that? And how did my brain rush to an English word?

“Aiii, that means there’s no tight competition, ngingam' gxoba zisuka,” (I would beat him up,) Zulu men and violence!

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 10

GCINULWAZI NXUMALO

Out of all our sexual encounters, this one that we've just had was special, I loved how she let me in, I love how her skin felt; what I mean is that I love her, and I'd do anything to be with her again and again. Sometimes I'm a fuck up, I know, but it's not intentional, she knows that too. She always complains about me being emotionally unavailable,

but I wasn't raised that way, I've always learned to keep to myself.

I'm driving her to my elder brother's house, I don't know whether I'll be back or not, I can only hope that I'll be back to the love of my life. But I have my friends, friends that I gave every evidence that I had gathered in the past few days, if it happens that two days pass by and I'm not back, they will leak everything and my brother's name will be partly cleaned, he'll know what to do, I know that if I die, he'll be capable of doing every I've ever done. He has it in him.

Killing without a conscience, I've done that

in his behalf, so I know that when I'm gone, he'll do it too.

"I can't go in with you," I say, I don't want to look at her, I won't want to leave, but then again, I have to. I'm now parked outside.

"Why?" she knows why, but she doesn't know reason behind the reason why I don't want to be too close to my brother. I just look at her blankly, I won't answer her. "I love you," she takes my hand in hers, hers is warm. My heart starts beating fast, I want to cry, I don't know why, but I hold it in. "Look at me," she whispers, I'm looking at her, so I don't know what she means, but I just stare into her eyes, her gaze is

burning me, it almost makes me want to drop my eyes. “No one, I mean no one will ever take your place in my heart, you know that right?, I love you Sothondose,” without my permission, my tears fall. I love her, I can’t even explain it. I’ve never cried in her presence, I’ve always let myself be strong in her presence; but today I’m letting her see my vulnerability, even if it’s a 2 percent, it’s still there. I’m letting her see that I’m as weak and fragile as a new born baby.

“I love you even more themba lomphfumulo wam,” I call her the hope of my soul, she is. If she didn’t exist, I would

have taken my life a long time ago, she gives me hope.

“Ungakhali phela,” (Don’t cry,) she’s Pedi, but she knows none of it, perks of growing up in Tshiawelo. She wipes my tears, she’s the only person that I can point to and say that she loves me, I know she does, well my mom and aunt too.

“Please hold me,” I want a hug, that’s what I want, I want her to hold me tight. To tell me that she loves me.

She jumps over to my side and sits on my lap, her legs are bended to the sides of the seat. We are parked outside my brother’s

house. She wraps her hands around my neck and kisses my forehead.

“Stop crying baby, I love you,” her voice is cracking.

“I love you even more baby,” I hug her and lay my head on her breasted chest.

Her heart is beating, the sound is what I want to hear forever. “I have to go,” I say. More than her, I am telling this to myself because I’m suddenly feeling like I want to stay.

“Come back to me in one peace,” I don’t know if I will, I’m walking to a trap and I really am not sure if I have a plan. You know, there’s almost enough evidence to

prove my brother innocent, if we can get Londeka to talk.

“I will Sthandwa Sami,” she places her lips on mine and smooches my lips. I just wish she goes stop.

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Her phone is ringing, she’s taking time to answer, I need to talk to her. Keamogetswe would say that she knows me, but she knows what I want her to know about me; but Mam’ncane knows everything about me. She knows things not even my mother knows.

“My baby,” she holds grudges against her sister, not us. She loves us as much as mama loves Mthombo. I don’t know man, it’s hard not to love him.

“Mamami,” (My mom) I say and sigh.

“What’s wrong?” she knows that I’m not okay.

“I’ve found leads, I might be able to help him mama, I’m scared though,” if I fuck this up, my brother’s life will be ruined.

“None of this is your fault,” she says, there’s some shuffling before she releases a sigh.

“Gcinulwazi, we can’t lose you, go back home, all this will be sorted, Mthombo

probably has a plan,” I sigh and let my tears flow.

“Can I come there for the night?” my voice and lips says. I internally slap my head, what the fuck?

“You don’t have to ask, come,” she says. I thank her before hanging up.

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NARRATED

Gcinulwazi told Lahliwe that he’d be here in 10 minutes, so she prepared water for him to bath.

Although her and her sister don't get along, they don't hate each other's sons. Lahliwe thought that Thando would be cold toward Mthombo, but surprisingly, she apologized and confessed her sins. It was really shocking to her, but she knew that there was nothing she could do about the matter when Mthombo hugged Thando and told her that it was okay.

There are Thando's children, then there's Gcinulwazi, a child that was never hugged by his father, it would have been okay if that happened to every one of them. But everyone knows that Nxumalo is a lover, he loves every one of his children, but he just

detaches himself from Gcina. It caused him a lot of pain. But it damaged Gcina's way of thinking. Gcina enjoys inflicting pain on others, if someone ever steps on his and his brother's toes, they never live to tell the tale. She knows this because she saw it.

It was years ago, he was pouring acid on a person and laughing at every scream that left the man's lips, when she confronted him about it, he just told her that the man was trying to ruin his brother's marriage. It gave her nightmares, it still does. But what makes her smile and love him, is that there's hope, hope that he'll be alright one day,

because even though it's not, there are emotions in Gcina, something she thought never existed.

No one knows this, Keamogetswe knows that Gcina would do anything to protect his family, what she doesn't know is that he actually laughs and watches the bleed to death. She also doesn't know that he yearns for his father, every time when his father played with his brothers he'd watch, hoping that one day it would be his turn, he waited and waited, till today he is waiting.

"Mama," he says and sits down smiling, he's smiling, but the smile lacks something, emotions.

“My baby, are you okay?” It’s a stupid question, but she asks it really. He shakes his head no.

“I’ll be fine ma,” he says and tells her that he’ll bath and get ready for bed. She thought that he was here to have a chat with her, to vent, but it doesn’t seem like that. As soon as he leaves, she takes her phone out from her pocket and dials her son.

“Ndlovukazi,” (my queen) his voice is always kept low, if someone was to compare Gcina to Mthombo they would come back thinking that Gcina and him are

the same person, their only differences are the demons each of them is fighting.

“Mthombo, do you check up on Gcina?”

She’s really worried today.

Mthombowolwazi sighs.

“He wants nothing to do with me,” he says, calmly. She closes her eyes in frustration, Thando did what she did to make sure that Gcina lives, whatever it is that she did she would have done it too.

“I didn’t ask if he wanted anything to do with you, I asked if you checked up on him,” she says.

“I’ll call him,” he says.

“Okay,” she says.

“Ngiyak’thanda Ndlovukazi yam,” (I love you my queen,) she blushes and tells him that she loves him too. She didn’t expect him to grow up and be a soft spoken child, someone who’s loving and caring, but he was and she was happy until Thando explained that Gcinulwazi is almost an alter ego of Mthombo, it started haunting her. Heck it made her not sleep at night.

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Gcinulwazi woke up in the middle of the night and drove to Mpumalanga. He’s located them, but he doesn’t know whether to get in because he is without back up,

either way that fucker is still waiting for him. It's 4am now, the sun will rise very soon. He needs to do do this. He walks out of his car, God will protect him– he always does.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 11

GCINULWAZI NXUMALO

I find this funny, for the first time in many years my heart is beating fast because if

fear, fear of having to lose my life. Life gives you life when you are fed up and want it to end, and life takes away life when you need it the most. I've been standing here, smoking but it helps not. My head is still conflicted thinking of what could happen if I ever leave... Eish!

My phone is ringing, I hate distractions; I let it ring, I won't answer it; I don't even bother to check the caller ID. I sigh before getting back to my car and driving off to a safer side, a side where they won't see me.

I'm puzzled, I don't know who it is that is calling me, I don't get calls from anyone besides my 3 women. Mom Kea and Aunt. I

know it's neither of them because they know I'm out for something serious, they know that they should Never distract him. I missed the call, it's bhuti, now I have to call him back. He probably thinks that I don't have his Numbers saved.

"Gcina, where are you?" He asks, I sigh and close my eyes, aunt Lahliwe must have told him.

"Mpumalanga bhuti," I say.

"Are you okay?" Sometimes I wish I was calm as he is.

"Yeah, I'm okay," I say.

"Please do not risk your life, we all love and need you," I purse my lips into a thin line. I

have to put my act together, I don't have to be emotional because of this.

"I'll call you soon bhuti," I say.

"Okay," he says.

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I've driven back to the motherfuckers house, someone bhuti trusted is a person that betrayed him, it makes my stomach turn. Even that Lillian Mnisi is in on this, because she is his sister, motherfucking fucker!

A silencer is out on my hun, I shoot the door handle, it opens and I walk in.

“Lovers and cowards!” I say. Londeka is here, looking like a cat that was trimmed! Weee, I scan her, she’s pregnant.

I’m trying to focus on this Mnisi waste of sperm, Wandile; I can’t, because my eyes are drawn to Londeka’s Belly. I feel it, she has someone I have to protect in her belly.

“I’m here to strike a deal, I need you to release her and we’ll talk, men to men,” I say, cocking my gun. He doesn’t scare me, if he uses women and lies to attack then I know that he is nothing but indunu. (an ass)

“What? Who do you think you are to come here and demand that I give this thing?” I

am really not interested in this thing, I am interested in what this thing carries, she has someone that is a Nxumalo in her belly.

“Ngu Zwide ka Langa, do you want me to continue praising myself?” I ask, he clenches his jaws, one thing I’m never doing is begging this piece of shit, I tried being nice, something that I never am.

“Get up wena sifebe, check on my contacts and call Zweli, he’ll come get you,” I toss my phone to her, she takes it and gets up, she’s limping, which makes my head spin. I sigh when she’s out of sight, now I can deal with piece of rubbish here with me,

damnit! Today will be the first day whereby I shoot a person without torturing them first.

He's relaxed, I don't know why!

"Man to man, let's fight with our fists to see who's the man," he says, I chuckle. I have no doubt that between him and I, I am a man, because I face my enemies head on. Also, I have no doubt that he is trying to stall me, so I don't even wait for a minute to pass before I blow his brains off, ufile umgodoyi.

"I never thought that I would see something like this, I have to say, you are very capable, son!" I freeze, a cold metal is placed on my

bald head! Fuck, Fuck, fuck! If I die today, I'll die a happy man because I know no one is in danger because of me, Tsandzekile's mother is in Johannesburg with Bonga, her nurse is dead because why the hell would she keep quiet about the visitation that Lillian would make?

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

He's stressed! Since this whole saga started, this is actually the first time he feels heavy shoulders.

The reason for his stress is Gcina, why is he not fucking picking up his phone when he promised to call? That boy is full of shit, he needs one day, just one day with him, he'll wake up with manners, and he'll surely know that he needs to keep his promises.

He woke up very early today and locked himself in his study, he wants to forget about everything, he wants to distract himself but it's just hard, because if not Tsandzekile who keeps on calling Elvis, it's his brother that might be in danger, Lord what has he ever done? Other kids are mending their marriages, he is being

stressed by a boyfriend that has sweet words.

“Mtho,” Lord, now he has to listen to her telling him about how Elvis is a great boyfriend.

“Thandekile, hello,” his face is kept neutral, he’s not really in the mood.

“Who exactly is posing as a threat to me?” she asks.

“Your boss,” it’s true, if Lillian finds her, she’ll try to manipulate her again. He might have lied to keep her here, but a man has to do what he has to do to get what he wants.

“I want to go home, my mother must be worried about me,” she says.

“Then go,” he says calmly, he doesn’t want her to leave, but he doesn’t know how to beg her if his brain is conflicted.

“Okay, I have my bags packed, goodbye sir,” he hates it when she calls him sir, she said Mtho at first but now it sir?

“Okay, thank you ma'am,” he looks back to his laptop, he’s not doing anything now, he’s passing time. She walks out and close the door, he sighs and looks up the ceiling. Where the hell is Gcina and why the fuck isn’t he taking his calls?

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Keamogetswe is silently sitting in the dining room, eating her breakfast.

Tsandzekile appears from the passage.

“And then? Where are you going?” Kea asks, she’s questioning her because she sees her cleaned up and carrying her side bag.

“I’m going home sesi,” Keamogetswe's face falls. She’s the only one that she’s able to converse with. Lord who will make her laugh because the other woman in this house has her nose flaring everytime she sees her, okay maybe that’s not true.... But still.

“Please stay, please,” she begs. Well, she doesn’t mind begging. Tsandzekile doesn’t really want to leave, so she sighs and sits down.

“I wasn’t leaving, I was going to the shops, what’s up with Mtho?” she asks.

“Why are you lying about going home then?” Kea asks.

“Because I wanted to get Mtho out of his had news, but today he seems to be sinking shame,” Kea nods and closes her eyes. She misses her husband.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 12

GCINULWAZI NXUMALO

I will never, EVER, bow before a white man who thinks he is greater than me.

Lingacoshwa zinkukhu. He thinks I'm

Frozen because he has me at gunpoint, but the real reason why I'm frozen is, I don't have a plan, and that why the fuck did I not catch this? I should have known that

Wandile is not clever enough to pull this shit off alone. "You helped me get rid of rubbish," he says and chuckles. I haven't

turned to look at him, Lord I hate him already.

“What do you want?” I ask, after unclenching my jaws.

“Come with me,” he has an English accent. I am not racist, I just hate racist people, and I know a racist when I hear one.

“And why should I do that?” I turn to look at him, he is old really old, older than my father I think. He needs me, I know he won't kill me, well at least until he gets whatever it is that he wants from my brother. I'm hoping and praying that Londeka is already with Zweli, and that she is clever enough to tell him that I'm in danger so that Zwe can

execute the plans we had made. I don't care about what happens to me at this point, I'm worried about my wife and brothers.

"Because I have a gun held at your head," Lord Jesus, if I knew how many people he had with him, I would take the gun away from him because it's clear that he is an amateur, who speaks like this? And tell me why I'm not trembling?

"Okay," the laugh that escapes my lips is unintentional. He lightly hits my head with that you of his, Jesus please save me or kill me because if this man kills me, I'd fight to wake up and commit suicide, it's a

disgrace. I sigh before I allow him to push me around, he'll pay for this.

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He locked me up in a storage. You know, this man here used Wandile who is now dead. I don't know how I didn't find that out. It's Mr Rooi, the man whose son tried to take the farm away the farm from Mthombo, well I had him killed bhuti worked his black ass off for that farm. "You love him don't you?" This is why being killed by him would be a disgrace, he thinks I'd tell him about the people I love.

“Yes I do,” I fake sarcasm and a smile. Who the fuck does he think he is? Or rather, does he think he is smarter than me?

“Oh, I see,” he says. I almost roll my eyes.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

His chest is heavy, he thought overworking himself would work, it didn't.

Keamogetswe and Tsandzekile left, they said they were going to the mall. He also decided to leave the lovers home. At first he thought he would drive around, but he found himself parked just outside Gcina's house, it's funny how they live in the same

area but they don't even visit each other. He only came here twice or thrice, the first time was when he gifted him this house.

It's homely, they made this house a home without even having children. His heart finds peace in this house, he takes a seat after touring the house. Besides his stress about his brother, his heart feels almost contented. Like something that was missing in his life for so long was just put back in place.

He closes his eyes and rests his head back, he internally prays for Gcinulwazi's well-being, God knows that if he comes back, he'll try being a better brother; he'll check

up on him regularly, and he will surely tell him that he loves him. He got into every room, except 2 rooms, their main bedroom and a locked room.

He sighs before getting up again he's curious, every room of this house is kept unlocked, why is that specific one not locked? He sighs before pushing the door, he'll break it down if he has to.

It turns it's only his weight that was needed to break the door, he get in. His nostrils are immediately filled with his own scent— weird! He turns on the lights, Jesus, if he didn't know better he'd think that this is his study. Everything in this room is exactly the

way his study is kept. This is sure creepy. His pictures are all over the room, Jesus he hopes that his brother is not trying to kill him. Some are even pictures he didn't know he had.

Curiosity killed a cat, it has to be changed to "Curiosity killed the Source of knowledge."

He goes to the desk and takes a seat, he opens a drawer, he finds a drawing; it's a beautiful drawing of four boys and a girl. It's them, their family. He releases a sigh, at the back there's something that is handwritten.

Sometimes I wish I could hold him and hug him, he is the closest thing to a father I have, because my father wants nothing to do with me he closes his eyes, and wonders if he rejected his brother, and why the hell would their father reject Gcina, when he loved all of them.

After sucking in a breath, he dials Gcina, he's praying for him to pick it up; there are things he needs to fix, their relationship.

"Hello," it's someone, and that someone is not Gcina.

"Ya, uban lo okhulumayo?" (who's this speaking,) he heard an accent of an English man, that is why he is speaking deep Zulu.

“It’s your brother’s keeper, I’ll send you a location, come there, tomorrow,” the man says and hangs up. Okay what the fuck just happened?

They played around with his feelings, he didn’t care, he really didn’t give a damn, but now they are touching things they shouldn’t be touching. Gcinulwazi? His fucking Gcinulwazi? When he just found out that there could be love lost between them. He won’t let them do that and think they can get away with it, they’ve crossed the boundaries, people think that because he is quiet and calm they can do whatever shut they want to do and get away with it, well,

they are wrong because all along all they knew was Mthombowolwazi Ddadla, they are about to find out behind all that there is uNxumalo, someone they can't touch. He clicks his tongue before he goes back to his car, he's not going home, he is heading straight to Mpumalanga, but first, he needs to let Khaya know.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 13

MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

It's either he takes the blame or his brother dies; that's the alternative he was given. At this point, his head is not spinning, it's SPINNING.

He arrived here earlier today, he knew that they wouldn't do anything to him, because as much as they would want to end him, they still need him alive. These people are just dogs with no teeth. Now if he had thought straight and gathered people to come with him, he would have gotten in and came out with Gcinulwazi. Instead he is still here looking at a chained Gcina.

He's been given time to "talk" with his brother.

"What was in your mind when you carried your big head and came here alone?" It still puzzles him.

"It's funny because you did the same thing, you came here alone and without a plan," Gcina says, his face is heard, and eyes are the darker shade of brown. There's no difference between him and Mthombo, the way they think and their impulsiveness is the same.

"I knew they wouldn't do anything to me," Mthombo says, he's not as angry as he was

when he left Gcina's house, seeing him breathing gives him peace.

"Just like I knew, go home, and tell Kea that I love her; I'll figure a way out of here, Londeka is with Zweli, I gave her my private phone, I'm sure they about to release statements about you being innocent, leave." Gcina says not daring look at his brother.

"Why?" Mthombowolwazi asks. Gcinulwazi sighs, why what?

"Because I've figured a way to escape," he says.

"He told me that you were trying to get a guard to help you escape, they are all loyal

to him; the only way you are getting out is if I plead guilty and also release a statement publicly," Mthombo says.

"What no! You can't do that, it will destroy you, and oMa, please you'll shatter the heart of your father, mine too." Desperate eyes look at Mthombo.

"I have to do it, anyways I was in your house and I saw a lot of pictures there, most were mine, yin'ndaba uyang' fensa?" (are fancying me?) Gcina cracks up, and closing his eyes; damn it!

"Yeah, you know now that I've always yearned to have a relationship with you, go please," Mthombo clenches his jaws.

“Don’t fucking tell me shit Gcina, why were you always cold towards me?”

“Because if I was warm-hearted towards you, you’d get too comfortable, and one of us could die, I had to live for my wife, you also had to leave because if you were to die, I’d die too, I’m sorry,” Gcina blinks back his tears.

“Who knew about this?”

“Our mothers,” Gcina says and sighs, “I want to be alone,” he adds.

Mthombowolwazi is just numb, the numbness is caused by what he just heard. Didn’t they feel the need to tell him?

“Hold on, I’ll be back, this time with my men. A few hours is what I’m asking for,” Mthombo says.

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SAMKELISIWE ZWANE-NXUMALO

Baby steps each day.

I can’t explain the feeling I’m feeling though, I think it’s heartburn, every time I see him it rises up to my throat. Yep that’s how much I love him, and I’m glad that he is trying, trying to be a better man, for both him and I. He doesn’t sleep before kissing

my forehead. He hugs my body closer to him all night, that's something right?

They say a man that cheats is a dog, but what do you call a man that compares you to their dead girlfriend? It's hard because you have to put yourself in his shoes and try to understand that he's still mourning, it took three years to come to his senses, I won't lie I'm still expecting him to go back to his shell, I live in fear of that all day everyday. I'm also hoping that he doesn't.

He's gone today though, he said something about Gcina being in danger, I hope they find him. There's just something about him that screams protection. It's like when you

are in his presence, no one would touch.

I'm scared of him too.

I woke up early today, when I got to the kitchen I found Mam'Bongi, she was already cleaning and making breakfast; I offered to help her, but she told me not to because this is her job; I just went to clean my room because I was raised better and told not sit around and look at an elder doing something you can easily do.

Kea and Tsandzi and Kea are not here, I'm glad shame. I have nothing against Tsandzekile, I really like her, neither do I have a with Kea. I just don't like her, I don't

know why and I'm glad that today I can breathe in my own space.

I take a bottle of wine, wine is like my water, a day does not pass by without me having to drink it, it keeps me happy, because most of the time I live in my head and think of what could have been.

Now that I look at things at another perspective, I realize that I don't dislike Kea, I'm envious of her, she has education, and all I have to my name is just a matric certificate that I couldn't even pass well because I had so much stress. My mom was raped and I was product of that, she never let me breathe, she would make sure

that I always knew that I am nothing but a product of rape, she always reminded me of how much hatred she carried towards me. I hate her, u don't even call to check up on her. She made me a bitter person, and a woman that bows in the presence of a man.

Someone is fiddling with the door, oh it's bhuti, I quickly stand and brush my palms on my thighs, I'm nervous. He looks like someone who was crying.

"Where Thandekile?" he asks, no greeting.

"She went out with Keamogetswe," I tell him, my eyes are everywhere but his face.

“Your husband is in the car waiting for you,” he says, I nod my head and rush out, I wonder what it is that is happening, I’ve never seen bhuti looking like that.

I see him, he has his head rested on the steering wheel, I quickly get inside the car. He’s sniffing.

“What is wrong?”

“They killed him, they shot him, not with one or two bullets, not even three, 8 bullets? Fucking 8? And they did that after they forced Mthombo to make a public statement, a statement whereby he was admitting that he raped Londeka, everything is just a mess...” oh God! Why

didn't I see the statement? A bile is rising
up my throat, why would they kill Gcina?
What has he ever done?

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 14

>>>EARLIER<<<

NARRATED

His brother has just left, he is hoping that
he doesn't do anything that will jeopardize

his future. Gcinulwazi has hope that maybe he will live and see his brother lead a happy life. It has always been his purpose in life. He tries to keep his hope for the sake of trying to reconcile with his father, the sake of being with his wife.

Rooi walks in with a younger version of himself. The boy is probably Khayelihle and Mthombowolwazi's age, he has tattoos all over his arms and legs, Jesus this makes Gcina cringe!

"Yes boy," they are not Afrikaners, they are English; Gcina finds this interesting because the Afrikaners are always the

ones that are racist, he has a different opinion.

“Yebo,” (yes) pretending not to know English will probably help a lot.

“Shane you look like shit,” Lord help him get off these chains, “I have R5 airtime, who do you want to call?” The only numbers he knows by head are his and Kea's, but he doesn't want to hear her voice right now, he doesn't want to hear something that will make him emotional.

“English is not make sure me, but I'm want to speak to my sister boy,” (English is a bit of a problem to me, but I want to speak to brother) okay that was smooth, too smooth

because the frown on the boy's face is enough to let him know that he was exceptional.

"Here, hurry up, your time will be up soon," he nods his head and thanks the man before he calls out the number that he wants to call.

"Yaz kuney lima la, jwabu lwa Somizi"
(There are fools out here, Somizi's foreskin)
it rings, and he internally prays that Zweli answers. His phone records every phone call, that's a perk.

"Excuse me?"

"Ahh, nix my boss," he needs to learn to shut his mouth.

“Hello,” thank God.

“Yeah, fede ntwazinin, yimina. Relax, ungumamele, angiw'cavi uGeorge lamabhari ang'gqolozele. Izoqhuma nou intshiza boy, ngifuna wenze sure ukuthi igrootman lithols incosi yalo, alihlali edanyan and liphila moja, izobonana kwelizayo,” (How are you my boy, it's me. Please relax and listen to me carefully, I'm pretending to not know English. They'll shoot me soon, please make sure that my brother gets his child, that he does not spend any time in prison and that he lives a soft life till we meet again,) he sighs and closes his eyes, his chest is closing in on him, if a bullet

kills him, it has to be done we quickly. "It's the Roois, they are the ones that..." The boy quickly shoots him.

"Fuckkkkk!!! I didn't know that he knew English," it wasn't his plan, it was his plan to kill this black man, if anything, he is not a killer.

"That's good my boy," the old man says to his son. He is proud super proud.

"I just killed a man! What have I done!!"

"You know, I'm glad that this happened, or else I wouldn't have known that you were a true Rooi," he says and pats his son's back. If he were to say he was proud, it would be an understatement.

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KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

I had such a great day today, I'm still enjoying myself.

You know, I don't remember the last time I had alcohol. I've always been too busy to drink.

"This is nice actually," she's having a dry Gin, this girl is a Daredevil shame, a whole mood.

"I wonder who will drive us back home," Gcina is probably back now, he never goes away for more than two days. I'm stressed

that he will be angry at me. And I know already the type of punishment I'll be getting... I can't wait.

"We will call for an Uber," if I have ever said I loved someone before, then I lied; I totally lied, I have just discovered real love today. Tsandzekile is a great person, I swear.

"Let's go now, I want to go home, my husband is probably home," I say, dragging her out of the bar, our plan was to shop, we had planned to go to a mall, but I guess the quiet bars here in Hyde Park are really interesting that we had to just go in and groove during the day.

"I don't want to go yet, the night is still young," the music that's playing here is bullshit, I swear. I can't really dance and I'm too tall to do that, but why the fuck are they playing jazz when youth is the only one here? They aren't being serious. We were surely drawn by the beauty of this bar, not the music, it's kak, I swear.

"Come let's go," I say getting up. I stumble a little, and giggle. In not drunk, just a little tipsy.

"You are a party pooper," she says and I laugh. "Do you think Mthombo is home?" She asks on our way to the car, I'll take my chances and drive. Oh and this one here

has a crush on bhuti, I keep on laughing at her, she's a dreamer, she dreams of hers and Bhuti's marriage. And I actually think they would be such a great couple.

"I hope he is hey, because I need my husband too, I miss him," I say and sigh before getting inside the car. I really do miss him.

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It's super quiet here, I swear you can even hear a pin dropping from the gate. I hope we don't have any intruders. My heart is suddenly heavy, something feels wrong.

“Samke,” I call out, I can hear Tsandzekile breathing next to me, I quickly take her hand when I lose balance but it doesn’t help, I fall. I feel weak.

“Are you okay?” I’m not okay, and it’s weird, I don’t know what happened, my mood has dropped from a hundred to zero in just a few minutes. Lord!

“Please get me water, I’m thirsty,” I’m not thirsty, I want to down the lump forming in my throat.

Samkelisiwe appears just after I gulp the water that was just given to me. Her shoulders are dropped, something bad has happened. I scan her, her eyes are

bloodshot and she's definitely jumpy, her eyes are everywhere but on me. She looks sad for some reason, or is it pity.

"What's wrong Samke?" I raise my brow. I'm still on the floor. I'm looking up at her. She chuckles lightly, she's nervous.

"What do you mean?" she asks.

"Just that, what is wrong?" I repeat my question.

"Nothing is wrong, come with me," no no no, something is definitely wrong, and she's trying to keep it from me. I want to know!

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 15

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

Samkelisiwe is acting weird, why is she asking me to come with her? All we do is, greet and say bye, that's all; why is she acting sweet all of a sudden? I don't get this, I don't get her.

I'm still very much on the floor. They are both looking at me like I'm a drama queen, maybe I am; but today, I'm not doing any of this intentionally, I really can't find the strength to get me up from this cold floor.

"I asked you a question, Samkelisiwe," she sighs. I see pity in her eyes, I hope Gcina is not cheating on me, because he'll will break loose.

"You need to get up from the floor, or else you will get sick," I take in a deep breath after closing my eyes. She's not prepared to tell me what is wrong, so I ask for Tsandzekile to help me get up, before I go to my bedroom, well the one I've been lent for time being.

I get inside the sheets and switch on my phone, I go to the pictures and find a recent picture of Gcina, he was massaging my feet while talking, he wasn't aware that I

was taking pictures of him; one thing about Gcina is that he is handsome, really handsome. What took me aback when I first saw him was his eyes, his eyes stand out shame. A gorgeous man is what I have as a husband.

I put the picture as my wallpaper before closing my eyes, I feel sleepy. It must be the alcohol I drank.

“Makoti,” I hear it from afar, I open my eyes, I almost roll them. There is only one person in this world that calls me Makoti, it’s Khayelihle, the man who hates me. What does he want? First it was his wife, and

now him? I rub my eyes, wondering what it is that couldn't wait until I woke up.

"Hey, Khayelihle," Bhuti is his brother, the eldest. The one that considers me his sister. He treats me the same way he treats Slindokuhle. And then Zanothando, I can never get over him and his respectful self, he is older than me, but he calls me sisi, sometimes I forget that he is actually younger.

"Are you okay?" he asks, okay I'm over this already.

"I'm okay, are you?" he quickly shakes his head no, and sits on the chair next to the mirror stand. Okay, what the hell is wrong, I

get up– I'm really glad that I'm in decent clothes– I rush to him and brush his back, he's sobbing lowly.

“What is wrong?” I should consider releasing a song titled ‘what is wrong’ because wow!

“He's no more,” he says not looking up to face me. I feel like I know who he is talking about but still, I ask...

“Who?” my hand hasn't moved from his back, it's still patting and brushing, I'm attempting to hush him.

“Gcinulwazi,” I laugh, I hate pranks and dark humored jokes! I fucking hate this, besides

today is not the first of April, so he shouldn't dare me.

"Get out," I say. I'm already balancing my palms on my waist.

"I'm sorry," he says, so he is not joking???

"He's no more. They took him away from us, we had a plan, we were already heading there, when we got there we found him swimming in his own blood, they shot him eight times," my chest! It's closing in on me, u can't breathe. What is he talking about, where was Gcina all along?

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

Being in the same room with her scares me today, I want to be out of here. She looks like a lion that's ready to bite off my head, but I'll persevere, because I understand. I'm in pain too.

I keep on wiping my tears, but they are stubborn, they come back each time I wipe them, I've given up. It hurts so much. I should have listened to Mthombo when he told me that he was gone.

"I feel it back, our boy is gone," he had said, we were still on our way, but I pressed on and told him that what he was thinking was nonsense. He nodded and let us continue.

When we got there, I was the first to see his body, I'm not sure if I counted well, but I scanned eight bullet wounds in his body, there was no way that he would have lived. We were not really close, but he was my brother and I loved him to death, it pains my heart. His death has triggered so many wounds, fuck!

I pull my t-shirt and cover my face, I feel like a great part of me has been taken away from me. Death hurts, it fucking hurts.

"He can't die," she says after so long, I had even forgotten that there was someone with me here. I sigh before wiping my tears,

I look at her. Her facial expression is just... blank.

“You need to cry or something,” no matter how much I disliked her at first, I knew that she loved my little brother, even a blind man would see that. I just felt like she was a heartbreaker, but I realized that she loved him– I just can’t deny it.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

He’s sleeping on his stomach, fully clothed, and thinking. A lot is going through his mind. Today might be his last day as a free

man. He might not be able to attend his brother's funeral! It fucking hurts that they played him.

You know, that day, he had everything figured out. He'd do it, he'd confess whatever shit they forced him to, and then he'd get Gcina back.

After they took a video of him, they told him that he'd have to wait until they polished and edited everything; he'd get Gcina soon after they televised it; the plan was to meet with his men and they would have gotten Gcina... Little did he know that they played him.

Seeing Gcina's lifeless body lok the floor hurt him. He blames himself for everything. If he hadn't stepped on people's toes to get what he has, maybe he would have still been alive! He's gone now, and he has so many questions... So many questions. He felt it, it surprises him that he is so hurt, because he felt the disconnection between him and someone. His heart felt so heavy before he could even see him– but shit still hurts!

“Mthombo,” her voice brings him back from his half sleep. He sighs and lifts his head to meet her gaze.

“There are police waiting for you,” not now!
He clears his throat and gets up from his bed.

“Before I go, can we talk?” he still has his calm persona on, but he is burning with anger, he wants to burn someone’s skin!

“Yeah,” she says.

“I love you,” he says and takes her hand into his, she wants to say something, but he quickly puts his forefinger on her mouth, “I know that I don’t really know you, but I know whatever it is that I have to know about you, the rest will fall into place,” he says and sighs. “Please fetch your mother, and take care of Kea and her in here, I’ll be

back soon," he doesn't know when soon is... but he surely will hold on for her.

She's caught off guard, she doesn't know what to say, although she knows what she feels. Before she knows it, his lips smashes into hers, his arms wrap around her. A single tear falls from his eye, his heart is heavy as fuck.

"Mr Mthombowolwazi Nxumalo, you are under arrest for the murder of Mr Gcinulwazi Nxumalo and sexually molesting Ms Londeka, you have the right..." what the fuck?

"Ningazong' jwayela amasimba onyoko, what the fuck are you saying? When did I

murder my brother? And why the fuck are you in my room?" A gun is cocked... It's Khayelihle!

Bang! Someone just got shot!

"Khayelihle!!!"

"Ziyanya lezinja!" He just shot a police man in the presence of another police man! This situation is fucked up! Very fucked up.

"Mthombo!" Tsandzekile calls out to a Mthombo who looks very much defeated. He is seated on the bed, he's crying.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 16

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

“Khayelihle what have you done?”

Samkelisiwe is crying here, next to me.

They think I've done enough? They've seen nothing, my hands are itchy, everything that had a hand in the death of my brother, and these totally false accusations has to die!

Umuntu has been quiet for too long.

“I'm sure people greater than you don't know of this shit, tell me now who the fuck sent you here?” I'm sure that the real police

wouldn't have pushed any of our wives to make their way into the bedroom after they sent someone to call Mthombo for them, I'm pretty sure that these people are not police. This one is already trembling. Killing one of them was not a mistake, I would do it all over again if I given a chance, this one too has to die, but for now I have to keep him alive, until Zweli gives me all the information I need, until he tells me about their families, I'm sure I can get something tangible enough to make him work for me, instead. If there's a thing that I have to admit I did wrong, then it would be killing a person in the presence of women.

Samkelisiwe and Keamogetswe know who we are, they know that if we have to, we kill. I'm not sure about Tsandzekile, but out of all of them she's the one that is not crying, she's trying to pacify Mthombo.

"Our captain," I laugh. I laugh in pain, what do they think we are? Fools?

"Who's your Captain, and which police station are you guys from?" I asks, he blinks. He's not supposed to blink! Who have him permission?

"Uh... my captain," He's still lying! I shoot the one that's already dead, he needs to be reminded that he is in my mercy.

“What do you see written in my forehead? Eyyy mina ngizok' nyathela mfana,” (I'll beat you up boy) I say. My phone pings, I quickly take a look, okay everything is now good, it's time for me and Mthombo to step up. Even in death, Gcinulwazi came through for his brothers, he came through for us, you know, I know people out here, so many people but I've never met someone who's as quick as Zweli, that boy is technology itself, he's young even.

“Eyy Mthombo bafo, I have a mother who's 60 years old, she's diabetic, do you think she'd survive a bullet?” I'm asking Mthombo, but I know he won't give me an

answer because Gcinulwazi's death hit him hard, it hit me hard too but one of us has to take care of things otherwise it will be the end of the Nxumalos. "Do you think she will, Ngema?" he knows I'm talking about his mother that's why he is down on his knees now, begging and crying for me to forgive him. I don't want to lie and say I don't hurt women, I do hurt them, there are so many women out there who are disrespectful as fuck, hiding behind the "gender based violence" term; but I wouldn't hurt an innocent woman, even a man.

I want Londeka for myself though, Zweli is keeping her away from me.

“I’ll tell you who sent me,” Good! I cock my gun and sit on the bed, I place the gun on my thigh. “The Roois, the sent me, they work with the Mnisis,” he is singing like a bird, even giving me answers I didn’t know I was looking for.

A man with a gun, is a man in control.

“I would have loved, loved, loved to kill you, I’m afraid you have to live and work for me,” I say and shrug. Zweli's people should come and clean up this shit here.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I would have loved to have a brother, a brother that's exactly like Khayelihle. What he did, what he did was just great I tell you. I'm shook, but I have to be strong for Mthombo who looks like he will never heal. There's Mthombo and Kea. Every one of us has to keep an eye on them because if we ever lose focus one of them would die. "Are you okay?" I ask. He's just taken a bath. We are in a different room, his main room is full of people who are cleaning. There was blood all over the place when we left the room.

“I’ll be fine,” he says and sits next to me. He is walking topless, his lower body is wrapped in a towel. “Thank you for being here,” he says. “Your mother will be home, first thing in the morning,” I heard that Gcina took her and put her in a place where no one would have access to her, and apparently her nurse is dead because she was working with the people involved in this whole operation take Mthombowolwazi down.

“Thank you, I should be packing my clothes,” I say and sigh, I really hate leaving now, especially in a time of need, but I have

to, I have to take care of my mother. I will surely attend the funeral though.

“I’ll see you when we lay him,” I say, a lump is rising up my throat. Gcinulwazi and I clicked from the very first time we saw each other, I mean I even forgot that he kidnapped me. I saw something in his eyes, pain. I was hoping that he’d live and be happy some day, but I guess it was God’s will.

“Thank you,” he says and chuckles lowly, “if there’s anything good that came out of this thing, it’s you,” he says and places his hand on my thigh. “I’ll be okay, I swear on my brother, I just need you to wait for me, I

need to fix this," he says and sighs. I swear I feel like telling him that I've got all the time in the world, that I'll wait for him.

"It's okay," I say putting my hand over his and brush it. He take my hand and kisses it, I know I'm not supposed to melt, but I do. He can't be acting all lovey dovey in a time like this.

"They will pay for this, I swear," he says. They should, whoever killed Gcina should pay, Khaya has paved the way, he should just follow on it, otherwise he will never have peace.

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I'm in a car, driven by one of Mthombo's drivers. I'm thinking, I'm wondering how I ever found myself in such a situation.

Lillian is a bitch, I swear I hate her. She took advantage of me, in her eyes all I was, was a naïve journalist, but all I was, was a girl trying to take care of her mother. She ruined me and my love for Journalism.

Sigh.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAOTER 17

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

I cried myself to sleep last night, hoping that when I was done crying the pain would just subside and fade. I was wrong, it keeps on multiplying. The tears are dry yet the pain is still as fresh.

Pain is not the word to describe what I feel. I feel so empty. That's how I should feel, a great part of my life has been taken away from me. I don't want to say that all this that happened is God's will. He was gunned down, they were not mistaken, it's him that they wanted.

They shot him, not once and not twice, but eight times. Intentionally. Like he was an animal, like he was a thing that was a monster to this world, it hurts me so much, he was killed like he was inhumane. My heart feels heavy, whoever killed him should never rest, I don't care how it is done, but it has to be done, however way it has to be done! Even if we have to go to witch-doctors, I will lead the way.

I'm 24 years old and a widow, how cruel can life be to some of us? My heart is just heavy for my chest, I feel like following him, I miss him so much. He had his days, but he was a great husband, that counted,

right? My beautiful man. I will never see him again in the flesh.

I had been with my late husband for 4 years and been married to him for only a year. Life couldn't wait until we got our second marriage anniversary, I find it very unfair.

We arrived here this morning and I soon sat in the mattress with my mother-in-law.

She's nicer than she has ever been, I'm glad she is because I don't have time to deal with rude people, I just lost my husband, I need time to grieve him. Also, in grateful for the support Khayelihle and his wife has been giving me, especially bhut' Khaya, he

was the last person I thought would support me, really. They are the only emotionally available people. Zanothando is said to be missing, he's the only one out of their siblings that was closer to Gcina, maybe he just needs time and space to accept that Gcina is gone. Baba, also, he seems to be very far with his thoughts. They say that he hasn't been eating since he heard about the death of his son that he neglected.

"Do you want tea?" MaDladla is seated next to me, she's drained too, but she worries about me more. This is a new side to her I've seen. Since I came here Baba was the

one that liked me, he is really a nice person, it makes me think and wonder why he was hating on his son, maybe hate is a big word!

“No, ma, I’m okay,” I say, blinking back my tears. I miss him, I’m wondering how I’ll get through the years without him. She nods her head.

“I’m really sorry, I know how much he loved you,” he says. I nod my head.

“I’m sorry too ma,” I can’t wait for my grandmother to get here for the funeral, I just want her to embrace me, maybe I’ll feel better.

“He loved you, he still does,” she says and wipes her tears, “I just didn’t want to see that, but right now you are the only thing close to him I have left, I’m really sorry for how I treated you,” she says and I nod.

“It’s okay ma,” I want to scream and shout, I want to ask why he had to leave me at such a young age. I want to vent, yet there are no words. I want to cry, yet my tears are not enough.

“I’ll go check up on Mthombo,” yeah, that one is just breathing, but he looks so dead inside.

“Okay, ma,” I nod my head, she gets up and heads out.

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MZIKAYIFANI NXUMALO

Regrets...

What could have happened if he was what he was to his other children to Gcina?

Would it hurt lesser? What if he hadn't made peace with his death before he was brought to life, what if he bonded with him, what if he tried showing him how much he loved him... he thought it was too late, that should be reason enough for him to neglect his son right?

He wasn't supposed to feel this pain, that's actually the reason why he didn't want to have a close interaction with his son Gcinulwazi, he knew that he would die. For the 6 months that Gcinulwazi was in his mother's tummy, he didn't even try to brush her tummy, she basically went through that pregnancy alone. He wanted to protect his heart, because it would kill him, loving a child that would die soon. When Gcinulwazi was finally born, he didn't care to hold him in his arms, until the day they had to do their ceremonies. He held him and it felt heavenly, it felt like it was his first time holding a baby in his arms. He

still closed his heart. It wasn't because of hate, he loves all his children, but because of fear. The fear of the feeling he is feeling today. And today he regrets all that he has ever done to try to stay away from his son, because regardless of the efforts, he still feels hurt.

He thought coming to the river would help, Gcina loved the river too, but it hurts him even more, because it reminds him of how much of a fuck up he was.

"Baba," Mthombo says, sitting next to him.

"Yeah, mfana," he says, and clears his throat. His voice almost betrayed him and cracked.

“Why wasn’t I told about whatever shit you did? You kept us separated for fuck’s sake; the least you could have done was to tell me why, buka manje useshonile,” (he’s now gone) Mthombo chuckles, in pain.

“I’m sorry,” What the fuck is sorry? He can’t sleep because all he thinks about is; what would have happened if he hadn’t gone there and got emotional with him.

“It’s too late for sorry, I killed him, I fucking killed him, baba,” he says and gets up, he needs a walk. Mzikayifani releases a sigh, he’s tired. His wife did whatever she did behind his back, yet he is the one that’s catching fire. He feels bad because his son

is blaming himself, but right now, he really can't anything about it. He is still in pain too.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 18

LAHLIWE DLADLA

Gcinulwazi left us with our hearts wrenched, I don't know how I feel about his death, I loved him so much. You know when you have children and have that one

child you love mostly because he doesn't know how to do things himself? Yes, he was that to me. Gcinulwazi was an emotional person, not as hard headed as Khayelihle, and not as calm as Mthombo. Zanothando took after Gcina, they have the ability to feel. I love all of them, despite hating their parents.

I don't think there's one of that would ever heal from his death, not his siblings, not his parents, not even me; I don't want to begin to imagine how his wife must be feeling, Keamogetswe is just a beautiful kind-hearted person, a young woman that was so determined into changing hers and her

family's life until Gcinulwazi came into the picture. Gcinulwazi told me that he doesn't want a working wife so he kind of manipulated her into not to find her articles after completing her studies, she was in love so she agreed, I'm wondering what it is that she'll be doing to get her mind off things.

"I miss you," I quickly close my eyes and release my breath slowly, this man just lost a child that he has been neglecting all along, this is why he thinks that he suddenly misses me. He feels bad for being an absent father, now he's gone and not coming back.

“No, you don’t,” he has his hands buried deep in his pockets and is leaning by the door, he got here a few minutes ago, I still don’t understand what he wants.

“I do, I think of you every time,” he says and sighs. He’s aging gracefully. He is handsomely gorgeous, the grey-hair also is not helping at all, it enhances his handsomeness. Mzikayifani is brown eyed too, just like the two of his son and daughter.

“What do you mean you think of me all the time, aren’t you with your wife all the time?” I ask, almost rolling my eyes.

"I mean just that," I sigh and close my eyes. I'm frustrated, the only kind of attraction associated with me he has, is sexual. After making a child with him, I was forced to leave, and by then we've already had sex a multiple times, it was a great one. He knows how to make a woman feel good about themselves. When I left, I pushed the thoughts to the back of my head, until he came back 28 years ago.

"Go to your wife," I'm home too, he took 4 hour's drive just to tell me that he thinks of me? He sighs, and sits down without my permission.

“I’m sorry, for what she did, I’m sorry for being an ass,” he says and casts his eyes down. He is crying and genuinely hurt. I hate myself for standing up and embracing him, this man should be with his wife.

“Don’t hold back, we knew that you loved him,” he did, and we all knew, he was just in denial. We all saw it through his efforts of making sure that he was okay.

“He had to know, but I fucked up, I was scared of losing him, but I feel like shit regardless of not having an emotional relationship with him,” this is why we all need parents, Mzi has uncle’s but they do not play a role of parents to him, they show

up whenever they feel like causing problems, sometimes I feel like they are the cause of the natural causes.

"I'm sorry," I brush his head.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

Sleep, what is that?

He hasn't slept for a few days now, all he kept on doing was going to the river and watching the water flow, not forgetting always looking at isphandla that he has, the one identical to the one that he took from Gcinulwazi, it was bloody, and he

didn't wash it, it's kept in his wardrobe in his rondavel. He keeps on looking at it and smelling the blood that's on it every night before he attempts to sleep.

He switched off his phone, he is not running away from reality, but he just needs time to mourn his brother. He misses him. Maybe if they hugged once he would have felt better, maybe he would feel closer to him, or, rather, if they had fucking told them the whole truth in the beginning, he would known to stay away from him.

He sighs and throws a little stone into the river, he keeps on doing that until there are

no stones in his hands anymore. He buries his hands deep inside his pockets and looks up, the sky is not clear, just like his heart, tears burn his eyes, but he won't let them fall. If the mistake was his, why didn't they take him instead?

First, her perfume fills his nostrils and then her hands wrap around his trunk. He smiles a little before turning, this is surely a way to lift his mood, he didn't expect her to come two days before the funeral.

"You were not answering my calls," she says, he sighs and kisses her forehead, before burying his head on her neck.

“I’m sorry,” he says and kisses her neck before taking in a deep breath.

“I missed you,” she says.

“I missed you too,” he believes that there are still things they need to talk about. He is willing to give love a chance, and he is hoping that she doesn’t want to play games, he is too old for that. They have a thing going on, but they need to put a title on it.

Mthombowolwazi sits on the river rock and puts Tsandzekile in-between his legs, she rests her head on his chest and closes her eyes. Mthombo has his hands wrapped around her.

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It's dusk now, Mthombo and Tsandzekile are both walking home. They are holding hands and having small talks.

“What are police doing here?” they are parked right in front of Mthombo's home.

“Ay, angaz yazi,” (I don't know) Mthombo says, his heart falling. He feels like he knows why they are here, but he is just in denial, his brother's funeral is in 2 days, and he couldn't have a talk with Zweli, damnit! They are so close to finding the truth, and now this?

“Is Khayelihle home?” Tsandzekile asks, he is the one that takes little to no bullshit, s...

“I don’t know, but he had went out when I left,” damnit!

They just got home, they find the police waiting for him.

“We are here for you Mr Mthombowolwazi,” the man says.

“I’m here,what can I do for you?” he asks.

“You are under arrest for sexually assaulting Ms Londeka...” the man says this when the other police man handcuffs Mthombo. Tsandzekile is shocked, couldn’t they wait until the funeral was over? Mrs Nxumalo is crying, begging them to leave

her son alone. Keamogetswe is not allowed to leave the mattress.

The police are pushing Mthombo to the van, the neighbors are out and watching Mthombo being put in the back of the van.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 19

SAMKELISIWE ZWANE-NXUMALO

It's been 2 days since bhuti has been arrested, Zanokuhle is missing too. We are living with Zombies. Everything is a mess. At this point, I think everyone of us are drained. We can't focus and mourn Gcina because there's so much more that is disturbing us. Honestly I can't even sleep at night, I feel like there's something wrong in this house, something really needs to be fixed.

"Makoti," it's one of the aunts, she's a cousin to Baba. I don't like them, at all.

"Ma," I say.

"Where's your husband?" He came here yesterday, telling us that Mthombo will be

freed today, they are working on something. I hope they do, otherwise the funeral will be delayed, that will only bring us bad lucks.

MaDladla also told us straight up that we won't be burying Gcina until Mthombo is home, Mthombo needs to free him.

"I don't know ma, he left today in the morning," I say and get up, I don't want to have conversations with any of them, they are bitter.

"Uyaphi-ke manje?" (Where are you going now?) She asks.

"I'm going to check up on Tsandzekile," at least Keamogetswe is not alone.

“What does she even want here... Abo Mthombo are bringing us foreigners...” I’m already out of that Kitchen! I know she will go on and on about this till kingdom come! To her, everyone that is not a Zulu is a foreigner. Keamogetswe has to tolerate that bullshit from her, every day, even now.

She’s lying in bed on her bed and looking up at the ceiling. She was here to support bhuti, and now they have taken her away from her. I’ve knocked and gotten permission to get in, but she hasn’t looked at me.

“I want to go and see him,” he is in the holding cells, do they allow that? I don’t

know, but it's worth a try, right?

"Are you sure?" I ask, she nods her head.

She hasn't cried, I envy that. Had it been me in her shoes right now, I swear I would have made a scene. She's calm, just like bhut' Mthombo. They probably took him to Nquthu Police Station, so I tell her because I can't go with.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

This all is delaying Gcinulwazi's funeral and frustrates him so fucking much, people are trying so much to get a crazy reaction from

him, they just can't get it through their skulls that he us not a fucking rapist.

He understands that these policemen are doing their job, but at what cost? His brother being put to rest? Banganya, they would shit on their pants!

"Eyy, Bafo, my brother's funeral is put on hold because I'm not there," he says and releases a sigh. The policeman, his eyes are pitiful.

"I'm really sorry Bafo, but you know that I can't, I've been ordered by the higher authorities to do this, I'm afraid you will have to be transferred to Johannesburg for a court appearance." Being accused of

murder would have been better than this.

This, all, is bullshit.

“Right, I understand.” Inside, he is fuming, but he is only used to being a calm and unbothered person, so he will keep it that way.

These people really don't know why he is here, because they aren't even taking him for a bit of questioning. All they do is come up and check on him.

“You have a visitor though,” Mthombo raises his brow, he made it clear to his lawyer that he doesn't want any of his family members coming here.

“Can you give us a moment?” Her voice! He quickly stands, he sits back down when he remembers that there are metal grills surrounding him.

Oh, they are opening up for her. The policeman closes and locks up the cell, he leaves once Tsandzekile is inside. She quickly jumps on him and kisses his lips, she missed him. He responds to the kiss. She has her legs wrapped around his torso.

“Are you okay?” He asks.

“Are you okay?” she diverts the question to him. He tells her that is okay. He takes a seat on the mattress that he was sleeping on, he sits her on his lap.

"I'm okay, how did you get here?" he asks.

"By a taxi, obviously," she says, chuckling.

He nods and kisses her cheek.

"How are they at home?" He wants to be filled in about what has been going on. She tells him that his father is not okay, he almost looks like he also wants to die.

Honestly, everyone at home is hurt.

"It must be hard on him, he expected his son's death earlier than now. When he started warming up to him, he does, I feel sorry for him," he says.

"I know, you guys need to reach out," she says.

"We are also going through a lot, " he says and rests his head on her breasts.

"Zithandani, asambeni, you will be lovers correctly at home," (lovers, let's go) it's Khayelihle.

"What do you mean?"

"Just that, you are a free man, we'll talk about this on our way home," Khayelihle says, and sighs, "Do you guys have a container?" he asks, a container?

"What would we do with a container in jail?"

"This is a holding cell, S'hlama!"

"Hey, wena! I'm your big brother, I'll smash your big head against that wall!" Mthombo says.

“We are the same age.”

“I saw the son before you,” Mthombo says.

“Still, we are both 33. Make it snappy...

Chile!” Khayelihle says and walks out.

“I swear, he has a multiple personality disorder!” Tsandzekile says chuckling, Mthombo casts his eyes away from her and clears his throat.

“Sometimes, that’s what I think, too,” he chuckles nervously.

They just got to the parking lot, Khayelihle has a container in his hand, he is leaning against his car.

“How many bad lucks have you collected?”

Mthombo and Tsandzekile look at each

other in confusion. "I mean you almost had sex, and we are mourning, to top it all, in a holding cell, hhay shame!" Mthombo chuckles and opens the car door for Tsandzekile before he gets in. They settle in the backseat, Khayelihle will drive.

"Zweli and Zano came through for us, I swear Bafo," Khayelihle breaks the silence in the car.

"What do you mean?" Mthombo is ready to bite heads! Let anyone associate Zanothando with anything illegal, they will see the real him.

"I mean just that! Apparently Gcina introduced him to Zweli, they've been

working close ever since,” Khayelihle says.

“Can anyone please wake him up? I just want to have a conversation with him, I thought I had told you guys clear that the shadiness ends with us,” Mthombo scoffs.

“Hhaybo we-bhutoo what do you mean?

Gcinulwazi is at fault here,” Khayelihle. He is definitely shifting the blame to

Gcinulwazi, but this is not entirely a lie

right? The only thing he did was to

introduce Zanothando to Zweli, he already had shady dealings going on– which were taught to him by Gcina.

“Who taught Gcinulwazi all this shady

business? I had told you clear that it ends

with me and you, but you don't listen!"

Mthombo says. If Khayelihle wasn't driving, he would

"You taught me, I didn't ask you to teach me, so nje don't blame me bhuti-wabantu!"

"What shady business are you guys talking about!" Oh shit... they had forgotten!

"We have a business, we teach children to color in, also we reach them about the importance of color shades," Khayelihle says. Tsandzekile nods! Mthombowolwazi? Well, he could burst out laughing right now! When the hell did Khayelihle make up this crazy and dumb lie?

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 20

AT THE FUNERAL

Izulu liyaguqubala!

It's dark! Not because it's late, but because the weather is changing, changing from a sunny morning to cloudy one. Clouds cover the sky. People from the city, and from the village that knew Gcinulwazi are out in numbers to see his family put him to his place of rest.

His boys are gathered in one place, surrounding a black BMW 325i that no one but then know of. People have had their speeches, and most of them described him to be a good boy, but his boys? They have so much to say, but they would rather keep it in the chests because it would be considered 'disrespectful.'

Out of all his gents, Zwelihle is the one that was closer to him, they knew each other's flaws, and still stuck together. The only sad part about all this is that he is not allowed to cry out loud, people would assume things he wouldn't want them to assume.

As a man, you don't cry, if you cry, you are gay. That's it.

"Mthombowolwazi Nxumalo, you need to set him free," it's the traditional healer that was asked to cleanse and remove the bad luck of people being killed by the use of a gun in the Nxumalo household.

"What do you mean?" Mthombo asks.

"Come forth," the man is not in his seer attire, he is in a black suit like everyone else, so why does he think that this is the right time to be a seer?

"Silaphi isphandla sakho?" (where's your traditional wristband) the man directs the question to Mthombo.

“Here,” he points to his hand when he finally gets to where the man is standing. “You held back, tell him what you want to tell him,” the man instructs. “After you’ve said what you want, place the wristband over the coffin,” The man says and shifts to the crowd.

Mthombowolwazi crouches fiddles with his wristband. He has so much to say but his words are failing him.

“Usamncane kodwa Bafo!” (You were still young) he releases a sigh and rubs his nose bridge. He has to stop his tears. “I had never thought that one of you guys would leave me, any of you, I’ve never

dreamt of me burying my siblings, I'm the older one, it has to be done by me; akxenani bafo," he says and blows out, "Do not rest, not until we find and make those that killed you pay, siyak'thanda Bafo, Zwide ka Langa" he says and places his wristband on the Coffin, he sniffs and chuckles to stop himself from crying.

Tupac! Through the speakers of the black BMW, Tupac speaks. The coffin is going down as the song Life Goes On blasts. Guns keep on getting cocked.

'Rest in peace young nigga,' a bang sound is heard. Zwelihle gets into the car and starts by revving it, he stamps hard on the

accelerator. As Zweli spins the car, he puts his hand on the air, he's decided to let his tears fall. But at least no one will see him.

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KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA

Seeing what his friends were doing, brought a smile to my face. That was his life, a life of a calm man, yet very gangster. It's almost as if they are paying tribute to him. I love how he was loved! Although he lacked love at home, he had love from his friends. I wipe my tears and release a sigh.

Tupac had always been his favorite artist, he listened to him day in and day out. I couldn't understand why until he told me to not view Tupac the way the society viewed him. He told me that Tupac spoke and cried by singing, he would rap about real life struggles, things that most black people go through.

It's been a week since we laid him, but it feels like yesterday. I miss him and think about him almost every night. You know, I don't know what my next step from here will be. I don't think I want to go back to my granny's home, because I don't want to

leave his memories. Memories shared in this rondavel, neither the ones we shared in our home back in Hyde Park. Sigh!

I'm thankful that my grandmother came and supported me, she had to leave just after the funeral because she is not one of them, also she has her own things to take care of. She held my hand and kept me sane... Now that she left, I feel sad and alone.

I get off the bed and make it up, I quickly take a bath before I get into my black attire, the constant reminder that I'm a widow, someone's wife. Someone that left me.

“Sthandwa Sami,” I hear him say, my ears are surely deceiving me. I keep quiet. “Kea,” he says, I turn and see him seated on in the bed.

“Gcina! Are you back?” he smiles and shakes his head no.

“I’m not, and I’m not coming back, it’s sad that I had to go, but I’m glad that I had someone like you in my life. The idiot that will have you as his wife in the future will surely be lucky, never forget that I love you even in the after life...” I blink twice, he’s gone. It was all in my head!

I sink down to the floor and let my tears fall. The pain is surely unbearable! I miss

my Gcinulwazi so much! And these hallucinations are not helping either.

“Makoti.” Mam' Lahliwe's voice, she sleeps here to help with her sister who is sick. It's only now that Gcina's death is sinking in, MaDladla is losing her marbles.

“Come in, ma,” I say, getting up and wiping my tears. She gets in and smiles before sitting on the couch that placed against the bed, I join her.

“Ma,” I say.

“How are you?” How am I? I don't know really!

“I'm okay ma, how are you?” I ask.

“I’ll be fine, I wanted to let you know that I’m leaving,” she says. I nod my head and thank her for her hospitality.

“I love you,” she says and hugs me. It takes a lot in me not to break down.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

He told me so many times that he loves me, I didn’t say it back but I’ve shown it. I don’t know what it is that we are doing. But I know we are not dating... Yet I’m in his arms. He pretends to be okay, but I hear him cry whenever he thinks I’m not around.

It makes my heart sink, that's why I try to talk about light conversation whenever I'm with him.

We took a morning flight to Johannesburg, we just got here, and I'm planning on going back to Mpumalanga in the morning.

Wandile was said to be found dead and thrown into a river in Mpumalanga, he died a few weeks ago and it was discovered two days ago. So this weekend it will be his funeral, I've been invited. I'm going! I want to see Lillian looking miserable. I hate her.

"Awulele, ucabangani?" (you are not asleep, what are you thinking about?) He asks.

“I’m thinking of your different shades of colours business,” Khayelihle had to think that I’m dumb if he thought I’d believe it. I pretended to believe him because in all honesty, he scares me. He’s sweet and funny, but he switches to an angry person very quickly. I thought he was friendly, that was until Gcina's death. I surely saw a different side to him.

“We have no business like that... Awusho ungiqoma Nini?” (when are you agreeing to be my girlfriend?) He snuggles me closer to him. He is avoiding this topic.

“Wakhuluma ngatsi unesiciniseko sekutsi I’ll be your girlfriend,” (you speak like you

are sure that I'll be your girlfriend) I say.

"Elvis is not a threat to me, you'll be mine soon," who the fuck is Elvis?

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 21

MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

Thandekile left, early in the morning. It was hard but she had to leave, I'm not her husband... I have to respect her and her family. I'm leaving too, I'm on my way to

eNquthu; to see how everyone is doing, I'll be there for this whole week.

I only came back to Johannesburg because she was also leaving. My heart had to be split into because there's a lot I left at home, also I had to think of my woman. She likes denying but she knows that she's mine already.

By the time I get home, it's already dark, so I have no choice but to go to my rondavel. I take a quick shower and then get to bed. "Hello?" I can't believe she was already sleeping.

"Mama wengane zami," she giggles.

"Ubusulele yini mama?" (were you already

asleep?)

“No, I was preparing myself to sleep,” she lies.

“Okay, mama. Uhambe kahle kodwa?”, I ask her if she traveled well.

“Yeah, what about you?”

“I missed you,” I did, I still do.

“I missed you too, I still do,” she says. And then she says I’m not her boyfriend.

“Ey engakuthakasela u-Elvis ukuzwa lokhu?” (I wonder if Elvis would be happy to hear you say this) honestly, I know that Elvis does not exist, I’m just doing this for fun.

“There’s no Elvis,” she says and sighs. She can’t possibly be saddened by the fact that there’s no Elvis, now can she?

“I’m here though,” I say.

“Yeah-yeah, let me sleep,” she’s now faking a yawn, well...

“Okay, Goodnight, I love you,” I say. I hear her sigh... I’m not hanging up until I hear her say it back.

“I do, too,” I can definitely work with this.

“Goodnight,” she says and hangs up.

This is actually the first alone-time, and the only thing that is in my mind right now is the Roois, they have to die, and their death shouldn’t be easy, I’ll make sure that they

pay for what they did! It won't be nice, I swear. It's me that they wanted, so I don't get why they killed my brother instead. His death won't be in vain though.

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Waking up early is always a struggle for me that's why I'm woken up by Khayelihle! Damnit, he could have chosen a better time.

"Ya, bafo," he sighs and sits down. He isn't happy today, I haven't seem him like this in years. "Are you okay?" he nods his head. I know he is not okay. His eyes tell me

everything. "Do you want me to tell her to leave?" I'm on my feet now. Putting on my trousers, sleeping in shorts is a good thing when you have brothers like these.

"No, I'm okay, her presence doesn't move me," I know it does, the woman ruined my brother's childhood, but I'll respect his wishes.

"Do you want to take walk?" I know it calms him down always. He is like those white people who take walks when they are sad or angry.

"Yeah," he nods. Eyy but it's too early. I'm not complaining though.

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ZWELIHLE MAZIBUKO

Londeka's tummy is growing! Reminding me day by day why I can't kill her. Also, I cannot kill her because she's helped us a lot, A LOT! Whether she gives birth to Mthombo's child or not, I can't kill her, I promised Gcina that I wouldn't kill her.

"Are you ready?" I ask, she nods her head.

"Yes, I am," she still looks beautiful, regardless of her looking like someone who is suffering from Kwashiorkor!

"Okay then," we head inside the building, I take a seat and watch her talking to the

constable! This is the only way I said I'd let her go. She needs to drop the charges she laid against Mthombo. The media?

Everything is sorted out, her statement apologizing to everyone for lying about such a thing will be released tonight on the news.

need to see my girlfriend, it's a pity she hasn't let me

"I am done and hungry," that's it! I'm taking this girl to her baby daddy, I can't be dealing with the stress she's giving me.

"I'm hungry too!" I say and get up from the chair and walk out, she follows behind me. I'll need to sleep for five days without being

woken up, just to rest because this girl is a headache!

“Please get me a burger, ngiyacela,” she begs. It gets to me, my heart pains for her. Everyone will look and view her as the bad guy, but she wasn’t; they forced her into this.

“Mthombo would have protected you,” I know he would have. “You shouldn’t have let him threaten you,” I say, igniting the engine of my car.

“I didn’t think about that, I didn’t know his capabilities,” she says.

“Aii ngiyakuzwa-ke,” (I hear you) I’m taking her to Mthombo, as per Gcina’s

instructions.

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LAHLIWE DLADLA

I don't know how many times we are going to do this, I'm tired of being his sperm dish.

I don't want his wife finding out that we've had sex without her permission.

"Nxumalo, you should go home," before we fall into temptations, he needs to leave. I'm too drained to be around him. I can't resist him, so he needs to be as far away from me as possible.

"I don't want to be home," he says.

"I really need you to leave," I really do.

"Are you still angry at me?" he always does this! Going back to the topic of me being chased away because she had fallen pregnant.

"I'm not angry at him," I'm lying! I am very angry at him, he let his wife be the man in his home, he doesn't have balls.

"Do you regret it?" he asks. Years ago, I did! I regretted everything! But now? Now I don't. I have a blessing, Mthombo. And if everything hadn't turned out the way it did, Gcina wouldn't have been birthed.

"I do," again, I lie. What is it that I see in his eyes? Is it hurt?

"I'm sorry," he says. He sighs and takes a seat next to me.

"I failed him when he was alive, I'm about to fail him, yet again," I assume he is talking about Gcina.

"What do you mean?"

"I'll manage don't worry," he takes my hand in his. His hands are warm, they always are. He is a human heater. "I miss you," I close my eyes. I'm preparing my lies in my head.

"How could you miss something that you've never had?" I ask.

"I almost had you," he almost did, until I remembered that Thando is my elder

sister. "Don't you miss me," he whispers in my ear, his warm breath makes me weak in the knees. Sometimes it does get lonely, and I do miss being held by him! It feels right being with him, but I have to hold back because he is my sister's husband "I want to be alone," it comes out as a whisper! Damn Mzikayifani!

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 22

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I'm part of those that are here to sympathize with the Mnisis, or rather I'm with that group but I'm not one of them. I do not sympathize with any of them. I feel like they deserve every bad thing under the sun.

"Yati, bengimtsandza kufa Lillian ngimutsemba futsi kantsi solo usebentisana netigebengu," (You know, I loved Lillian a lot and trusted her, whereas she was working with criminals) Dignity whispers in my ear. If we didn't have her, we wouldn't have gotten the evidence. I need to thank her.

“I tell you mngani, bacinisile nabatsi ngamane utsembe litshe kunokutsi utsembe muntfu,” (friend, it’s true when they say you should rather trust a stone than to trust a person,) I say and shake my head. “Ngifuna kuyombona,” I tell her and get up from the chair we were sitting on. I offer to my other ex colleagues to take the money and the candles to the family. Nothing suspicious, good.

She looks horrible! I thought I had had some humanity in me, I’m proven wrong, because right now, I don’t feel anything for her. I’m being questioned as a journalist right now, other journalists have been

blowing up my phone, asking for interviews since Mthombo's name has been cleared.

And this is all because of her! This fake-looking dumb ass.

"Ngivelana Nani," (I'm sorry,) I say acting like I'm sad, actually I could be happy to get some popcorns and champagne just to watch them, because wow! I'm happy! I'm enjoying every little pain this woman is yet to feel. I know for a fact that Mthombo will not let her rest, and I'm more than willing to help him ruin her. Gcinulwazi has lost his life because of her, sigh!

My phone rings, it's Mthombo! I get up and walk out, I'm in a good mood, what I've just

seen improved my mood.

“Ntombi yam emnyama,” I’m not even dark!

This guy. I laugh.

“Hello,” I say.

“You can’t say ‘hello’ what am I to you?”

what is he to me, again?

“Mthombo,” I say.

“Indoda ayibizwa ngegama mama,” (you don’t call a man by his name,) he complains.

“Zwide,” I say.

“There you go, mama, kunjani?” (how are you?) He asks. He phones every minute.

“I’m okay how are you?” I ask.

“I’m okay, too, I’m tired though, I’m walking on the mountains with Khaya,” he says.

“You’ll be okay,” he laughs, a nice sound to hear, really.

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

They are back from the walk they have taken, he felt a little bit better outside, but now that they are here, his emotions have gone back zero. He feels so damn itchy, his chest is closing up. It’s nothing new, it always when she’s here, but every time it happens, it feels like it worsens.

Burying and saying goodbye to his brother was harder for him, because he couldn’t

focus on grieving only, he had to focus on the he woman that touched him 23 years ago. At first she would use her mouth, it shortly escalated to her hopping on top of him.

“Are you okay?” It’s only Mthombo that knows about this. Mthombo did advise him to tell their father, but he didn’t want to, what could he have said? ‘Baba, your cousin-sister raped me?’ He could never! “I’m not a child Mthombo, I’m a grown ass man,” he says in frustration.

“A grown man? A grown man that’s grown only in the outside? What are you? Khaya and Lihle?” just then, Khayelihle's get teary.

“So you are going to use that against me all the fucking time? It’s fine, gibela phez’ komkhukhu wakini umemeze-ke,” (climb on your squatter camp and shout then,) he says and storms to his rondavel! He wants to be out of here, right now!

“Khayelihle vula lom'nyango,” (open this door) Mthombo grits banging the door. He fiddles with the door handle, it’s not locked! So, he pushes the door and walks in. He finds him balled on the bed. “I’m sorry,” Mthombo says, he should have known better than to touch on him having Dissociative Identity Disorder. He switches

to a lot of personalities most of the time, and that bloody Witch caused all of this! "I'll get her to leave, can you allow me to do that?" Mthombo says.

"I'm naughty, that's what she said, she meant no harm," he whispers! He's talking to himself. Mthombo sits down and listens. "My mom said that she would discipline me because I fought Gcina," Khaya says and covers his ears with his hands. "No, no, no, please don't, no," his voice cracks! Mthombo's heart cracks! Jesus! Khayelihle is ruined for life, it's even worse because he doesn't want to drink his pills. Mthombo gets up and heads to the kitchen, angrily!

“Izinja azibuyele emizini yazo manje, all of you dogs, fuck off!” he says, calmly.

“Hayi-bo Mthombo!” Manxumalo exclaims raising her hands up to her head. “We are being disrespected by a child emzin’ ka bhuti!” (In our brother’s home!) He says, her sisters join her.

“Wena Salukwazi esimbi, you would better fucking shut up, before I mop the floor with those three dreadlocks on your head!”

Mthombo warns. “I know what you did, and if you’d like me to keep it to myself, you can gladly fuck-off from here! Ftsek,” (you ugly old lady) Manxumalo quickly gets up and rushes to the bedroom that she was

sleeping in, and packs her clothes.

“Nilindeni nina? Imvana?” (What are you waiting for? The lamb?) They get up and race to the bedroom. Good, now he can go to check up on his stepmom aka aunt! This life? No balance.

“Ma,” he says, hitting his knuckles against the door. He pushes it open and walks in. He loves her like he loves his mother, and he believes that she loves him too. That’s why she made sure that the both of them lived! If she hated him, she would have sacrificed him.

“My baby,” she says, she looks so tired.

“Are you okay?” he asks. She nods her head. “Can I get in?” he asks if he can get inside the sheets, she nods. He takes off his shoes and gets into bed. He leans against the headboard.

“He’s gone ma,” he says and purses his lips.

“He’s resting ngane yam,” she says and gives him a faint smile. “I’m sorry for not informing you, I did things on my own without thinking,” she says, tears form in her eyes, but she still manages to give out her perfect smile.

“Shhh ma, it’s okay,” he says and hugs her.

She releases a sharp breath. She let her

tears flow. "I love you wena mawami," he says.

"I love you even more, my son," their relationship has always been a tight one.

"Wipe your tears, you'll be okay, we'll be okay, I swear," he says. She nods and wipes her tears. She loves him, very much.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 23

NARRATED

Zwelihle is driving Londeka to Mthombowolwazi's home, it's quiet in the car. Sighs keep on being released here and there.

"Mthombo has moved on," Zwelihle breaks the silence.

"What does that have to do with me," this is why he is taking her to her baby daddy, she has an attitude! Jesus, he cannot deal with her.

"I'm telling you because, I don't want you to go and ruin things for him," he says.

"Angihlangene Mina, it has nothing to do with me, but okay," she says and continues to stare outside the window. Zwelihle clicks

his tongue and shakes his head in disappointment, what a chaos Gcinulwazi left him in.

They have just arrived in Hyde Park, Mthombo is not around. "I could have called him and asked if he was around!" Zwelihle kicks one of his tires, Londeka is quietly watching him. He's frustrated, a lot of things are frustrating him.

"You could have but you didn't," she says. He turns to look at her! Damn it! She's like a mosquito that buzz in your ear at night, and when you try to slap the shit out of it, it moves and you also yourself Instead!

“Mawondana, awung’xega,” (leave me alone) he says.

“You could leave me alone here, I don’t think that Mtho would have a problem,” Zweli throws a dirty glare at her!

“It’s Mr Ntshangase to you,, sweetheart. Get in the car...” who knows what could happen to her if she Doesn’t? She’s so thin, she looks like she’s about to die! Mnisi fucked her up... a lot!

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SAMKELISIWE NXUMALO

I haven't seen him in hours, I miss him so much. I wonder where he is or if he's eaten. I know that this is really a hard time for him– it is for all of us– but I'm hoping that he doesn't go back to being a ghost husband. I'm still not hundred percent comfortable with him, I feel like one day he will just wake up with change of minds.

“Would you like another cup of tea?” my relationship with Kea has improved, a lot! We are kit best of friends, but we are sister wives.

“No sisi, I'm okay,” she says and balances her elbow on the table, she brings her hand to her face and leans on it. “Where do you

think baba has been?" I've been holding it in, for so long. I've been wanting to ask too, Baba has been away for almost a week now, it's really not a good thing. Ma is not okay, her health is being tested, and she jst lost her son, she really needs support from her husband, and guess what? He is nowhere to be seen.

"Ey I don't know, girl and I hope he'll be back soon," I say, she nods her head.

"I heard bhut' Mthombo telling MaNxumalo that she has three dreadlocks!" I burst out laughing.

"Where are they vele?"

“They left, apparently they will be back with uncles,” weee iscefe! I’m bored out of my head. The uncles of this home are really controlling, they try– time to time– to bully baba to do things because they are older than him and they hold his blessings! And baba allows them to. Bhut’ Mthombo and Baba are really the only ones in this family who are calm. The other ones, they love war!

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I cooked and dished out for everyone, Slindokuhle offered to feed uMa. My

husband is said to have been sleeping in our Rondavel the whole night.

“Nxumalo,” I knock and get inside. He’s flatly lying on the bed, he’s looking up the ceiling. “Hey,” I whisper, his eyes are bloodshot, he’s been crying.

“Mkami,” he says, his voice is lowered and deep. I nervously wipe my hands on my clothed thigh and sit next to him.

“How are you holding up?” I ask him.

“Ngiyancenga, I’m taking it one step at a day,” he says and sighs. “I’m sorry,” he says.

‘I missed you,’ I’m being honest, I missed him so much. It’s like he was here yet so far away.

“I missed you too, mkami, come here,” he says. I lie next to him, he pulls me closer to him and presses his lips on my forehead.

“I’m leaving, for a week, I’ll be back and I promise to be good for you,” he says.

“Uyaphi, where are you going?” I ask him.

“Don’t worry about it, Sthandwa Sami,” he says and squeezes me in his warm side hug, is it even a hug if we are lying down?

“Just know that we are going to mark my brother’s death!” He’s going to avenge his brother, which is a good thing. I will pray that he comes back home safe.

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It's still dawn when Khayelihle sneaks out of his Rondavel and walks to the back of the main house to meet his brothers. They had planned this for days. They've been instructed to leave before everyone wakes up, they shouldn't be seen when leaving. "Do you have the herbs?" Zanokuhle asks squinting his eyes, there's something he is seeing or, rather, someone. They decided to leave days before they attack, just so they will be able to stay away from women, intelezi works better when you don't have any contact with women.

“Yeah, we do,” Mthombo says, his voice and actions lately are a lot different.

They walk to their car, making sure to be as silent as they can. Those Roois and Lillian need to be put in their place! Once and for all.

“Are you okay, Bafo?” Mthombo asks Khayelihle.

“All good,” Khayelihle nods his head.

“I’m not driving!” Zanothando says and gets in the car. Mthombo has no choice but to drive! Khaya doesn’t seem okay, at all.

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LAHLIWE DLADLA

He needs to leave! I've been telling him that he needs to leave, but he never really listens to me. I'm tired of begging him.

"Things might be happening at home, wena you are here," I say and shake my head in disappointment. We fell into sin, yet again. I'm disappointed in myself, and him.

"I'll leave tonight," he says.

"You are mourning, and we did things we weren't supposed to do," I say.

"We'll see someone," I sigh and nod. I can't deny it, my feelings for him get stronger with each passing day. I snuggle closer to him, he holds me tight and kisses my lips.

“I love you,” he says, do I love him too? Yes I do. But we can't be together.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 24

NARRATED

“Gazi, what's on your mind,” Mthombo questions Zanothando. Zano has been staring outside the window for so long, Mthombo is starting to ask himself if there's an invisible girl he's seeing outside. They

are in Mpumalanga, Witbank. They are in a hotel called ANEW, it's closer to the Roois.

"Kufuneka isphandla sakhe, you need to put his bracelet on," he says and hands it to Mthombo.

"Yeyy, do you go through my things?"

Mthombo asks, what if he had a gun.

"Yeah, if I have to though," the seriousness on Zano's brings Mthombo to awe, what the hell?

"Ohhhhh," Mthombo drags it, he's waiting for Zano to tell him that he is joking– it's not happening.

"Yeah, make it snappy, your father is on his way here," he says.

“Why would baba come here?” Mthombo asks.

“Because he needs to avenge his son Bhuti, Gcina was his son, and he loved him,” he knows so much about their father. He knows the woman that has his father’s heart, he knows his father’s struggles. He is the last son of their father, and he is the closest to him. Maybe their close relationship was because Nxumalo felt guilty because Thando never really nursed Zano, she had Gcina that she loved like no other. She didn’t even breastfeed Zano because she was obsessed over her 2 year old baby.

“Alright I hear you,” Mthombo says and sigjs before going to pour himself a glass of whiskey, he gulps it. And groans, it burned his throat!

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It was easy to find them, the Roois. With Zweli, almost everything is possible, Zanothando had to have his input though. Mzikayifani got to them yesterday night and was filled in on everything.

Mthombowolwazi and Khayelihle have just realized that they don't know their father, at all. He said he is not a criminal or anything

of that sort when they asked, he said that he had to learn many things at a young age, and one of those things was fending for himself.

The Roois are not Afrikaners, however their lifestyle is no different to them. They are living in an isolated place which is an advantage for the Nxumalos. Also, they own farms! It's about to get interesting, Khayelihle has always wanted to have cows and goats of his own.

They got intelezi for whites, what do whites know about using umuthi? Khayelihle thinks to himself.

Mzikayifani is just as calm as his first, well they all are. Zanoluhle keeps on zoning out, thinking about his best friend, Gcinulwazi.

“Siphi isphandla?” he asks where Gcinulwazi’s bloody bracelet is.

“Nasi,” Mthombo takes it out of his pocket. Zanoluhle takes and stares at it for some time before handing it to Mthombo.

“Wear it,” he instructs, it’s time to unleash the other side to uMthombo! Just for this day. Mthombo sighs and slowly puts it on.

“We’ll revisit this place tonight ,

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I'm bored! Jesus, but the problem is that I want to be here. I want to see Lillian weeping and screaming. I want to prove if I still have some goodness in me.

They have been singing, and speaking lies about Wandile, they say that he was a good person, a good person that's able to frame someone? Of rape? Rhaaa! I wish to stand up and say that they are lying, it's just not allowed.

I wonder if these people will go to heaven when they are dead, I mean so much lies? Yho!

“Lillian Mnisi, get down! Otherwise your mother dies!” this voice! I’d know it even if I was deaf. But I can’t believe how vile his voice sounds. I turn, and I confirm with my eyes that it’s Mthombo, he has a balaclava on, but I know him. I know it’s him! He’s alone. People gasp. I hear a gun cocking and a gunshot is what I hear soon after, I’m part of the screamers. We quickly go down. Now I want to be home, home with my mother. I regret coming here, what if I get shot at mistakenly? Sigh!

“Eyyy, we don’t have time to look pretty, get the fuck off your heels, and come here, lobhuti wakho udinga uk'bekwa, your

brother has to be put in his place of rest, and that can't be fine with you present!" I didn't know he was this cruel, I'm holding in my urine! I wish I could raise my head and watch her, I'm hearing fading footsteps and sobs, she's following him, or he's following her, but someone is doing the following.

"Ningasukuma bazalwane, you may all stand up brethren, eyy lemigulukudu!"

(these thugs) the pastor says, "They are so lucky I'm a pastor now, otherwise all he'll would have broken loose," pshhhh.

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“Make ngiyakutjela!” (I tell you mom,) I’ve just narrated the whole story to mom, she’s laughing her ass out, I would too.

“Aii you are so extra my child,” I roll my eyes before sitting down. I’m disappointed in the fact that she thinks I’m being extra, I told everything exactly like how it happened.

“I am? Aii make,” I sigh. Now reality is sinking in, I’m unemployed! With the rates of unemployment, where am I even gonna get a job? I need to start over, drafting my CV and emailing it to companies, God! I’m so tired and drained for that, also in the meantime, I need some help with my mom, she needs her treatment, and I don’t even

afford it, I think looking for my sisters will
good for me at this point.

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My phone is ringing in the dining room, I
rush to and answer it, it's Mthombo.

“MaNkhalanga,” butterflies are an
understatement, there fishes in my
stomach and they are swimming, he
sounds so sweet calling me like that.

“Nxumalo,” I say and hold my chest to stop
my heart from jumping out.

“I miss you,” he says.

“You saw me at the funeral,” he sighs.

“You shouldn’t have seen that,” he says.

“I saw it, it’s not your fault, are you okay?” I

don’t want him feeling bad over things he can’t control. He did whatever he had to do.

“I love you yezwan yin?” (okay?) He says and hangs up before I can say it back!

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 25

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA NXUMALO

I'm stressed! A lot has been going through my mind. Gcinulwazi's brothers have been gone for days, we haven't heard anything from them. Apparently they left to avenge their brother. I don't know how I feel about them being away from us for so long, we cannot deal with losing any of them, we've just lost one, Gcina, and by how it seems, we are all still not okay, although we are taking it one day at a time.

I can't even focus here, my head is all over the place. Ma is getting better with each coming day, I'm so glad that she is, we've gotten so close, I don't have an beef with any of them now, all is okay, and I feel bad

that for us to have a healthy relationship,
Gcinulwazi had to die.

“Do you think they are okay?” really, my
heart is not settled.

“I don’t know,” Samkelisiwe and I are
watching TV, or maybe the TV is watching
us, because we are not focused on the TV.

“My heart keeps on beating fast,” it’s
always beating fast, but today, the cause of
it is anxiety!

Samkelisiwe changes the channel to
channel 404, this girl and news, Lord!

“Hhaybo!!!” she exclams. That catches my attention.

“What happened?” I turn my whole attention to the TV, my jaws drop to the floor! H.A.Y.I.B.O!!!

A journalist tells us that a farm that is said to belong to the ‘late’ Roois, a white family, had been burnt to ashes, they say a close source told them that there were people inside, they burnt everyone and everything, their dogs and cats! Lord, something tells me that it was the brothers of this home. I’m in awe. Whoever did that is cruel, they killed even innocent children? Yho!

“People are cruel out there,” one of those cruel people could be her husband!

“They are,” I say. I really hope that the Nxumalos are okay, really, even if it was them that did that, I hope they come back in one peace, we haven’t even cleansed the home to get rid of the curse, because if we don’t people in this family might continue to be killed with a gun.

“Ngaze ngakhathala!” (I’m so tired,) that’s Khayelihle’s voice, I quickly get up and rush to them, Khayelihle is the first one to enter so I throw myself at him, I quickly remove myself from his embrace, his wife needs to

hug him too. My senses are back! I shake
the hands of the others and hug
Zanothando, this one is my first son!

“Someone missed us!” Khayelihle says.

“I didn’t miss you, I was just worried. Baba,
should I make you tea?” I say. When last
did I see him?, He looks drained too.

“Ngiyalicela, yes please,” he says and I nod.

“Where’s Slindokuhle,” that one is never
home, she’s just weird, I don’t get her
personality, but right now, I will focus on
this man that looks so empty and angry!
Today, he looks so much like Gcina, bhut’

Mthombo is someone that you cannot read, but today? Lord.

“She went to her friend down the road,” I lie.

Bhut’ Mthombo nods and walks out.

“Take it off when you sleep, please,” Zano yells after bhuti, he nods his head, that’s all he gets as an answer. I go to the kitchen to prepare baba and ma’s tea.

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NARRATED

Her chest is closing in on her. Her husband was away from her for weeks, and he doesn't seem affected by her absence in his life.

"Maka Khaya," he says, not holding any eye contact.

"Nxumalo," she says and sighs, a single tear slides down her cheek. He sits down on the bed and faces the door.

"Who is she?" she asks, she just wants to know who the woman that gives him solace is. She clearly is better than her because why was she left to deal with the death of one of her children alone.

“Lahliwe,” she nods with a smile, her tears are still streaming down her cheeks. She wipes them.

“Should I go home?” she asks, this is a question she a long time ago, they had children because dhe kept on crying for more, after Lahliwe left, he was never the same, so she asked for children just to have company for herself.

“This is your home,” he answers.

“It doesn’t matter if you don’t love or want me,” silence. She sighs and covers herself with the blankets, she cries.

“Koko,” that’s Keamogetswe knocking.

Mzikayifani walks to the door, he doesn’t

want them to see his wife crying, he takes the tray with tea on it, and thanks her before closing the door and walking back in the room.

He places the tray on the pedestal. He sighs before getting in bed and hugging his wife close to him. He loves Lahliwe and wants to marry her, he loves his wife too, she bore children for him.

“I want to be alone Mzikayifani,” This is the first time, ever, that she’s calling him by his name.

“Ngiyaxolisa mama,” he apologizes, she heaves a sigh and closes her eyes. Maybe l’d the woman was not her sister it would

have hurt lesser. She lets him hold her, but her heart is heavy, it's tired. This is what she feared 33 years ago, Lord knows that she lived with guilt. She was young, and she thought that Lahliwe being away from Mzikayifani would make him focus on her. That was her naïvity, she regrets it, and will forever regret it. She will apologize, her whole life if she has to.

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It's morning, everyone is awake and in the dining room for breakfast, except their parents. It's surprising because even

Slindokuhle is present but the ones that always preach about breakfast being the important meal of the day.

“I’ll go check on ubaba,” Zanothando breaks the awkward silence. He has always been the one to love one parent openly, and he does it with pride. He stands and walks to the main room. He knocks and waits for his father’s permission to go in.

“Come in,” his father says. He gets in and closes the door, he leans on the door.

“Are you okay baba,” Nxumalo is holding one of his marriage pictures.

“Your mother left,” Zanothando raises his brow.

“Ma never leaves, what happened?” she is his mother, he cares. His heart is racing, he hopes it’s not because of his affair, because all he’ll will break loose, Mthombo won’t be happy.

“She knows about your aunt, what worries me is that she didn’t take any money, she didn’t even take clothes,” Zanothando’s heart sinks!

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 26

NARRATED

Zanothando is blankly staring at his father, showing no emotions at all. Nxumalo keeps on sighing, his eyes are looking at his beautiful wife he lost to the obsession of wanting a child so many years ago. She abused him, both mentally and sexually. He had to sleep with her even though he didn't want to all in the name of trying for a child... And when she saw that she couldn't conceive she forced him to sleep with her sister, that's how he developed something for he younger sister, sigh! But a man cannot speak out about things like that

now can he? A man is supposed to endure things silently and put on a happy façade in front of people. He feels like anytime his heart will stop beating, maybe if he had parents, or elders to groom him, he would have known how to be firm with his wife. He only knows how to fight, his fist and weapons are firm for him not to be verbally firm, he cannot use that with his wife. A woman should be loved and taken care of, that, he knows. What he wasn't taught is, how to say no to your wife without being abusive. It is so much he could talk about, but so little he can say, because society doesn't let men talk. He sighs and quickly

wipes his tears. He hopes his son didn't see that!

"You know that Mthombo will be angry, right?" Zanothando mutters, shaking his head in disappointment. His father should have heard his mother moving around the house.

"I know," Nxumalo says and heavily sighs. This is nothing he had imagined would happen, he expected her to be angry, not to leave. He didn't want her to leave. He is the mother of his children.

"You need to find her," Zanothando says and walks out. Mzikayifani closes his eyes.

People seem to be healing, the mood is not as somber as it has always been. He's grateful, that's what Gcina would have wanted. He takes a seat.

"Is ma okay?" Mthombowolwazi asks. He cares a lot about his mother and aunt. He loves them a lot! He knows that Zano said that he went to check on their father, but he also knows that deep down, Zano wanted to check on his mother. It's just that, he can't accept it.

"She left," Zanothando's eyes are solely cast on his plate.

"She left?" Mthombo wants a clear answer. Zanothando keeps on saying things that

don't make sense!

"Yes, she fought with Dad and left, she took nothing, not money and not clothes,"

Zanothando says and shrugs, his eyes still on his plate. He needs to push back his tears! It hurts, but he doesn't want it to hurt. His other siblings are quietly staring at them, if not eating. He purses his lips. The pain is badly excruciating.

"How could Dad fight ma, she's sick,"

Mthombo says, annoyed. He doesn't get how his father thinks, really! Sometimes he acts like a child!

"I don't know, bhuti. " Mthombo huffs and pushes back his chair before getting up.

“You will not fight your father Mthombo, yakuzala leyandoda,” Zanokuhle glares at his brother. It’s unacceptable! A child cannot fight their parents.

“I was given birth to by my mother,” Mthombo says, glaring back at Zanokuhle, “You are disrespectful these days, why the hell are you calling me by name?”

Mthombo questions. Zanokuhle takes in a deep breath.

“I’m sorry, bhuti” he says. Mthombo clicks his tongue and heads out to his rondavel, everything here is frustrating him. He wants to go back to Johannesburg. He had planned to go back because Tsandzekile is

relocating in the next 2 days, but now he has to stay back and look for his aunt. He had hoped that he'd be there to welcome her and be able to explore her flat with her.

He lies on his back and looks up at the ceiling, how did everything become so messy? There was a time when was unruly, but he outgrew that stage of life when he finally got everything he wanted.

He sighs, what happened that night was something he never thought he'd do. It's like something had taken over him.

That old man and his son had to die, together with Lillian, and that's exactly what happened, but the problem is, he

killed even an innocent woman and two children. They tried to stop him, but he was just unstoppable, he didn't listen! He tied them all around a pole that was at the center of one room and burnt every one of them. He regrets it now, killing innocent people is what he regrets.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

Again, I'm on a flight to Johannesburg, hoping that something will pop up very soon. I know that the chances of

something popping up are close to nothing but I'll hope. I've never heard that there is someone who died because they had hoped for something, so I won't die.

We are living off of my savings. I don't have a lot of money in that account so I know that they will be over in no time. The money that's in there will probably sustain for two months or three.

Johannesburg is a place where most people found jobs, but now the I think unemployment is mostly there because there are so much people living in a small city.

What makes me sad is that I had to take my mother to a home, I couldn't afford a private nurse to look after her, she begged me to take her there, I knew that I should but I didn't want to give in easily. At least now I know she's in a safe place. It will keep me going until I find a job. I'm hoping that I also find my siblings soon, my mother is not a burden to me, but she's old now and I think she'd like to see her children before she kicks the bucket. Sigh! I have hunt for a job and my sisters all at once.

This feels like the first time I was in a flight, I couldn't take pictures because I was

nervous, and now I can't take pictures because I'm sad, I'm also stressed! Sigh.

I'm finding my way out of the airport when I see his bear-like built body standing on the entrance, I almost run to him when I remember that day! God I was so scared, I almost shit my pants... well, my dress.

"MaNkhalanga," he says with a small smile.

I return the smile looking straight into his light brown eyes, this guy is beautiful, not handsome but beautiful. He's thoughtful, too.

"Nxumalo, how are you?" I ask him.

"I'm okay, how are you?" he asks.

“I’m good thank you,” I tell him, he takes my bags and walks towards his X5, well, I don’t like this car, but it’s super expensive. He opens the door for me, I get in, he closes and walks to the boot to put my bag.

“Buckle up,” he instructs once he is also inside. I’m looking out the window, we are driving in comfortable silence. “My mother is missing,” he says, I noticed that he isn’t okay, he didn’t hug me!

“When?” He calls both his mother and aunt ‘mother’ so I don’t really know who he is referring to.

“Two days ago, she’s not home neither is she at her home, I’m stressed,” he sighs

and purses his lips into a thin line.

"I'm sorry, you will find her," I'm not even sure, but I sound so sure.

"I hope so," he says and heaves a sigh.

"Can I connect my phone?" he nods his head. I switch on my Bluetooth and connect to the car, and then play Celine Dion and R-Kelly 'I'll be your angel.' He smiles.

"Obani labelungu!" (who are these whites)
oh my God!

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 27

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

Bhuti left after saying mean things to his father, baba didn't even say anything he just cast his eyes on the ground. I don't think I would have done that, I think I would have Moer'd the shit out of him, how dare he say that to his own father! But again, baba is just as calm. More than anything, I think we were shocked, it was the first time seeing bhuti that worked up.

I think they should go easy on the old man, he doesn't look happy. Also, because their

mother left doesn't mean that she's right. Baba hasn't eaten in 2 days, it hurts me because he is the father I have never had. That man is kind, he wasn't close to Gcina but he's never shown me any hate. He's always treated me like his daughter. This house doesn't feel like a home anymore. I've never heard him cuss at Gcina, I've never seen him looking at him differently from the way he looks at his other kids, he was just distant.

"Sisi, are you okay?" that's Zanothando getting in, I was just trying to think. He looks like he's about to blow up.

"Are you okay?" He has never shed a tear for his brother, I think it's building up, very soon, he might have anger issues.

"I'm okay, sisi, I'm just tired, these people don't want to give my father a break," they are all almost ganging up on him except him though. But no one has been brave enough to tell baba that they hate him in his eyes like bhut' Mthombo. He might have not meant it, but it will not hurt baba any lesser.

"Every one of us knows that Ma was cruel to aunt, when she gave birth to Mthombo she chased them away, baba was not home then, but he is mostly hated for that,

it doesn't make sense" he says and shakes his head, he's hurt too, but he understands his father, "Is it because he is a man, for them to understand that he feels pain he has to cut himself or scream or kill himself? Aii ubaba is a person, even Gcina— a person who had the right to hate him— understood him," he quickly looks up as if he realized something— he's said too much. "Ngiyaxolisa sisi," he apologizes. I nod my head.

"It's okay, you can talk to me," I can be his Gcina. I'll listen to him.

"All I'm saying is, baba too needs to be loved, he's gone through a lot, imagine

having a son that you would do anything for looking at you, straight in the eye, and telling you that they hate you, aiii cha, this is abuse," This is what ma wanted! I don't know man, she wanted her children to hate their father, little did she know that they would end up hating each other! I can't help but think of her as a selfish human. She could have told one of us where she is heading at least. I was warming up to her, but now I'm hating her.

"I'm sorry," I say. He nods his head, dammit, he looks so hurt.

I think I need to make some calls, they need to speak to someone, they are not

okay man, and it's just heartbreaking. "I wouldn't be surprised if she took her own life and followed her favorite son," that comes out like pain itself, he thinks that his mother is selfish, just as I think she is.

Samke just cooked and set up the table for supper, none of the brothers are out, they are locked in their rondavels. The house just as cold as the weather is outside.

There's no warmth, it's like this house was abandoned years ago.

"Bhuti should come back and apologize to baba, what he did before leaving today is not right," Slindokuhle says. This is the first time I'm hearing an input about this whole

situation from her. "Ma should stay wherever she is and leave my dad alone," she seems to know something we don't know.

"Are you okay," at this point, I think everyone in this family is broken.

"I'm okay, that woman is cruel to my father," she says and rolls her eyes. No one will be eating today, I tell you! I'm numb, they look numb too.

"Eyy kunzima," Samkelisiwe says and releases a huge and sharp sigh!

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NARRATED

"You need to find her and forget about me," Lahliwe says over the phone. Mzikayifani sighs, tears stream down his face.

"My heart wants you," he's not lying. His heart yearned for her from the first time they had a sexual encounter till today. But he will respect her wishes. Maybe focusing on being a better father to his kids will be better than forcing any woman to be his wife. "But I'll let you go," he says and sighs. He'll be turning 60 soon, maybe will be dying soon because he doesn't know anything about his health. He needs to push Mthombo and Zano to get married

soon so he can die a happy man. Also, he hopes that any man who will try looking at his daughter be struck by lightning. Men are trash!

"Thank you, goodnight," she says and hangs up.

Today marks the worst day after the day he heard of Gcina's death. Mthombo looked at him in the eye and told him that he hated him and spit on the ground. It was anger, he understands, eyy but I ripped his heart apart.

He releases a sigh and gets up from his bed and walks to his son's grave, his family's Graves are not far from home, they

are just in the next yard. It's where all the Nxumalos are buried.

He sits down next to the fresh grave and looks at it, welcoming fresh tears, he's never shed tears like this in his life. "Eyy ngaze ngazi Sola mfana wam, I regret everything my son, kubuhlungu" his eyes are teary, he keeps on looking up trying to stop his tears from falling, they keep on falling. "I fucked up, a lot," he says shaking his head. "I know I did, and there's no excuse for that, but I miss you," he covers his mouth with his hand. It hurts, dammit. "Kuyonakala ekhaya mfana wam, things are messed up at home, and I'm falling apart,

maybe I am half a man that your mother used to say I was, eyy ngiyahluleka, holding on is getting too much, your brother looked me in the eye and told me that he hates me, he blamed me for everything I didn't do," he says and closes his eyes, his face is a mess. "If I could, I would turn the hands of time and be a better father to you too, sesangedlula lesoskhathi, that time has passed all I can do now is look back to the nonexistent memories you and I have," when his tears drop, a sound of thunder strikes. It starts drizzling but he doesn't move. Maybe God is trying to wash away

his pain, so he lies down next to his son's grave and hugs it.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 28

LAHLIWE DLADLA

Protecting one's peace is important. She left home to protect her peace. The last time she was happy was when she asked her husband to sleep with her her, from there she started living in fear, had she

known that it would have been like this, she wouldn't have ousted her sister. Her heart is paining, this might be the end of her marriage, who is she fooling? Maybe herself because her marriage was long over! That's what Thando told her. Thando told her that it's hard to hold on now, there's a small piece of Lahliwe that feels bad for her, but the problem is that she doesn't believe that she's hurt, she doesn't look hurt at all.

"You need to go back," Lahliwe says, after hanging up, she was just on a phone call with Nxumalo. He informed her that Thando is missing, also he let her go, he told her

that he'll respect her wishes. It's not what she wanted, but after all Mzi is her sister's husband.

MaDladla is angry, she has her phone with her, but she doesn't have any missed calls from her husband. The first person he called was her sister, he didn't even ask if she was with her, marrying a dog that doesn't appreciate you is like this. He didn't deserve her in the first place!

"I don't need to go back," she says and sips her coffee. She is evidently annoyed. She can't hide it.

"Are you even sorry?" Lahliwe is really curious, her sister is not acting like

someone who cares about this whole messed up situation. She slurps her tea. Lahliwe is annoyed, this person left home without anything– she took little money for taxi to get her here and made sure that she was warm, she made sure that they think that she's fed up and by the looks of things, it worked, heck they even think that she walked a long distance, that she has nothing to eat– she didn't say anything to her children, and the way she's so unbothered brings upon many questions to Lahliwe.

“I am, to you and Mthombo,” Thando says. She's never done anything to Mzikayifani, if

anything, he should go jump on the highest bridge on earth! Together with his side chick, maybe? They should leave her with the kids. Life would be much better. She will go back home when she thinks he's suffered enough, for now, let the man-sluts suffer.

"Okay," Lahliwe says and sighs. Thando begged her to lie and say that she is not with her, no one asked but she didn't say anything either, guilt is slowly creeping up. Mzikayifani mentioned that the kids are stressed but she didn't say anything meanwhile she knows that Thando is here and that she arrived safely! Two days ago.

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Lahliwe has just cooked supper, she's alone and eating. This, all, is upsetting her.

Thando doesn't seem to be thinking a lot, she doesn't seem to care about anything else rather than getting sympathy from the children.

Thando says that she has not healed from the death of Gcina and that she still feels chest pains, so she went to bed early. It's puzzling how calm she is yet she claims to be hurt by her husband...

Lahliwe sighs and closes her eyes, maybe she just feels sorry for her sneaky link...

Jesus, she's having sneaky links at this age? Lord be with her.

If Mthombo and his brothers find out that she knew about her sister's whereabouts and didn't tell them, they will be angry...

sigh! God forbid, they shouldn't even find the fact that she has had any kind of romantic relationship with their father.

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ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

Watching his father lying down on the ground like a little that's throwing tantrums because their parents did not approve of buying them toys has to be the most hurtful thing that has ever happened to him. He feels helpless and it doesn't help that everyone else just doesn't care, okay maybe that's being too much, but he can't do anything to help.

"Zanothando! You are watching baba lying outside?" Khayelihle is on a panic mode! The rain is pouring outside.

"If this is the only way he will find peace then let him be," Zano says and releases a deep sigh. Yes, it hurts, but it will free him.

“He’ll get a cold!” Zanothando laughs hard.

“Ubaba akayona ingane, dad is not a child,” he says and moves away from the sitting to the kitchen. He sighs before filling his glass up with water and going back to the sitting room where his brother is.

There are so many things that have to be done, and it needs his father with his head clear!

“You are so weird these days,” Khayelihle says. Zanothando chuckles lightly.

“How have I been before ‘these days’?”

Zanothando raises his brow. Mthombo doesn’t answer. “Exactly bhuti, you don’t know me,” he says and leaves Khaya in the

sitting room, thinking hard about what Zanothando just said! It's funny how close he has been to Mthombo that they ended up not having a close relationship with the 2 younger ones, Gcina and Zano had no choice but to be close, now that Gcina is gone, Zano looks so lonely. He looks like he is sinking into a dark place!

Khayelihle sighs and walks back to his rondavel. He finds his wife in bed wearing a gown. Who came with gowns? They should be burnt!

"He's moved to his room, I think, because he is not in the graveyard anymore," Khayelihle says unclothing himself.

“I saw that,” she says, he gets into bed, butt naked, what the hell? Isn’t he cold?

“Awugodoli? Aren’t you getting cold?” she asks.

“Ngiyagodola mama, I’m cold and I need you to warm me up,” he says and hugs her waist because she’s sitting on her butt.

“You are cunning,” she says, he laughs.

“Akuhkhulunywa kanjalo nendoda,” (you don’t talk to your man like that,) he says with a small smile.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

Her room is okay. Just okay. There's not much of safety there, but it's something they can totally work on. He manipulated her into coming home with him. He has no intentions of being intimate with her, he wants to mourn his brother and be respectful to his memories. They will probably cuddle all night. He loves cuddles. They are heading to Hyde Park, her room is in Rockville, in the township, sje doesn't have roommates however she has flatmates!

"Are you okay?" she asks him, he's not okay! He left home after a huge fight, no it was not a fight, he attacked his father, he

was called by Zano and was told that their father is not okay, he wants to believe that he did a good thing by calling out his father for his nonsense.

“What?!” she half shouts, he just narrated the situation to her. She doesn’t look pleased, at all. “I’m not saying either of them is right but do you realize that you disrespected your father Mthombowolwazi?” She’s really not pleased.

“I’m sorry,” he is not sorry, his father is full of drama. He left them with his suck aunt and then he comes back and fights her, who the hell does he think he is?

“You should always respect your parents, the Bible says that!” he almost rolls his eyes. Of course he knows this, but what happens if parents disrespect their children?

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 29

MADLADLA

“You need to go home,” she can’t be tired of me already, she stayed with my husband

here for a week and never told him to go home, so why is she telling me to go home? And besides this is my home, too right? Which other home should I go to? "I'll go home when I'm ready to face your boyfriend," it doesn't hurt me anymore, I learnt to live with the fact that my husband's love for me faded, is it even love if it fades? I'm not quite sure, but I know that whatever it was that bound us had faded after he fell in love with this one that I call my sister, and she had the nerve to accept it, she went behind my back and loved my husband, after everything I did for her. They betrayed me and I kid you not,

they will not live to tell the tale. They have to go. I'll make sure that they'll pay. It's even better with Mzi, we have no blood ties, Lahliwe on the other hand! Ncncnc.

"Aiii sisi, what you are doing is not right, you are not only stressing your husband.

The children, too, are hurt," I do care about them, but for now, I need a breather. I need to breathe, away from them. Mthombo is a constant reminder that there was once Gcinulwazi. I don't hate Mthombo, in fact, I love him more than I love the other 3, but I don't love him more than I love uGcinulwazi, so him dying instead of Gcina wouldn't hurt as much, not even the death

of every one of them at once would hurt this much.

“They will be okay,” I say and get up, heading to my bedroom. I’m tired I need to lie down, sitting in this house, alone, is tiring! The presence of Lahliwe is nauseating.

“Ma!” I’m not sure which one of them it is, but it’s between Zano and Khaya. If it was Mthombowolwazi, I would have known because he is exactly like Gcina, his voice and all.

“Huh?” I’m annoyed. I’m being woken up from my deep sleep, by a lousy child! Dammit.

“You need to come back home, sis’ Kea is sick, we don’t know what to do,” Aii what do I have to do with Keamogetswe’s illness? That girl took my son away from me, I’ll never like her! I don’t care if she dies. It wouldn’t affect me.

“How did you know that I was here?” I ask, Zanothando annoys me, really. His father planted him in my womb to get me ‘over’ Gcina, he’s an unwanted child.

“Aunt called me,” that bitch! She’s taking things way too far. Out of all of the children she could have called, she called this one? The one I can’t stand. For what, even? I told her that I will go back there once I’m ready!

“Go home, I’ll come with a taxi, or I’ll ask Khaya to come fetch me,” I say and get off from the bed, I’ll take a bath.

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ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

He’d honestly like someone to explain to him why it hurts him. His mother just told him that she would rather take a taxi home than to be driven home by him. He’s always known that he is his mother’s least favorite child, but she doesn’t have to remind him everyday!

He just got out of her room, he shuts the door and wipes his tears. He goes to the kitchen, where he left his aunt.

“She said she will ask Khaya to fetch her,” he says when Lahliwe looks at him with a questioning eye.

“What’s wrong with your car?” Lahliwe asks.

“She doesn’t trust my driving skills,” Zanothando lies. Between him and Khaya, he is the smooth driver, but Lahliwe doesn’t know that.

“Oh, alright my boy,” she smiles at him.

“I’ll take my leave,” he bids his goodbye.

“Uhamba ungekadli kehla? You are leaving without eating?” Lahliwe knows how much of a foodie Zanothando is.

“I’m fine ma, I ate before coming here,” he lies. He says goodbye one last time and leaves.

Lahliwe angrily walks to his sister’s room, why the hell is she treating a child like this? From a young age, Zanothando was treated like an outside by his mother, Lahliwe knows this because Mzikayifani once begged her to choose warm clothes for Zanothando because Thando wouldn’t barge, it was winter and Zanothando was

just a child, it didn't make sense why

Thando would be so cruel!

"Hhay, ngiyazi geza ezam ntombi, ungcolile," (I give up on you, you have a dark heart) she yells out for Thando to hear. Thando locked her room.

"What do you know about being dark hearted?" Lahliwe laughs, bitterly.

"I know so much, you've never been kind-hearted, you treated me like I was not your sister, you ousted me with a child that was not even a week old, and gave us only a bottle of water! But, I have to give it to you ntombi, you are more than dark-hearted! That would be an insult to dark-hearted

people, they usually love their kids!”

Thando cracks up and clears her throat.

“You would know, engani you are a whore, you are sleeping with your sister’s husband after all,” Thando fires back.

“You are not my sister, please leave!”

Lahliwe says and walks out, leaving Thando hurling insults.

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The drive from his mother’s home to his home is not even an hour long, his mother should be here if she took a taxi!

Apparently, she was nowhere to be found when Khayelihle arrived there, he waited and waited for hours but there was no sign of Thando. So, Zanothando instructed Khaya to come with their aunt instead.

“How are you feeling?” he asks his sister-in-law. Keamogetswe holds her chest.

“I don’t know, I still feel sick,” Zanothando nods his head. He’s standing by the door, his hands buried deep in his pockets. This needs an elder, not just any elder, but a woman that will offer moral support to her when they finally break the news to her, she’s pregnant and unaware. Zanothando instructed his father to go and let his family

know. Mzikayifani gets better by each passing day. Zanothando is glad. No woman was involved, he got better by himself.

“You will be okay,” he says and smiles.

Gcina left something behind, something that will forever remind them of him.

He walks back to the kitchen, sis’

Samkelisiwe is cooking soup for her sister wife.

“Are you okay?” she asks him. Is he okay?

No, but...

“I’m okay sisi, are you?” she smiles and

nods, she’s okay. “I’ll go to the gate, I need

to have a word with mam'ncane," he says.
She nods, what a busy boy Zano is.

He's puffing and pulling his cigarette,
waiting on Khayelihle's car to arrive, so that
he can brief his aunt. Only him and his
father know about this. The others will be
let know once she's decided whether she
wants to or not to keep the baby, if she
doesn't want to, they will have to buy
convincing skills from the nearest shop
here, because there's not way he will let her
abort his brother's memory.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 30

MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

He needs someone to explain to him why the hell Zanothando is smoking freely. His eyes must be playing tricks with him, it can't be! It just can't be.

He gets off his car and walks up to Zanothando who looks like his mind is far.

"You are smoking?" Mthombo says, as a matter of fact.

"Yeah," Zano says before he pulls and puffs. Mthombo is in awe, what the hell is

this?

“When did you start?” He asks, trying so hard not to be conveyed as judgemental.

“A very long time ago,” Zanothando says.

Mthombo nods. He doesn't smile, and he knows for a fact that the two brothers after him don't smoke too. He doesn't like that Zano is the only one that smokes, but he won't address it as yet.

“Okay, where's dad?”

“You want to apologize?” Zanothando asks after throwing his

“Awungene, not that it's your business, but no, I'm just asking,” he says. Zanothando nods and looks to the other way, there's no

sign of Khayelihle's car. "Are you okay?"

Mthombo genuinely asks.

"I'm okay? Yeah, I am," Zanothando says and smiles, still not looking at his brother.

"You want to talk to abelungu?"

Zanothando laughs.

"Some day, when I've done all I have to, I'll ask you to take me to them, I'd like help, not now though," talking to a psychologist would help, he's carrying so much over his shoulders. Going to church, alone, helps, but not that much because he needs to share some of his struggles, and he can't do that with a close friend or the village gossipers from church. He can't tell people

that he sees most things before they happen, these days all that is being looked down upon. Whether it's a prophet or a traditional healer, you are labeled as a scammer, so he'd rather keep these things to himself.

"You know I've got you, I love you back," Mthombo pats Zanothando's shoulder and walks furtherly in.

Zanothando summoned them in, well, they never really question anyone, their father instructed them that they should never question each other's concern, well, only if they are valid. And, with Zanothando, they are always valid.

“Sisi, can I come in?” he says, softly knocking. He heard she was not okay.

“Bhuti, you can come in,” her voice is barely there. He get in and greets. She is with Samkelisiwe, they are inseparable these days.

“How are you feeling?” he asks, taking a seat on the daybed.

“I feel better now,” she gives him a tired smile, he nods.

Samkelisiwe, she looks out of place, heck, she feels out of place! “I’ll go and make you tea,” she says and gets up, she’s giving them space to talk.

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At last, Khaya's car appears. Zanothando breathes and clasps his sweaty hands together. He rubs them together. This is going to be a tough one. It will be tough and challenging months.

"What took you so long?" he asks Khaya, rushing to open the for his aunt.

"We had a punch," Khayelihle says and folds his arms to his chest. Finally, he takes a breath.

"Ma, thank you for being my heroine," Zanothando says, smiling at his aunt.

“It’s okay, khehla, what’s up?” she wants to know why it was so urgent for her to leave her dumplings on the stove.

“Sis’ Kea, she’s pregnant, I need you to break the news to her,” he says and rubs his forehead. This will be so hard to do!

“What? We’ll have someone to point to and say they are Gcina’s!” she already has tears burning her eyes.

“Yes, ma, but please be careful how you say it, she’s just lost ubhuti, I don’t think it will be pleasing to hear that she’s got a piece of him in her, it will be bitter more than sweet,” he says.

“How old are you?” Lahliwe smiles. This one’s mind works more than his brothers’ minds combined. It’s amazing.

“I’m 28 mommy, ngiyak’ thanda yezwan, good luck,” he says and kisses her cheek before walking away.

“Heyyy! Usuyabhema? Do you smoke, you will die if lung diseases,” she yells.

“What is a lung ma?” Zano asks his aunt, chuckling. She doesn’t know what it is, but she always hears it when people on TV talk about it.

“It doesn’t matter, what matters is that it is deadly,” he bursts out laughing, he laughs until he disappears to his Rondavel.

Lahliwe takes in a deep breath. She needs all the strength in the world, wait she forgot to ask the most important question! How did Zano know about this before Kea knew? That boy!

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KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA NXUMALO

She dragged it and dragged it before she dropped the bomb! I should have known before all of them, I should have been the one to inform them of the good news, the news that Gcina will live forever. Well, not forever, but at least there's something we

can say is his memory. I was too distracted, I was still mourning him, I still am.

“Don’t cry,” I don’t know if I’m crying because I’m happy or because I’m sad!

This is a butter pill to swallow.

“I’m okay ma, I’m just glad,” I thank God that he is choosing to trust me, and I hope he doesn’t change his mind. I’m almost over the first trimester, I’m not sure how far I am though. We’ve had sex several times before he left for Mpumalanga. But that last day... that day, he said goodbye.

“I’m so happy, Zano will be happy too,” he knows? “Yes, he’s the one who knew first,”

now I'm convinced that there's more to Zanothando than what meets the eye. He's always instructing and informing. It's really a nice thing, also questionable.

"Oh okay, thank you ma," I wonder where my mother in law is. She just disappeared from the face of Earth.

"I'll be here until you give birth," she tells me.

"Oh, thank you ma," I really appreciate her being the person she is.

"Where's Samke?" she's probably with her husband, she said she was going to make tea for us, she still hasn't come back. I'm sure she's tired, she needs to rest too. She's

been taking care of me, I'll forever be grateful to her. And the brothers, of course. "I think she's with her husband ma," I say, she nods and tells me that she is going to check up on her.

After she's left and shut the door, I sigh and hold my tummy, it feels so surreal. I have someone growing inside me. "Hey baby Lwazi," I smile, one tear slides down my face. Experiencing this with him would have been so much better.

I miss him!

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 31

ZWELIHLE MAZIBUKO

Yho! That's what describes his life lately!

He has been turned into a housemaid.

Everything she asks for, he needs to get, otherwise she will wail until he gets it for her. It's tiring really. His name should be changed to aunt-mavis Zweli.

"I'm telling your baby daddy about you," he says. Aiii this is where he draws the line, he's tired, honestly.

“It’s what you should have done when you found out that I was pregnant,” she says and rolls her eyes. Jesus! Her attitude has him wishing to strangle her every night! They don’t get along, but he does everything she asks for without any questions, all she could do is, at least offer him respect.

“Mina ungime la, you are tiring and annoying,” Zweli clicks his tongue. These days he can’t even go and play with other kids because he has to constantly look after this one. He gets up and heads to the door, he puts his phone and dials Mthombowolwazi.

“Nduna,” Mthombo says. Zwelihle takes in a breath, he has to do this!

“Nduna, please relax, and don’t panic,” Zwelihle says.

“Go straight to the point Bafo,” he’s already panicking. It’s the black people rule, maybe whites too.

“I’m with Londeka,” Zweli says.

“Ohh, how is she?” Mthombo asks. Really, he’s not interested.

“She’s fat, unomkhaba,” (she has a big tummy,) Zweli says. Mthombo chuckles.

“Aii we nduna yam, you called me for that?” Zweli inhales deeply. This might be hard for Mthombo.

“She’s pregnant, and it’s your child, uGcina...” the line goes off. He sighs before closing his eyes, well, he tried. Mthombo probably needs time to process all of this, he’ll get back to him when he’s fine.

“I bet he insulted me, eyy uMthombo yinja, he’s a dog he just needs a tail,” she says and clicks her tongue.

“The world doesn’t owe you anything Londeka! uMthombo has every right to be mad at you, heck, even I am just tolerating you because it was Gcina’s last wishes, once the child is born, you will be on your own shame,” he says and clicks his tongue

before heading out. He needs a drink! He's too sober for this shit.

"Yho!" she exclaims and sits down, she's tired! She sinks on the couch, this, what she did was not intentional, she was forced to do it, it was either she did what she did—lying— or she'd lose their child. She had to protect what was growing inside her. She didn't know that Mthombo was capable of helping. She could have told him, but she didn't know better at that time, so she chose to protect her baby, every mother would do that, right? Choosing their children over their boyfriends.

If she was asked to choose between her child and Mthombo, she would choose her child again and again. She's sorry for almost ruining his life, heck she ruined it, but she had no choice.

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It took time for her to sleep. She was awake almost the whole night, Zweli was out, probably grooving or with a girl the whole night. He came back by 3am, that's when she finally slept.

It's 5am now.

She gets up from the bed she was borrowed by Zweli and makes it up. What Zweli said to her totally changed the way she feels and thinks about most things. The world really doesn't revolve around her and she should be grateful that Zweli took care of her. But today, today she is going home, a place she ran away from as a teenager, it wasn't healthy for her, the woman whom she knew to be her mom abused the shit out of her.

She is a second born, when she left, her little sister was 12 years, and she was 15. They probably forgot about her, she sighs.

She takes a quick shower, after drying herself and applying lotion, she puts on the warm tracksuits that Zweli bought for her, they fit her perfectly, he's a good guesser. This fits her well. She looks at her reflection, her tummy is so big, in three months she will be giving birth.

****You are sweet and generous, thank you so much for taking care of me, and making sure that I eat well so I can get back to my normal weight. Thank you for listening to me going on about how life isn't fair to all of us, especially me. What you said to me yesterday made me realize a lot of things. Thank you so much for helping me. I'm**

sorry for being a pain in the ass** She places the piece of paper on the table and takes her small bag before sneaking out. He shouldn't know that she's leaving. If this house was in the suburbs, it would have been hard to run away, Zwelihle lives in the hood, he has no security, so it's easier for her to run away. She stole a few hundred notes, it will get her to Mpumalanga. She closes the gate and leaves, this is her goodbye to Jozi!

She's finally in a taxi, and waiting for it to be full so that it can take off, this one will take her to Klip town and from there she'll catch one that will take her to

Johannesburg, and only then will she catch a one that will take her straight to Malelane. She's not ready for all the explanations she will have to do.

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It took her 5 hours finally get to KaHhoyi. There's no one home, she sighs before putting her bags on the stoep and goes to their next door neighbor.

"Kakhulu ekhaya," she says to let her presence known.

"Yeboke make, kunjani," (how are you, ma) the child that attends her is cute, whose

child could it be. Maybe it is Dignity's.

"Ngiyaphila sesi, I'm good, do you know sesi Tsandzekile?" she asks.

"Make utse ngikutjele kutsi uyeta," (mom said that I should tell you that she's coming) the child ignores her question and tells her to come in. They both go in, she's told to sit in a couch in the TV room, she takes the instructions from the child.

"What am I seeing? Temaswati?!" Make Nkuna says, exclaiming.

"Yebo make, ngimi, ninjani?" (yes, ma, it's me how are you?)

"Siyaphila sesi, singeva wena?" (we are good my child, how are you?)

“I’m good ma, I’m here to ask if you’ve seen my mom and sister?” Make Nkuna scans her, her eyes stay on her big tummy for a while.

“Your mother is in a home, your sister is in Johannesburg, she’s now a journalist,” Make Nkuna says. Her heart sinks, everything happened just the way her mother said it would. “Where were you?” She’s glad they are not going to dwell on the topic of Tsandzekile’s success. She’s happy for her sister, but right now, she doesn’t know how to respond to the statement.

“I was in Johannesburg, trying to figure life out, eyy kumatima make,” (it’s hard ma,) she says, her tears almost burning her eyes.

“I see, are you okay though?”

“I am ma,” she lies. She’s not okay, there are a lot of things that she still needs to figure out. Most people know her as Londeka, she’s not Londeka. She’s Temaswati Nkhalanga. Londeka was a name she gave herself when she ran away from home, her mother chased her away, telling her to follow her elder sister, she tried finding her, but she didn’t. The only option she was left

with was being a prostitute and changing her name.

Becoming a prostitute at an age below 18 was hard, and dangerous because anything could happen. But she had no place to go. She had found out that her mother was not her real mother and that she didn't love her so she had to push. She pushed hard until she had enough money to finish her grade 12 and study administrations, that's how she became a Person Assistant to Mthombo.

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#unedited

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 32

MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

After he spoke to Zwelethu, his head has been all over the place. He knows all the possibilities of the child being his, he hopes it's not the case though. It will bring a lot of problems. Londeka is someone he loved, she broke his trust, and he wanted nothing to link him to her, but now this? Yeah, he is probably Satan's favorite child, because it's clear that he is not God's.

He sighs before taking his phone and dialing Tsandzekile's number. It rings twice before she answers.

"Mthombo," she's like this, and he's made peace with the fact that she will address him using his surname when her left butt agrees, otherwise he'll always be Mthombo to her.

"Sthandwa Sami, how are you?" He says and turns to lie on his back.

"I'm okay, how are you?"

"I'm okay too," he says and sighs.

"Did you talk to your father?" she asks, she's been on his neck, telling him to apologize to his father.

“No, he’s not around,” he says.

“Phones are made for a reason, he might die with the memory of you telling him that you hate him,” he sighs. He really didn’t mean any of that, he was just angry.

“I’ll call him,” he says and sighs again.

“Are you okay?” She asks, it’s time for him to tell her the truth.

“Zwelihle called, he told me that Londeka is pregnant,” he says. She goes quiet. Well, this will probably fuck his and her relationship up. “Thandekile,” he calls her.

“I’m shook, you are going to be a father,” she says, hurt is traceable in her voice.

“We are not sure if the child is mine,” he says.

“What if it is?” She asks.

“What will happen? Will you leave me?” he asks, even though he knows very well that he would never let her leave him. It’s just impossible. He cannot he see himself without her.

“Can we talk about this face to face?” she says.

“Kulungile, it’s alright, I’ll be there when the week ends,” he says, he also needs to go and inspect his farms. “Ngiyak’thanda uyezwa?” (I love you)

“Okay, I’ll see you then,” she says and hangs up. Yeah no, this thing will fuck their relationship up, no lies!

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

Finding a job these days is hard, that’s an understatement, it’s very hard. But I’ve earned myself an interview at The Soweto Tribune, they said I should come next week Monday. I was planning on sharing the news with Mthombo, but I got saddened by the news of him impregnating Londeka, so I ended up not telling him. He said he will

be coming down to Johannesburg though, so I will tell him then.

Now, I know that she was there before me, and I probably have no right to be angry, but it doesn't lessen the hurt it brings. It saddens me so much that I will not be the mother of his first kid, sigh. I'm honestly hoping and praying that the child is not his. We have just started dating, we have nothing but love, to even think that we have never even been intimate yet, and already we have problem that are sizes of mountains.

My phone rings, it's a number I don't know, I answer the phone, put it on loud speaker

and remain silent. You see, I was taught at a very young age that witches are even able to practice their craft through technology, it's dangerous for you to place the phone on your ear, just like speaking before they do is.

"Hey, may I please speak to Tsandzekile?"
It's a voice of a female. I don't know her though.

"Hello, she is out but I can pass the message to her," I say.

"This is Temaswati," I freeze! How did she know that I was looking for her? God, I'm so glad she called.

“Sesi, it’s me Tsandzekile, how are you?”

the only thing I know about her is her name, I don’t really remember her.

“I’m surviving ntfombi, I missed you,” she says, I missed her too, I also have a lot of questions for her, she left, without any explanation, we just woke up one day and she was gone.

“I missed you too, where are you?” I ask, that has been my question all these years, I wondered if they were okay wherever they were.

“I’m home sesi, ngivile kutsi make useHome, ngim'landze?” (I heard that mom is at a home, should I fetch her?) She asks.

Honestly, I don't think it's okay for the both of them to be together, I don't trust her with mom, she might wake up and decide that she doesn't want to be there anymore.

"Yeah, fetch her, it's okay," it's not okay, but she is her daughter too, I'm not the only one that has a say over this.

"When will you come home? I miss you man," she says, I tell her that I'll be home after I get a job. "Alright, I love you, bye," I love her too, but I'm angry at her.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

They are all sitting in the dining room, eating supper. Everyone is present, except MaDladla, the main woman of the house.

They are sitting in awkward silence.

“Baba, can I have a word with you?”

Mthombo says, his father looks at him and nods. “Cha, khona lana baba,” (right here) he says when his father tries to get up. “I’m really sorry for what I did, no child should speak to their parent like I did, nginga hlawula nokuhlawula, nganginga qondile ukuthifa,” (I would even pay a fine, I didn’t mean to spit,) he says and looks down at his empty plate.

“It’s okay, mfanawam,” Nxumalo says, and shrugs. Everyone makes mistakes. “I will think about how I should fine you,” he says and chuckles.

“He should buy me the latest iPhone dad,” Slindokuhle jumps in.

“Ungawa,” (you’d fall) Mthombo says and gulps his juice. They all laugh when Slindokuhle sulks. She likes acting like a baby, forgetting that she has a degree. “You need to find a job sisi, please, even you wena Zanothando,” Zanothando chokes in his saliva. He coughs.

“How am I catching fire? Hhaybo.” Zanothando says. Khayelihle laughs

shaking his head. He loves his family.

Mam' Lahliwe has been quiet, giving smiles here and there, and are the daughter in laws.

"Is'febe emzin' wam? What is this whore doing in my home?" They all turn their heads to the direction of the voice!

"Ma! You are back?" Mthombo says, totally ignoring the fact that she just threw insults at one of them.

"Bhuti, I didn't know you were a man with no self-respect," that voice! Khayelihle freezes, before slowly inhaling and exhaling.

“Hhayi-ke, zifunani lezalukwazi la, what are these old women doing here?” Mthombo asks, his eyes on MaNxumalo.

“They are here to chase your whoring mother away,” MaDladla says.

“Ma, what do you mean my mother is a whore?” Mthombo swallows the last word.

“Just that! She’s been sleeping with your father,” MaDladla says and hysterically cries.

“What?!” everyone– except Zanothando and Slindokuhle– exclaims.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 33

“You have guts to come here and pretend that this is your home and you are the wife here, I’m still alive for goodness sake Lahliwe!” Thando dramatically throws her hands in the air.

“I was called by Zanothando, you failed to come when the child called you,” Lahliwe says as calm as possible, she’s trying to be decent, this woman is testing her patience! Slindokuhle sneaks out, she’s tired of this drama already! MaNxumalo has already taken a seat, she’s watching the free drama

here and also Khayelihle from the side of her eye. He looks so grown and handsome, maybe what's inside his pants has grown as much.

"Eyy please don't talk things you know nothing about, leave my house! Now!"

Thando yells, annoyed!

"With pleasure, Thando!" Lahliwe gets up furiously, but is made to sit down by Zano.

"She's not going anywhere," Zanothando grits. This all frustrates him, their mother likes to play victim. Yes, she has been done wrong, but her wrongs weighs his father's wrongs!

“What are you saying wena? Are you disrespecting me? Your mother?” Thando is in disbelief.

“You have a child like me wena? You must be wishing!” Zanothando responds, shaking his head. He’s had enough of this woman! The only time she is his mother is when she feels like he is disrespecting her? “Ma, you are not going anywhere,” Zanothando says before getting up and heading to the door. MaDladla scoffs! This is the worst possible way of being disrespected! She gave birth to this child who is fooled by his beard! He thinks he is old enough to speak to her anyhow? But

she will attend him, she still has her whoring husband and sister to attend to. She walks up to her sister, angrily. She stands over her.

“Why are you sleeping with my husband?” a minute doesn’t pass before a slap lands on Lahliwe’s cheek. It’s too late when everyone gets up, Lahliwe has already stood up and pinned her sister on the wall. She’s old for this, but maybe Thando needs to be shown that she can stand up for herself.

“Bayeke! Leave them to fight,” Khayelihle stops Mthombo from getting between his mothers. Mthombo is so confused. Of course, Nxumalo and his mother had sex,

because if they didn't, he wouldn't be here. But why are they still sleeping together? Khayelihle wants them to sort this out, the only way they will sort it out is if someone shows the other one her strength.

"I'm not 18 anymore, you kicked me out with a child you promised to take care of, Mthombo was never mine to take care of," even though Mthombo has always known how his aunt was cruel to them, this still makes his heart ache, and makes him cringe. He has forgiven her, but why his heart getting stung by this?

"I'm your elder sister!" MaDladla says, trying to fight her younger sister off her, but

Lahliwe is just too strong.

“Ngizok’ khahlela wena! I’ll kick your ass!”

Lahliwe says, so low that the others, but Thando, hears.

“Emzini ka baba? In my father’s home?” it’s the first word Nxumalo says, Lahliwe quickly lets go of her sister and sighs, she stooped down to her level, again. She adjust her already-long skirt. She’s embarrassed!

“Umuzi wam, this is my home!” MaDladla says. Nxumalo chuckles bitterly. This is a home she helped become beautiful, yes, they had money, but they didn’t have style, and then she came! She helped turn this to

a home, while his parents were lying in the graves, dead! So he must not even!

“I want you to take everything that is yours and leave my home MaDladla, our divorce papers will get to you very soon,” Nxumalo says, calmly. Mthombo quickly looks over to him, what the hell? Isn't he too old for a divorce? “You are honestly not the woman I had thought you would be, you are a narcissist! I made peace with the fact that you didn't love me, but my kids? The line should be drawn there.” Nxumalo says and shakes his head before getting up and heading to his room. His heart is aching, but he decides to be calm.

“You, Lahliwe, are sleeping with your sister’s husband? You have no shame,” MaNxumalo says, Khaya clears his throat before getting up and showing his wife and Kea to the next room. He comes back, his eyes are bloodshot red.

“Ma, what the hell did you do to uMa and Mthombo?” this is not the first time he is getting this narration of the story, his father did explain to him, but his mother had always told them that their aunt ran away with Mthombo, and it was that until this day.

“What did I do?” she repeats the question and shrugs, Khayelihle is in a bad mood.

There's his aunt here, uMaNxumalo, she irritates the shit out of him.

"Okay, Mam'ncane, ukwenzeni umama? What did mom do to you?" he asks his aunt.

"It's nothing, really, don't worry," Lahliwe says, throwing a dirty look at Thando.

"Okay, I'll ask the others, I'll be back," he says and walks past MaNxumalo, he doesn't look her way, she's not a great sight to the eye.

"Gazi lam, kanti Kwenzekani emzini kababa," (What's happening in our father's home?) Khayelihle asks sitting down next to Zanothando. It took a few minutes to

find him after he didn't find him in his rondavel, so he thought that he should come to the river. He does know him after all.

"Your mother begged uMa to sleep with dad, actually she begged dad, uMa didn't have any choice but to agree because 'she took care of her' after Mthombo was born, she found out that she was pregnant with you, she chased them away, that's it,"

Zanothando summarizes it and throws a little stone into the water.

"Why are you here?" Khayelihle asks.

"To calm myself," Zanothando says.

“Okay,” Khayelihle says. The only way to calm himself is, being buried deep inside his wife, well, that’s if he’s not communicating with himself. They say he is crazy, he’s not.

“Do you feel closer to him when you are here?” Khayelihle.

“Who?” Zanothando knows who his brother is referring to, but he wants him to be clear.

“uGcina, I miss him,” he says and releases a deep breath.

“Yeah, I do,” he says.

“How?”

“I pretend to be with him, it helps a lot,” Zanothando says.

“Oh, okay,” Khayelihle says and nods. “I’m heading home, you are weird,” he adds with a little chuckle.

“I’m not, do you want to go to church with me this Sunday?”

“Uh, yeah, sure, I’ll tag along,” to be honest, he doesn’t want to go to church, but he wants to know more about his brother, so he will tag along.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 34

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA

I can finally breathe! The drama that was happening back home was a bit too much for me, honestly. I had never thought that I would– with my own eyes– see elders fighting. Yeah no, I will never forget that day, I swear. One would think that it was funny, but it wasn't, at all.

Ma told Baba that she would never sign those papers and she also promised that she would make him pay for being a nightmare to her. To be honest, every one of them was wrong, ubaba cheated, and

nothing can make it right, there are no excuses for being a cheater.

Mam'Lahliwe betrayed her sister, and nothing can make it right too. I think I would have died if Gcinulwazi would have slept with any of my non-existing cousins. And then Ma, yhoo that one, she's just... conniving! She's always the victim until you hear the whole story.

After threatening Baba, Ma left, she left her crew back home, the Nxumalo ladies.

Those ones were thrown out by bhut' Mthombo in the morning.

I'm back in Hyde Park, I had to convince my new-found driver– Khayelihle– that I'd be

okay here alone, he wanted me to live with his wife back home. It's crazy how Gcinulwazi's death brought us all closer, I'm civil with both of them.

You know, even though I feel like I'm able to breathe, I'm still sad. This place reminds me of Gcinulwazi. His scent is the dominant scent in this room. I miss him. I'm wondering if he is alright wherever he is. I'm not ready to let him go, but I have to. I need to let him go.

I've just taken a bath. I'm now naked and staring at my reflection in the mirror, my little bump is growing. It's really funny how

I'm starting to see all the pregnancy signs just after I was told that I was pregnant.

"Makoti," Bhut' Khayelihle is back here, again? How the hell did he get inside? Everything about him is just questionable.

"Bhuti, I'm coming!" I quickly put on my gown. I put on my slippers and head to the sitting room, as naked as I am underneath the gown I'm wearing.

"You can get dressed, I'll wait," he says quickly looking away. He finds this inappropriate. I almost laugh. I walk back to my room and put on my clothes and then head back to the kitchen. He looks restless.

“Are you okay?” he asks. I nod my head.

“I’m okay, how are you?” he sighs.

“I’m okay too, I need your help sisi,” he says, his lip trembles. Okay, I’m sure that he’s not okay. I want to reach out to him, but I need to set boundaries. I have to wait for him to say something.

“What’s wrong?” he blinks twice, like he is realizing something. And then he stares at me, without blinking or anything.

“Khayelihle?!” He looks startled.

“I’m sorry, please forget that I was here, I’ll leave.” Great, just great! Now I’m left wondering what the hell is wrong with him. He hurries out. Okay, now I’m stressed.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

“I missed you,” I haven’t seen him, well, until today. He just came back.

“I missed you too,” I say, giving him a half-smile. I’m still making peace with the fact that he has a Baby on the way.

“Please come closer,” he says. Aren’t we close enough? I mean I’m with him, in his bedroom, lying on his chest. I don’t know how close he wants me to be. Either way, I snuggle myself closer to him. “Thank you,”

he says and kisses my forehead. "I love you," I take in a breath.

"I love you, too," I say. He kisses my shoulder and puts his arm under me.

"You've been giving me a cold shoulder ever since I got here, yin'ndaba?" he asks me. I didn't even realize that I was.

"There's nothing," I say.

"That's not true and you know it," he says and sighs.

"How did you find out about Londeka being pregnant?" I ask.

"Zwelethu called," he says, I nod my head.

"The child might be, or not," he says.

“What if the child is yours?” the thought only makes my kidneys sigh in exhaustion. Stepmothers are always painted to be evil human beings. I know that I wouldn’t abuse a child, but I’m scared of what people might say. Whether you do bad or good as a stepmother, you are always painted as a bad one.

“Then it’s mine and I have to take care of it,” he says. It brings my heart to my feet, but I smile.

“You’d make a great dad,” I say. He would.

“I love you,” he tells me, yet again. He makes sure that he tells me every day that he loves me.

"I love you more, baby," he laughs.

"I'm not a Baby, we-MaNkhalanga," I giggle.

He's just adorable. "Ngiyadlala, I'm joking, I'm anything you want me to be," and he's cute.

"What time is it?" I ask. Tomorrow is the day of my interview, I want to have an early sleep.

"It's just after 9, yin'ndaba uthukile?" he asks me if I'm nervous, of course, I am.

"Just a bit," I say. He smiles, sheepishly. I wonder what's about to come out of that mouth of his.

"I can make you feel better," he says, running his fingers on my arm. "Do you

want to feel better?" he asks. I nod my head. He flips us and gets on top of me. He kisses my lips, it feels like he's been dying to kiss me. The kiss leaves me breathless. He gets the both of us naked, "You look so beautiful," I blush and shyly look away. It feels like this is the first time I'm naked in the presence of a guy. "Ngiyak'thanda, I love you, okay?" he says, rolling the rubber on his cock.

"And I love you even more," I say. He smiles at me before kissing me again. His fingers are rubbing my clit, making sure that I'm wet enough for him. He purses his lips into a thin line when stretching my walls. I

slightly part my lips. He closes his eyes and starts moving.

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NARRATED

Temaswati takes a seat opposite her mother, after placing the plate of food next to her. Her mother just stares at her. They have been living like this since she fetched her from the home. Make Nkhalanga only eats when she's too hungry, but she never says a word to Tema.

“So ma, forever hate me?” She doesn't know what it is that she's done to this

woman, she hated her for as long as she could remember

“What do you want, Temaswati,” Make Nkhalanga asks.

“This is my home,” Tema says. This is her father’s home, so she has a right to call it her home.

“I want you to leave,” Tema sighs and gets up, she’s tired of this. “I’ve always known that you’d be nothing but a baby-making machine,” she says. Temas's tears are quick to flow. This woman came into their lives and lived with them until their father died. After their father's death, they got to know that she was not their mother. Soon

after that, they also found out that Tsandzekile is not a Nkhalanga by blood. Her elder sister, Promise, ran away from home, till today, she hasn't seen her. She followed, but she felt like running forever is not gonna help. So, she came back, and now, after so many years, she finds out that Make Nkhalanga hasn't changed.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME
CHAPTER 35

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

Going to his brother's wife alone was not a good thing, but he needed help at the time, he wanted to ask her if she knows of any psychologist, someone he can trust, everything was getting too much for him until he remembered that he is a man. So he decided not to ask, he left and drove back home.

"Baby, I'm back," he knocks. She tells him to come in. After all the drama that happened, they went back to their home. He removes his hat and gets inside.

"You came back so fast," she says. He chuckles lowly.

“You didn’t miss me?” He asks.

“Of course, I did, my husband,” she says and hugs him. He closes his eyes and rests his chin on her head. He loves her, now he is sure that he loves her. Also, he doesn’t feel like he is betraying his late girlfriend and son.

“I love you,” she says. He smiles and squeezes her.

“Uthandwa yimina mama,” he tells her that he loves her too.

“I didn’t cook, I thought that you would come back tomorrow,” she informs him.

“It’s okay, I grabbed something on the way,” he lies. He’s so hungry, but he doesn’t want

to make her feel bad. "I want to lie down," he says, she nods and leads him in the bedroom.

He climbs onto the bed without taking off his clothes nor does he take his shoes off. He lies on his bed and looks up at the ceiling. Tears burn his eyes. Mthombo is the only one that knows about what happened, and he has his own issues, he doesn't want to stress him out.

"What's wrong?" she snuggles herself closer to him. He pulls her even closer and kisses her forehead.

"Nothing for you to worry about Sthandwa sami, I'm just thinking about how I'll get out

trucks back on the road,” he has a logistic company that he named after him and his late son, K&I Trucking. His son's name was Isibusiso. He misses him too, he came at the right time, he came when he was at his lowest. He and his late girlfriend were fighting, and they almost broke up, when they found out that she was pregnant. Apparently, she was cheating. When he found out he went crazy, and asked why she did that. She just looked at him and said, “Akumnandi ukuzwana nendoda ezikhulumisa yona, it’s not nice dating a man who speaks to himself,” it broke him, he honestly told her that because he

trusted her, but she would use it against him every time. It crushed his ego and emasculated him, so he asked for a breakup, he couldn't move on, and three months later, she came back and told him that she was pregnant. He had his doubts but he gave her the benefit of the doubt. They paid the damages before she gave birth. When the child was born, the Nxumalos did not doubt that the child was theirs, he came out looking exactly like them. They decided to go back to each other, and not just co-parent, he was really at his happiest then, he had the woman

that he loved and an heir, what more could a man ask for? He happened to kill them.

“Khayelihle,” she taps on his chest to get his attention.

“Ungixolele Mama, forgive me I'm just thinking,” his voice breaks, and a tear slides down his cheek. “I don't want to lose you,” he says, he truly doesn't. This woman persevered his shit and stayed with him for 3 years.

“Don't cry,” she says, wiping his tears and kissing his cheek. “You won't lose me,” she says, God knows how much she loves him.

“Lala ke, sleep.” He closes his eyes.

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"Baba," Zanothando knocks, he quickly shoves the photo book that he had in his hands under the pillow and shouts for Zano to come in.

"Hawu, you are here too my baby," he smiles at his daughter.

"I'm here, baba," she says, she came back today, she had gone to her aunt's place, well, more like she had accompanied her.

"Are you okay?" Zanothando asks, leaning on the door.

"Yeah, I'm okay," honestly, he's not okay. He still feels the need to apologize to his wife

for not being the husband she had hoped he would be, but he doesn't want her back.

"Baba, can you plait my hair?" Slindokuhle asks.

"Are you not 24?" Zanokuhle asks and raises his brow.

"I am, manje?" she also raises her brow.

"Let his jealous self be my baby. I'll plait you. " This is how they used to bond. He did everything that a mother would do to a girl child.

"Weeee, I feel sorry for the mean you'll marry," Zanokuhle says and chuckles.

"She won't get married this one," Nxumalo says.

“So that she can be a pain in our wives' asses, hhay ngeke.” Nxumalo laughs. It's been long since he had a genuine laugh. He feels a lot lighter, and he's decided that he'll be a better grandfather to Gcinulwazi's son.

It's late, Slindokuhle cooked and served them, Zanothando couldn't stop complaining about the 'stony meat' yes, the food was burnt but it's the thought that counts, right? Nxumalo is just glad to see that his daughter is growing, whether she cooks crispy rocks or not, it doesn't matter to him.

“If you don't want to cook, just say it out loud,” Zanothando says. He's just annoyed

he was forced to eat that food.

“No one forced you to eat my dear brother,” she says.

“Mtshеле wena, tell him, my baby,”

Zanothando scoffs and gets up, this is abuse. He leaves, heading to his Rondavel. He closes the door and sighs. He needs to take his brother’s offer, going to Joburg might be a good idea. It does get lonely, and his hand is starting to get tired, self-service is not so good!

“Baba, do you want us to clean his grave tomorrow?” Slindokuhle.

“Do you miss him?” he knows that they are talking about Gcina. Slindokuhle nods with

her eyes teary.

“Come here,” he opens his arms for her.

She. Quickly sits on her father’s lap and hugs him. He kisses her forehead and brushes her back. “You’ve been strong for too long, cry,” he orders her child. She sobs loud, every sob breaks his heart.

“He used to tell us that he loved you,” she says in between her sobs. “You distanced yourself from him and he hated that,” she says.

“I loved him,” he says.

“We know, he knew too, but you never got too close to him, and it made him sad.” He signs and nods, his boy died a sad boy.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 36

BAB' NXUMALO

They cleaned his grave without saying any words, it was the three of them. His daughter and Zano. It felt like he said goodbye to him, or maybe Gcina freed his heart like how Zano said he would.

He believes that they all feel relieved now.

He just took a bath, he smells fresh and

looks dashing if he can say so himself. He feels so good today, if he were a woman, he'd probably look at his reflection in the mirror. Any man would look good when their daughter takes them out for lunch. He climbed down the stairs, heading to his car, he's stopped by Zanothando.

"Madala san!" Zanothando whistles.

"Don't call me an old man, boy," he says.

He's 59 but that doesn't make him an old man, he's still fresh.

"Are you meeting up with Mam'ncane?"

Zanothando asks laughing.

"She said I should fix my life," he wants to focus on himself too.

“Uyaphi-ke baba, where are you going?” he asks, raising a brow.

“My daughter is taking me out for lunch, do not wait up, boy,” he says.

“Now I also wish I had a daughter,” he says and chuckles, he bids his father farewell and walks back inside his rondavel.

He takes his phone from his pocket and sends a text reminding Khayelihle that they should go to church since he couldn't make it last week. He then proceeds to call Mthombo, his strict brother.

“Gazi,” Mthombo says, he sounds drained.

“Bafo, are you good?”

“I'm okay, how is it going there?”

“Ngigrend, bamoja nalana,”(I'm good, everyone is good) he says. “Can I still come to Joburg and manage the production department?” he asks.

“Ya, you can still come,” okay at least, he has something to do. He doesn't even have a degree, but it's the perks of having brothers that work hard for you not to do anything.

“I will be there by Monday,” he says.

“Okay, I'll be waiting,” he says.

“Are you sure you are okay? He asks.

“Londeka, she says she's pregnant, and now I called Zwelethu, he says she ran away,” Mthombo sighs.

“What?!” this is a first.

“I don’t know if I should believe it or not, they the child is mine,” he says.

“Why do you say that? Did she cheat on you?” he asks.

“I don’t know Gazi, I can’t be sure,” he says and sighs.

“Do you think you’d be able to link me to her? I want to talk to her,” he says.

“I don’t know man,” Mthombo is just not interested.

“I’ll find her on my own and I’ll update you”, Gcinulwazi says. Gain a doesn’t want a 'Mzikayifani and Gcinulwazi' situation repeating itself.

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He can't believe that his daughter made him drive 1 hour 44 minutes for this nonsense. She said that she was taking him to a fancy restaurant- which she did- but that's the only promise she kept. He thought it would only be the two of them. He drove from eNquthu to Durban to be met with a yellow man.

"Who Is this wena Slindokuhle?" he asks his daughter, seemingly, too calm.

"This is my boyfriend baba," she says.

“You said you were Lesbian to me, nje,” this is a total lie, but this man shouldn't know, right?

“No, I didn't,” she says, he raises his brow.

“Yeah, wena mfana, what's your surname?”

she told him what his name is but a man's name doesn't matter, what matters is their surname.

“Mokoena, ntate,” he says. What foreign language is that?

“Mokoena, where are you from?” he asks.

“I'm from Lesotho, but I grew up in South Africa,” he can tell by his accent. He speaks like a Zulu man.

“Do you know your language?” he asks.

“Yes, ntate, I know it,” he nods.

“Is Ntate an English word?” they laugh, oh maybe he cracked a joke. He waits for them to finish laughing. Mokoena clears his throat.

“No, it means baba,” he says. He nods.

“It was really nice meeting you, even though I wouldn’t have agreed to if I was given a heads up, when should I expect my cows?”

“Hayi baba, asijahile, we are not in a hurry,” he says.

“What is your name again?” He knows his name is Thato, Slindokuhle told him when

they got here, he's just doing this to prove to him that it would be easy to forget him.

"It's Thato ntate," he says and takes the glass of water next to him.

"Okay, Thato, please buy food for us, I'm so hungry," Thato clears his throat and nods his head.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I went to the interview and nailed it. I got an email and a call this morning telling me that I should report to work on Monday. I'm so happy, I won't lie. Happy is an

understatement, I'm over the moon. I think I'll go home on Friday.

"Ngaze ngalamba, I'm so hungry," he's a clingy boyfriend this one. I don't remember the last time he spoke about going to work, does he ever go to work?

"I'll cook baby," I say. He laughs, he hasn't made peace with the fact that I will call him baby. It's just a pet name that he needs to get used to.

"Ngilambele is'bumbu," he says and brushes my thighs. He'll finish me this one, he loves sex.

"I'm tired," sex with him is great, but my vagina needs some rest. He bites my ear.

“Mthombo, no,” I say softly. It feels good. He quickly stops what he was doing. God, why? When I say no, I don’t really mean it unless I’m firm.

“I’m sorry,” it’s shaky and quick to leave his lips. “I didn’t hurt you did I?” fear is taking over his whole face, okay what’s wrong with him?

“Mthombo, kwentenjani, what’s wrong? Are you okay?” He looks away and tells me that he’s fine. “Mthombo!” I say.

“I’ll take a quick shower,” he says and walks off. I’m not yet done talking to him.

“Mthombo!” he doesn’t look back, but he continues to walk to the bathroom. Sigh.

I know this house by heart now, it really feels like home. My flat is cold, it doesn't feel homely like this house does, it's probably because I don't spend most of my time there. I'm in the kitchen, doing something, I don't know what, but it's something.

I'm worried about Mthombo, what he did today proved to me that he has not fully healed from those false charges that we laid against him. It will probably take time for him to trust women.

"Ouch!" I've cut myself! I've been chopping onions? For what though because it's not like I'll cook.

“Hey,” he quickly rushes in and takes my hand in his, “you’ll hurt yourself,” he says checking my finger out.

“I’d never accuse you of rape,” our relationship might not be at a good space right now, but he should know that I would never do something like that. I would never lie. He nods his head and says nothing.

This Londeka girl will be a problem!

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 37

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

“You even have a full uniform! Hhaybo,” he chuckles lowly, some things are just a surprise to him. He doesn’t know if he should be amused because he never thought that Gcinulwazi could be a member at a Zion Church member, or he should be ashamed that he doesn't know anything about him. It’s crazy man, how fast this boy grew. In a blink of an eye, he’s so matured and tall. Oh, he’s a churchgoer and smoker, it doesn’t make any sense, but

again, Zanothando himself doesn't make sense.

"Ziyabuya bafo, especially for a person like me," Zanothando says and chuckles, his brother is do curious, it's funny to him.

"A person like you? What kind of a person are you gazi?" It's really puzzling, he's not asking because he's trying to be funny. He's asking because Zanothando puzzles him, it's like everyday he learns something new about him. He doesn't want any ta-da moments now.

"I am an empath." it's a statement with a full stop, Khayelihle can tell that he doesn't want to explain further.

“What’s an empath? Is it something close to healers?” He presses anyways. There can’t be any surprises anymore.

“We will need time if we were to discuss this, but I can sense a whole lot of things, I absorb energies. Sometimes I sense things before they happen,” Zanothando says and takes his church stick and heads out. “It’s a good thing you didn’t bring your wife with,” okay he gets weirder every minute. “Let’s go,” he says and leads the way.

He’s now part of ibandla, he’s also a churchgoer. Church is not over but he already has highlights. The highlight of his ‘church day’ is the way they sing, he loved it!

At some point he felt like standing up and say, 'you all deserve a wuuuuu shame! Take your golden tickets and we'll meet at theatre week,' oh and that the pastors here have a great sense of humor. Liyaphindeka lelisonto.

"Mfana wam," a slap lands on his back.

He's about to fight back when he sees that the person with a deep voice that just slapped him. He quickly bows his head and gets rid of his wild thoughts. But, if this was a man— whether it was because of his 'umoya' or not— he would beaten the shit out of him.

“What a beautiful gift he left you, whatever is yours will get to you, all in good time,” if his life was complicated, then it just got 'complicatedest'. What the hell does this woman. “Get rid of your ungodly thoughts, let her be, her day will come,” the lady says and squeezes his shoulder, for the first time in his life he feels a motherly you touch.

His mother got over him as soon as there was Gcinulwazi, which was understandable, they would be obsessed over a new child, that's what all parents do. As a child, he was very unruly. He's a boy, most if them are like that until they get to

their teenage years. His mother never understood that that's why she forcefully took him to MaNxumalo, for her to 'put him in a correct lane,' she succeeded and put him in a right lane by raping him.

His emotions get the better of him. He pushes through the people and gets out of the church, he sprints out, he runs and runs until his breathless. By the time he stops, he realizes that he is in the River. A river that Gcinulwazi loved so much. He closes his eyes when he feels tears burning his eyes.

"Fuuuuccckkk!" he groans, like he is in literal pain. His heart feels too he's y for his

chest. "Why would you think that I hated you? Fuck I always reminded you that I loved you so much!" he whispers. "I miss you Bafo and I still love you, I just hated that mom ruined my life all in the name of loving you, but I never put the blame on you," he scratches his head and sighs.

'End it, it's okay to end it,'

"No, my wife still needs me," he says and brushes his head in frustration.

'No, she doesn't, she will find another man, a man that's worthy of her,'

"Fuck you!" it laughs, it fucking laughs.

'You want to fuck yourself?' the laugh! The laugh! It scares him so much.

“Please stop,” he’s nearing him, he shakes his head no. “No, please, please stop,” he cries.

‘End this for us, Khayelihle, how long should we suffer?’ maybe he’s right, after all.

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ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

MaKhoza– his church's prophetess– told him that he should run behind him, and that he should bring him to her as soon as he’s fine. He did as instructed, he’s been running and running but he doesn’t know where he

might have went to. He's angry at himself, he shouldn't have let any of that happen, heck he shouldn't have came with him.

He just hopes that Khayelihle, wherever he is doesn't do something stupid. He had to take him to church, he doesn't know why, but he felt the urge to take him to church. If he had known what would happen, he wouldn't have because now, if anything happens to Khayelihle, he'll be the one to take the blame.

He doesn't really know what Khayelihle suffers from but he knows it's something really bad, he knows that MaNxumalo is also involved in it. She always has this

crazy look she when she's around Khaya, and it always leaves him cringing.

His feet take him to the river. Whatever it is that Khayelihle is doing will not bring any good to their family. He quietly walks up to him, and stands behind him. He tries not to breathe and chokeholds him to make him unconscious.

"Shhhh," he says. He was trying to harm himself, this is the only way to help him... for now. Khayelihle has closed his eyes, he's finally unconscious. Zanothando lets him lie down, safely and takes out his phone before calling Zweli. They've gotten so close after Gcina's death.

“Bafo, please locate me, and send me a can,” he says, out of breath.

“Ugrend, are you okay?” Zweli asks.

“It depends, please hurry bafo, I have little time, thank you,” he says and hangs up.

“Stay with me,” he says to his brother, he keeps on checking his faint pulse and prays to God that he gets help soon. He would never be able to live with the guilt of killing his brother.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 38

NARRATED

Living with her mother is still as hard as it was since Temaswati fetched her from the Home. She still gets evil eyes from her, it still hurts, although she's now grown.

Sometimes she is given the silent treatment, and sometimes Make

Nkhalanga hurls insults at her. Temaswati always shuts her mouth because she considers her, her mother.

Every morning is a hard day for her to wake up because not only does she have to deal with the guilt of causing the child she's

carrying to be fatherless, but she also has to deal with an old woman that still cannot accept that she has stepchildren. It's puzzling because their parents got into their relationship knowing very well that they have children outside of their marriage.

She sighs before getting up and making her bed before she goes to brush her teeth.

"Temaswati unesivakashi nganeno, you have a guest here," her mother yells.

"I'm coming, make," she yells back. She quickly changes her pajamas and heads to the kitchen.

She freezes in the doorway when she sees Zanothando seated next to her mother with a cup of tea in his hand.

“Temaswati,” he says and gives her a half smile. She does her internal prayer for protection before returning the smile.

“Uh, Zano, hey,” her voice comes out squeaky and shaky.

“Long time hey,” he says.

“It has,” she says and nervously wipes her sweaty hands on her thighs.

“Ma, is it okay if I take her to the mall?” God knows how much she doesn’t want her mother to agree.

"Yeah, it's okay, as long as you come back before 8 pm," she says and gives smiles at him like she's a warm mother.

"Thank you ma, Londeka... I mean Temaswati, let's go," he says, his stare fixed on her.

"Uh, let me change," she says, nervously.

"No, you look gorgeous," he says, his tone changing.

"Okay," she could cry right now. She clears her throat before she tells him that they can go.

He opens the door for her, helps her buckle up, and closes the door of the car, he jogs to his side and gets in, he buckles up and

ignited the engine before slowly driving out.

“Temaswati Nkhalanga, who would have thought,” Zanothando chuckles. “I heard that you have a little Zwide growing in you,” Zanothando adds.

“I’m really sorry about everything I’ve done,” she says, tears blinding her vision.

“Why did you do it?” she lets her tears flow.

“I had to choose between the life of my child and him, I had to choose it,” she points to her stomach. He wishes he had a mother like her, a mother that would choose.

“We could have protected you, you should have told us,” his tone is softer now.

“I'm sorry, I didn't know what to do,” she says and signs before she asks him to adjust the chair, she rests her body.

“How far are you?” he asks.

“I'm 4 months far,” she says. He nods.

“If you ever need anything from us, please contact me,” he informs her.

“Thank you,” she says. At least there's some kind of support, it will lessen her stress, right now she just needs to inform her sister that she will be an aunt soon. “Do you think he'll forgive me?” she asks after

taking the tissues that he's passing over to her.

"He has a girlfriend," he says after being quiet for some time.

"I know, I just hope he could understand why I did what I did," she says.

"He's a good man, it will take time though," Zanothando says.

"I understand," she says.

"How many hours do we have until 8?" he looks at the clock, it's still 10 am, they have time, he'll take her to those people that press one's body. "I'll take you to those people abatofanayo," he says and gives her a small smile.

“Thank you,” she says, at least she’s not getting killed... well, for now.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

“You tried to harm yourself,” he breathes.

He doesn’t know what could have happened if Zanothando didn’t get there in time.

“I know mfethu,” Khayelihle says. He just woke up and found out that he is in the hospital. “When did you get here?”

“It doesn’t matter, what matters is that you could have killed yourself and would be left

to explain why you do what you did!" he's beyond angry. It just doesn't make any sense, "Do you drink your pills Khayelihle?" He looks away. "Khayelihle!" he roars.

"You will draw attention to us," Khayelihle whispers, what if the nurses or the doctors hear them?

"Eyy don't fucking tell me about attention, why the fuck are you not drinking your pills?" he shouts and gets up, this frustrates him so much. Khayelihle doesn't want to be helped.

"I'm not crazy!" Khayelihle grits.

"Who said you are crazy? No one said you were crazy!"

“Why do I have to keep on drinking pills like I'm not normal? You don't drink pills!” He buries his hands deep inside his pockets, he's trying to keep himself calm but it's just hard.

“What do you want us to do Khayelihle?”

“Let me be!”

“We can't afford to lose you,” Mthombo says and sighs. “We love you, if not for yourself, then please drink these pills for us,” Mthombo says. He's willing to say and do anything for his brother to be okay.

“Where is MaDladla?” he wants to ask her how she feels, he wants to know what the

real reason for taking him to MaNxumalo was.

“We haven’t seen her, I don’t know where she is,” Mthombo says and takes his seat again. “Why are you asking?”

“I’m asking, nje. What did you say about me to my wife?” he doesn’t want his wife to know about this, it would make him feel less of a man.

“We told her that you had some business to take care of,” he says.

“Thank you,” Mthombo nods. This man really changes like the weather, not so long ago he was fighting and now, he’s just... neutral!

“Will you drink your pills bafo?” Mthombo really needs to be assured that he will. It would really put him at peace. Khayelihle sighs. “I will do anything for you if you promise to do that for me,” Mthombo says. Khayelihle's eyes light up.

“Really? Anything?” Okay, now Mthombo regrets making promises.

“Yes, I will,” he says, skeptically.

“Okay, get me MaDladla's head,” Khaya says. Woah, what the fuck?

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 39

NARRATED

She enjoyed her day, thanks to Zanothando. To be honest, it was weird, but a nice kind of weird. Zanothando's presence screams respect, that's why it was weird chilling with him. He's so open-minded, he even offered to be pampered together with her. He calls it 'ukutofozwa'. "Enjoy your night, and please let me know if you need anything," Zano says.

“Thank you,” she says and climbs off the car and heads inside the house. He watched her walk inside, he only drives off when he is certain that she is safe.

“Make, I have something for you,” she gives her a foot rub cream. She heard it helps old people relax, so the first person she thought of was her mother.

“Thank you,” she says. She sighs and sits down.

“I'm tired of this life we are living make, whatever it is that I did to you please forgive me,” she begs. She'd really like to enjoy the rest of her last pregnancy months.

Make Nkhalanga sighs and nods, "I'm sorry for mistreating you too," she says "Really?" tears are already blinding her vision.

"It was uncalled for, ngiyacolisa ngane yam," she says. She gets up and hugs her. "Ngiyakutsandza make, I love you, Mom," she says. Even though she caused her pain, it doesn't mean that she is her mother and that she loves her, she would do anything for her too.

"Tfula sesi, ngiyakutsandza nami." (I love you)She starts sobbing, it's been long since she felt this hug.

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“Sisu sakho lesingaka? You have such a big tummy?” Tsandzekile exclaims.

“Ntfombi, you are so grown,” she smiles before getting up and hugging her sister.

“You are grown too, also, you are pregnant,” Tsandzekile says and smiles, her sister is glowing. “I’ll go and greet ma, and I’ll come back so you can tell me all about your life, also I want to know the father of your baby,” Tsandzekile says excitedly.

Temaswati smiles a little before nodding her head.

"I'm back. Tell me everything about you!

You know, I had thought I wouldn't recognize you," Temaswati laughs.

"Ungowakitsi wena, you are my sibling, you will never forget me."

"Yeah, I guess so," Tsandzekile joins her and sits down on the porch. "Why are you sitting here? Won't it affect the baby?" She asks.

"I'll move, I'm waiting for a call," Temaswati says.

"Alright then, while you wait for the call tell me about you sesi," she says.

"Utsandza tindzaba, you like people's news," Temaswati says laughing. "It wasn't

nice living alone, I missed you every day,”
she begins to narrate how her life was.

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MTHOBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

The grin on Khayelihle's face freaks the shit out of him. He understands that they have their own differences, but those differences shouldn't make him want her head.

“Are you serious?” He nods like a child that's asked if they want ice-cream. “If that's what you want, then I'll see what I can do,” he sighs and sits down. He found out about her being abusive towards his

father, she might be a shitty person but he feels as if she wouldn't have been what she was if his father didn't catch feeling for his mother. As shitty as she is, he still loves her.

"You could die ne? Relax, bafo. I wouldn't want you to do that," Khayelihle says and chuckles.

"That's a relief!" he says.

"Yeah, am I being discharged today? I miss my wife," he says.

"Yeah, you are. uBaba said there are oMkhulu at home, they want us there ngo 5pm," Mthombo informs his brother.

“Alright then,” Khayelihle says and gets up. He doesn’t feel any pain. Also he feels like his brothers were dramatic, why would they take him to the hospital because of a mere chokeslam? It’s just drama.

They are driving home, in silence.

Mthombo doesn’t look okay, he looks disturbed. Khayelihle keeps on stealing glances at him. He’s driving absent minded, he might even cause an accident.

“I feel like you meant what you said, about wanting ikhanda la ma,” Mthombo breaks the silence. It worries him that Khaya 'Joked' about a thing like that.

“I was joking bafo,” Khayelihle lies, well it’s half a lie. He does want his mother to be killed, but he doesn’t want it to be done by Mthombo, it would be a disaster.

“If you say so then,” Mthombo says and releases a deep breath he’s really worried.

They just got home, it’s two hours before the clock hit 5pm. Khayelihle tells Mthombo that he wants to spend the two hours with his wife, so instead of going to his father’s house, he takes a short walk to his home.

He knocks twice before pushing the door open. She’s not in the kitchen. He heads to the bedroom, there she is! Looking

beautiful and staring at a framed picture that she is holding.

“Mkami, sawubona,” (my wife, hi) he says, lowly. She startles. When she looks up, he notices that her eyes are teary. He rushes to her. It’s their wedding picture that she had in her hand, they didn’t look happy at all, you could tell that they were forced to be together. “Hey, Sthandwa Sami?” he takes her hands in his and helps her up. “Yin’ndaba aweneme nami, yini? Are you not happy with me?”, he traces the tears with his thumbs and kisses her forehead before he takes her in for a hug. “I love

you,” he says and rest his head on the top of her head.

“I love you too, Zwide ka Langa,” she whispers. He smiles.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

My hands are sweaty, my heart is beating almost out of my chest. I wish I could 'unhear' what I just heard.

“What?! Mthombo, Mthombowolwazi Nxumalo?” I ask, my voice is shaky as fuck. If I were to stand u don't think my knees

would have enough support to let me stand, I'd fall.

"Yeah, yindzaba uyamati? Do you know him?" She says that Mthombowolwazi is her baby daddy, which could mean one if two things. One, it's either she's the 'Londeka' that we've been talking about with Mthombo, or Mthombo cheated on Londeka with my sister. This totally messes everything I have with Mtho, I can't date someone whose dated my sister.

"No, I don't know him," I don't know what I'm doingz really. I'm scared. "I mean, I do know him, everyone knows of Mthombo, I didn't know that he was dating you, what

about Londeka,” I see her looking away.

“You helped him chest?” my chest is getting hotter! I don’t know how I feel.

“I’m Londeka,” she says after some time of being silent. My head feels light, when it hits the floor, everything becomes dark.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 40

NARRATED

“Tsandzekile, kwentakalani kani? What’s happening?” Temaswati asks. Tsandzekile has just woken up, Temaswati sprinkled her with water.

“Tema, you accused a man of rape, do you know the damage you caused him, he can’t even touch me because he thinks that I will do the same thing you did,” Tsandzekile says and gets up, she starts to walk up and down. Didn’t she faint not so long ago? Sigh! Wait what does she...

“What do you mean, he won’t let you touch him?” Temaswati asks, hoping for the opposite of what she is thinking.

“I mean just that, Mthombowolwazi is my boyfriend,” Temaswati swallows, she nods her head.

“Oh okay,” it hurts, but there’s nothing she can do.

“Just okay?” Tsandzekile asks, raising her brow. She really expected drama.

“Yeah, if he treats you well, then it’s okay, I’m happy for you,” Temaswati says and fakes a smile. She truly is happy for her sister, but it doesn’t change the fact that it kind of hurts that the guy she loves is her baby daddy.

“I don’t think I can continue dating him, he’s your baby daddy, what will people say?”

They'll say that..." Temaswati interjects.

"That you what? Who cares what they say?

I'm really okay with you dating him, I don't mind sesi, he deserves being happy, I've put him through a lot," she says.

"Why did you do that though?" Tsandzekile asks. "Why did you falsely accuse him of something he didn't do, what if he really got arrested? Do you know that Gcinulwazi died because of what you did?" Temaswati takes in a breath.

"I didn't have any choice, if it was between him and I, I would have chosen him, but it was my child, I had to choose it instead. I'm really sorry, I will tell him too, even though I

know it won't bring Gcina back," she says, tears flood her face. She really is sorry. She hopes they could forgive her. Tsandzekile sighs and nods. She understands her, but it doesn't make her right. She was wrong, she almost ruined a man's life.

Tsandzekile gets to her bedroom and dials Mthombo's numbers, she lies on her back. The phone rings once before he answers. "MaNkhalanga," he says. He sounds down. "Baby, are you okay?" she asks. "I'm okay, now that I've heard your voice, iphimbo lakho liyangelapha, your voice heals me." She blushes. "I miss you," she says smiling.

"I miss you even more, I wish you were here with me," he says. "Anyways, how are you? How did your sister welcome you?"

Mthombo asks.

"She was okay, hey," she releases a deep breath.

"Yin'ndaba, is there a problem?" Mthombo asks.

"Baby, I got here and found my sister pregnant..."

"Hawu, that's a great thing moc, are you jealous? Don't worry, ngizok' mithisa, I'll make you pregnant," Mthombo says and chuckles. Tsandzekile laughs too, Mthombo is such a dummy.

“No, I’m not jealous. Temaswati is Londeka,” she says and sighs yet again. This hurts her, every time things seem to be going well, something bad happens, she’s starting to think that she has bad lucks.

“Oh,” he says, flatly.

“Where to from here?” tears stream down her face as she asks.

“I love you,” he says.

“I love you, but is it enough?” She asks.

“Our love matters, right? We are not even sure that the child is mine,” Mthombo says.

“The child is yours Mthombo,” she says and sighs. “And our love matters, we will talk about this when I’m back,” she says.

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

She is in his arms, snoring softly. He keeps on kissing her forehead. He's worried about finding her crying while looking at their picture.

"Hawu, myeni wam, why didn't you wake me up? I need to cook!" She says with a husky voice before she flickers her eyes open.

"We can order in," Khaya says and kisses her lips.

“Mmm,” she breaks the kiss, “You know I need to help Kea, your elders are at home,” she says.

“We have an hour, we can make it count,” he says and kisses her neck. She moans, and stops him.

“You can’t go to your elders smelling sex,” she says and giggles. He takes her hand and puts it in his boxers.

“Please help me,” he says.

“No,” she laughs and gets up.

“I’ll get you wena!” he says and rushes to the bathroom, he quickly takes a cold shower.

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It's his uncles here, his father is also present. None of his brothers are here. All of that doesn't make him raise his brow, what makes him raise his brow is, the woman that's here while his brothers are not. Keamogetswe. He doesn't ask anything though.

"San'bona," he greets before taking a seat. They greet back and tell him if how much he has grown.

"Mshana, I called this meeting here, there's something really important we need to ask from you," Bhekifa, his uncle, says.

“Ngiyakuzwa Babomdala, I hear you baba, but can you please get to the point, I have a zoom meeting at 8,” he says, politely.

“Right!” Bhekifa takes in a breath, “As we all know, umakoti is pregnant, and she’s carrying a Nxumalo,” okay, that’s something obvious. Why would they call a meeting for that? “I also believe that, we know that umakoti is very young, boredom is something that will struck her.

Usengashelwa, aqome,” (she could be courted, and she could accept love from them) why is this man telling him this? If Kea wants to date, she can do it, but they won’t let another man raise their child. He

looks over to Kea? She has her head cast down.

“I know that Babomdala,” he looks over to his father, his father looks away.

“Ilapho ke ungena khona mfana wam,” he says.

“Hawu? It has nothing to do with me baba, if she wants to move on, she can do so, but she should know that we would never let her leave with our child,” Khaya says. Kea shoots her eyes up, is he mad? Not that she’s planning on moving on, but if it happens, she will take her child with, they will even go to court if they want to.

"I mean, you should take over your brother's duties, take care of his home," Khaya cracks up. Kea's hands become sweaty, what the hell?

"Okay, you got me, is this a prank or something? Where are the cameras?" he asks, he then looks over to his father.

"Baba!"

"You have to do it, son," Nxumalo says.

"Hhay-bo baba, I already have a wife, uZano ukhona," he says.

"Zano can't do anything, Gcinulwazi was older than him. You are all considered his fathers too, Mthombo could do it, but he doesn't have a wife," they explain.

“This bullshit! Fucking bullshit! I’m not doing this!” he says and gets up, he heads to the kitchen and angrily tells his wife that they should leave.

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#Bonus1

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 41

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA

They said I should never talk back to my in laws, they said I should respect them as if

they were my parents. The mother that was supposed to be mine, she hated me and spoke about me to her favorite daughter in law. UBaba, the father that was supposed to be mine, is quietly sitting here, allowing that I should be given to the brother of my late husband like I'm some kind of property. My real parents would have never done that to me, they would allow me to say something. They wouldn't dictate my life. I feel so alone. I've never really never had anyone beside my late husband. He was alone, well maybe he had Zanothando, he is nowhere to be seen now! He disappeared in the morning, without saying

anything. Maybe he would have stood up for me.

Khayelihle said he wouldn't allow me to leave with my child, which made me hate him once again, he always proves to me that I'm nothing but a baby mama in this family, he doesn't see me as his sister, it hurts so much! In time like these, I wish I had parents or brothers that could fight for me. My grandmother is old and not really well, hearing that I'm not okay would make her even more sick.

"He thinks that we are asking him, we are not," I close my eyes. I'm on a reed mat, with a shawl over my shoulder, I'm looking

down, tears are streaming down my face. If it happens that Khaya agrees, it will mean that I have to take off inzilo, I will have to stop mourning my husband, it's not something I want to do, I want to mourn him for a full year, that's what he would have done for me. Zanothando was more than a husband to me, he was my brother and best-friend too.

"You can go Makoti," Baba says, I see the pity in his eyes. But I'm angry at him. I get up and roll the reed mat, and walk out. I'm still crying, these tears make feel like a weakling, but I can't stop them, they keep on falling.

I get to his Rondavel, Gcina's, and close the door before I take his framed picture and lie on my stomach and cry. I miss him This feels so wrong, how am I expected to do this thing. I love Gcina, not his brother. I place his picture next to me and sigh.

"Gcina, you left me alone, at 24, I'm a widow! Now I have to be in a polygamous marriage, because you decided to leave me," I say, after taking his picture. I am mad at him, if he didn't die, this wouldn't have happened. My hope lies on Khaya not agreeing to make me his wife, I will forever hate him if he allows his elders to dictate him.

Oh, Samkelisiwe, she will start hating me again, this feels so heavy on Mez I need someone to talk to, it's definitely not Samke because she would girl insults at me.

I sigh after wiping my tears, I take my phone and dial Tsandzekile's numbers, her phone unanswered. I try her again, she doesn't pick up.

"Baby Lwazi, we are in such a big mess?" it keeps on growing. I hope it doesn't give up on me, on us.

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

This is bullshit! He's not doing any of that shit they said he should do. What the fuck? Just after he makes up with his wife? After 3 years of bullshitting her?

"I don't understand why you had to drag me out of the kitchen, I would have come home!" she's angry! Angry at small things! She should wait until he drops the bomb! She'll be fuming on his behalf.

"Sorry," he says. She laughs bitterly. He'll deal with her drama later. He decides to go and bath, again, just to calm himself before he starts talking to himself, again! He can't risk it, his wife cannot find out. He always

makes sure to hide his pills, just so she can't see them.

He checks the time, it's almost 8 pm. He tells his wife that he'll be back, he wants to go to his father. He heads out right after telling his wife.

He knocks and lets himself inside, he finds Slindokuhle sitting in the Kitchen, staring at her phone.

"Sli, uphi ubaba, where's dad?" he asks.

"Sawubona bhuti, how are you? Cha ngiyaphila nami, I'm good too," Slindokuhle says, attempting to 'teach' his brother some manners.

“I don’t have time for your jokes!” He says and storms to the main room. He knocks, his father shouts a lowered come-in from inside, he opens the door and gets in.

“Baba, I’m just here to beg you, please don’t make me do this,” his initial plan was to tell him how much he feels like his father failed him. But it would be a lie.

“I want to raise him,” he says.

“Then why don’t you take over?!” his frustration says.

“Get out, and close the door, you’ll knock and we’ll start over, I won’t let you disrespect me,” Khayelihle nods and heads out, he closes the door and sighs. His

father said absolutely nothing when Mthombo spit and told him he hated him, but because he slightly raises his voice, he is being made to start over.

“Baba,” he knocks and gets in after his father tells him to come in.

“I’m really sorry for making you do this mfana wam, we really want to raise this child as uNxumalo, if we don’t claim the mother, she’ll leave and take ingane with,” he says.

“Kodwa baba, my wife and I are making up for the three years that I’ve fucked up,” he says, holding it in. Where would this even put him and his wife?

“uMakoti will understand that you didn’t have a say in this, neither did umakoti omncane,” his father says and shrugs.

“Why isn’t Zanothando suitable?”

“uMthomb doesn’t have a wife, this duty is taken by a man that has a wife that will understand that unkos’kaz wes’bili, the second wife is not his, but his brother’s. Zanothando was younger than Gcina, Keamogetswe is his mother,” he says. Khaya sighs.

“Eyyy this life thing is not for me,” he says and sighs.

“Xola mfanam, please forgive us, do you want me to hug you?” he gives his father an

eye, and sighs.

“You want to hug me?”

“While my hugs last, they are limited,” he laughs and snuggles to his father. He gets the warmest hug!

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#Bonus2

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 42

MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

Yoh! That's all he has to say. After finding out that his baby mama is his sister-in-law he almost died, and now this? He is certain that his family is cursed. He could throw a fit and cuss them all, but he's just committed a sin by telling his father that he hates, he needs to be on the safe side.

"Ncese Bafo, did you tell your wife though?" He asks.

"No, I'm scared," Khayelihle says.

"Usaba unkos'kaz wakho Bafo? Swumshayi ngesende ngan? You are scared your wife? Why don't you hit her with your dick?" he shakes his head.

“Our relationship is edgy bafo. I have been giving a cold shoulder to her for 3 years, now that things are kind of looking up, I have to take another woman as my wife. I’m not scared of her, I respect her,” Khayelihle says.

“I can talk to her for you, but I will tell you one thing Bafo, you should always know that ukungena umakoti doesn’t make you her lover, she’s Gcinulwazi’s wife, you will just help keep the home a home,” Mthombo says.

“I’m not mentally fit for this, what if I get frustrated?” Getting frustrated is not his favorite thing, he loses control and starts

talking to himself, then they assume that he is mad.

“You drink your pills right?” he nods, he doesn’t miss them, he doesn’t want to get embarrassed in the presence of his wife.

“Nothing will happen, asambe, let’s go, I’ll speak to her,” Mthombo says.

“No, it’s okay, I’ll speak to her, ngikhaphe, accompany me just so she doesn’t assume that I was with Kea,” Khayelihle says and gets up, they head out. The short distance they are walking is filled with nothing but insults.

“Mangethe,” Mthombowolwazi greets.

“Hawu, sawubona bhuti,” she says. Her husband wraps her hands on her wrist and pulls her to him and kisses her forehead.

“Uyaphila? Are you okay?” he asks. She tells him that she’s good.

“Please take a seat, I’ll prepare a cup of coffee for you,” she says.

“Oh, ngiyabonga,” he thanks her. When she heads to the kitchen, Khaya sighs.

“Bafo! You can’t wait for coffee, I want to talk to her, hamba,” he says.

“Unyile, you know your wife makes the best coffees,” Mthombo whispers. Khaya sinks on the couch and sighs. He thinks this through, what the fuck do they want him to

do? They want him to fuck his brother's wife? Lingawa licoshwe zinkukhu! It can fall and be picked up by chickens! He's not doing any of that shit!

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KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

I'm packing my clothes, tears are streaming down my face. I'm going back to my home when the sun rises. It's better to be in Hyde Park, than here. I'm praying and hoping that Khayelihle doesn't agree to this nonsense, it will break me.

“Makoti,” what is he doing here at this time? It’s cold outside, the clock just hit 1 am. I open the door and let him inside before I close the door and sit on the bed.

“What are you doing here, at this time?” I ask him. He sighs and asks to take a seat. I nod, and he sits next to me.

“Are you okay? I can’t sleep, I just saw uGcina in my dreams,” hawu, that happens nje.

“Hawu bhuti, that always happens when you sleep while thinking about a person,” He sighs and looks to the four.

“He said in the dreams that I should check up on you, that you are in danger. I guess

you are right, it was just thoughts," he says.

"Oh okay, bhuti," I say. I'm uncomfortable.

He looks around and sighs.

"You are leaving?" I nod, it's true, I'm leaving.

"Yes," I'm leaving.

"You don't have to, I'll tell them that you and I are in-laws, not lovers," I quickly release a breath of relief.

"Thank you," I say, he nods, and bids his goodbye.

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I'll leave in the afternoon, at least I know that I can count on Khaye. I'm in the kitchen, with Samke. She's jolly, I guess she doesn't know what her in-laws were suggesting.

"Please help me with this," she says. I look over to her finger, she's pointing at peanut butter, only Khaye eats soft porridge with peanut butter. "You should practice cooking for him, your soon-to-be husband." I freeze! Oh my God.

"He's not my husband," I say.

"He's not, but he soon will be, stop acting like you have a choice," she smiles. Why the hell is she calm about this?

“Why are you not bothered? I know you don’t like me,” really, I’m not looking forward to being her husband’s wife. I also know that she doesn’t like me, so she should just cut the crap.

“If he agrees to this, I’ll leave, this time I’ll choose myself,” she says. What does she mean ‘this time’ is Khayelihle stressful as a husband?

“I’m sorry,” I sigh.

“I understand that you don’t have any say in this, even Khayelihle, they will manipulate him until he agrees, they did the same after his baby mama’s death, they easily manipulated him to marry me, we are

currently patching things up, ” a single tear slides down her cheek and she quickly wipes it. Am I behind with the syllabus? I thought they were the happiest couple. She inherited beef from her husband while they were not okay.

“He said he wouldn’t agree,” I tell her.

“Yeah, that’s probably why he didn’t say a word to me,” Okay if he didn’t tell her then how does she know?

“How do you know ke?”

“I grew up in the bhundus, I know about these things, the minute I saw obabamkhulu, I knew it,” she says, well, I’m

dumbstruck! "With the elders, it's their way or the highway," she says and shrugs.

"That can't happen, I'm Gcinulwazi's wife," Whether he's passed on or not, I'm his wife. I love him, and nobody else but him. No one could ever take his place in my heart, not even his brother.

"You are hey," she shrugs and then looks at me through the corner of her eye.

"What is it? Say what's on your mind," the table is set. She looks around and clears her throat before sitting down. I sit down too, next to her. "Well, running away without a trace is the only way out, and get married to someone else," she says. They don't get

it, I don't want to get married to someone else, I want Gcina. But, I nod my head anyway!

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#Bonus3

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 43

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

He says what matters is that he loves me, he is seconded by Temaswati, she says that love is a beautiful thing, and she loves

it for me. I love him too, and that's why I've decided to continue with our relationship even though he is the father of my sister's child.

I'm still home and bonding with my sister and stepchild slash niece or nephew.

Temaswati is always in and out of home, it's all because Zanothando is taking the role of a father to her. Even now, she's out with him, I think that they are having dinner or something.

"Make, I'm leaving, the weekend is over," I tell her. She nods.

"Okay, ntfombi, when will you come back again?" she asks. I tell her that ill come

back when the month ends. My bags are packed, I've already bid my goodbye to my sister, just in case she's not home when Mthombo finally gets here, he said he'd fetch me.

Mthombo sends a message, asking for my location because he is in town. I text him my location, he'll be here in a few minutes.

"Make, my iide will arrive in a few minutes," I say. She eyes me and raises her brow.

"Unendvodza?" she asks me if I have a man, her eyes are lighting up, why? Hhay-bo.

"Lutfo make, no I haven't," I lie with a straight face. I'm a black child, I don't talk

to my mother about my relationships.

“When you find one, make sure he is richer than Temaswati's” Okay this is weird.

I drag my suitcase after kissing my mom goodbye, I took the clothes that I had left here, I'll be in Joburg most of the time, so I need to make sure that I have enough clothes.

I bump into Temaswati outside, she looks so happy.

“You are leaving already?” she knows I'm leaving though. I laugh and nod.

“Accompany me,” I give her my side bag, she complains but still carries it for me.

Pregnancy suits her, her nose is big though.

Mthombo arrives simultaneously with us. He parks the car but doesn't get out.

"Thank you sesi," I say and try to take my bag, and then realize that she's frozen, I'm on the spot. I should have given her a heads-up, she didn't know that Mthombo would be the one to fetch me. I slightly shake her. She snaps out of it.

"If you don't mind, ngicela kucolisa kuye?" (I'd like to apologize to him,) she says, I have to put away my insecurities. I'll be a co-mother, so I have to put my soon-to-come child. I bald my head and head to the car, I knock on his window, and he opens it. He does not look happy. I greet him and tell

him that Tema wants to talk to him, he doesn't protest, he just sucks in a breath. I open the door for him, I'm a gentle lady.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

Hate? No he doesn't hate her. He doesn't think he'd ever hate her, he's just disappointed and hurt that she would accuse him of such. He thought he had thought he was over it. Over her? Clearly not. What's worse is that he feels like her pregnancy has a pulling force, he feels it that the person she's carrying in her

stomach is uNxumalo. He feels like kneeling and telling the child that ubaba is here. He guess he has to wait until the child is given birth to.

He eyes her. She looks so different, she looks more like an innocent child, not that freaky Londeka. Londeka was wild and daring, now that he thinks about it, the girl standing in front of her is not Londeka, but Temaswati. They are two different personalities in one body.

“Uhm, hi,” she says, Mthombo nods his head. His face is kept neutral even though his heart is beating in an uncontestable way.

“Londeka Zondo,” he doesn’t like long names, he’ll stick to this one.

“I’d like to apologize to you for wrongfully accusing you of rape,” she says. She doesn’t want to attach any reasons, until he asks for them himself. She’s genuinely sorry.

“Most people think I’ve done it, and I didn’t get arrested because I have money,” he breathes, his eyes are turning to a darker shade of brown. She looks at him, he’s clenching his jaws and becoming darker than he already is.

“I’m sorry for causing that, and I’m sorry for Gcina,” she says. She’s scared, it’s taking a

lot for her not to cry in front of him. She doesn't want sympathy, also, she doesn't want her sister thinking that she wants him back. She feels so guilty for Gcina's death, she wishes that she could do things differently.

"Are you okay?" he changes the topic.

"Yeah, I'm okay, I should get going," she says and walks away. He stands still for a minute trying to gather his emotions!

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THANDO 'MADLADLA' NXUMALO

She is laying low, for now.

She went through a lot with uNxumalo for him to ditch her like izambane elibolile. She is not a rotten potato. Why the hell is he in love with her sister? Is it because only one head stretched her vagina? It really disturbs her that her sister is the one that destroyed her marriage. If it had been someone else, maybe just maybe she would have forgiven him and went back to her home. Her sister? It's the worst way to be betrayed. Now, she knows that she might have ignited the spark, but what she did is done almost every time. If a man is not fertile, they ask the woman to sleep with the man's brother, and one won't even

hear anyone talking about the brother and the wife falling for each other. What she did is wrong only because she is a woman?

She sips her coffee, and looks out the window. She's in the depth of the Bhundus, who would have thought? She's living with an old high-school friend, MaJiyane. She pays her R500 for rent. She won't be here for long though, she has plans that need to be put into action.

It's funny how all her children too their father's side, have they forgotten that she brought them into this world? That she fed them and took care of them? Is this the gratitude she deserves? Nx, they make her

feel so sick! Every one of them will pay. Pay for making her life miserable, also for taking Gcina away from her.

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#Bonus4

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 44

SAMKELISIWE NXUMALO

Fear is creeping in.

Keamogetswe took my advice and ran

away. I'm scared because if they ever find

out that I'm the one who advised her to leave. They've been running around like headless chickens, looking for a girl who doesn't want to be found. In the month that she's been away, I can count the days whereby Khayelihle slept peacefully.

Anyways I'm trying to get out of bed, I need to release this urine that's stocked on my bladder, but Mr here is holding me tight.

"Khaya, I want to pee," I try to untangle his hands from me.

"Ngumyen' wakho, I'm your husband," he kisses my cheek and releases me.

I flush and pee while it flushes to avoid making noise, once I'm done I wash my

hands.

I've just taken a shower, I'm fresh and ready to cook breakfast. Khayelihle loves soft porridge with peanut butter, so I prepare that for him. I make scrambled eggs for myself. While the soft porridge is cooking I tell him to freshen up so that he comes and eats.

I don't want to lie, I am being loved right and it feels so good. I wish well for Keamogetswe, but I'm truly glad that she left, we wouldn't have survived it, me and Khaya. We've been through so much, it's tiring.

He walks in, staring at his phone. He pushes it in his pocket, and sits down before grinning. "You are my love wena Sthandwa Sami," I laugh, this guy is not okay upstairs.

We start eating, I feel his eyes on me. I tried keeping quiet, but now I can't.

"What's wrong?" I ask him. If I put on make-up, I would think that I drew my eyebrows incorrectly.

"Ngicela ungiphe ingane, please give me a child," he asks.

"Where am I gonna get a child?" I ask, do I make children? He's full of jokes.

“Ngizok bhebha phela unginike ingane,” (I’ll fuck you, and you’ll give me a child) Yohh, am I even emotionally ready for a child?! “I’ll stop taking contraceptives,” only when I’m ready for a child.

“Thank you, Langa lam,” I laugh, I’m his sun now?

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

The first time I saw them together, my heart pained. I could see that they still had feelings for each other and that I was a barrier between them. Maybe that’s what I

thought. Considering Mthombo's history, I could not shake the feeling that history is repeating itself. Also, it occurred to me that he was making me a rebound.

There were times where I'd sit and think of leaving him so that he can be with Tema, I also voiced it out, but he straight told me that I'm talking bullshit. I'm glad I listened, because the love he's giving me is like no other. I don't know how he manages to be so perfect, he loves me even though he was hurt by my sister! Mthombo is a materialistic man, his love language is buying gifts. He makes sure that I get a bouquet of flowers once a week. He's a

busy man, but he makes sure that he makes time for me, what more could a woman ask for? No man, I love uMthombo. I love the fact that, even though he has to deal with his personal issues, he's able to remind me of my importance in his life. He's always assuring me.

At work, I'm doing well and making sure that I'm always on the lookout, what Lillian- may her soul continue to wander without any peace- did to me gave birth to so many insecurities. I always make sure to do my own research on things, I think I should also make private investigating my side hustle. I swear I'm good!

Ses' Tema is doing well she's five months in with her pregnancy, and also she's taking good care of her, I'm glad she is hey. I still wonder what made sesi leave home, but I won't push it, I'll keep on asking because of curiosity, but if she tells me that she's still not ready to talk about it, I'll let it slide and let her tell me whenever she is ready.

I work under White people, the owner of The Soweto Tribune is Eric White, he's young, I can't believe that he's the one that built it from scratch. I think he inherited this company. I tried doing research on him, but his name doesn't even appear on Google. I'm still planning on doing more research

though, a 34 year old owning such a big company? It makes my kidneys sweat.

My phone beeps. It's Mthombo, he's reminding me of our date. It's at 8pm, I still have time to wrap up my current project.

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I got time to refresh, I checked myself on the mirror thrice and I confirmed that I looked good, I let him lead me into the car and let him drive me to this place I'm not familiar with.

Just by glancing at it, I can tell that only white people eat here. I'm so happy that he

booked the whole place for the both of us, I don't do well in social places. I go crazy when I'm in social places, I just feel like taking out my phone and a microphone and interview people.

The waiters are not your typical Spijo in Soweto, these ones are well-mannered and taught how to smile. They also know when to give their smiles.

I've gone through the menu, and I've just confirmed that I don't know anything from it. For starters, I order Hot Smoked Salmon and beetroot platter, he orders the same. I swear I regret my decision, but I keep my smile because he seems to be enjoying. I

appreciate this, but next time he should let me choose. I'll choose Spijo over this.

"Ngiyakuthanda Tsandzekile," for the first time Mthombo pronounces my name correctly, I'm shocked. He laughs, probably at my facial expressions. "You know, I don't know how I saw it, but I think it was the fact that you shivered and fainted when you came to interview me, that's when I saw that I love you," I smile after rolling my eyes. He gets up and comes to me.

"Mthombo, what are you doing?" I ask when he kneels next to me, people are watching! Oops, I forgot, there are no people here.

“I love you MaNkhalanga, please let me send my uncles to yours?” I smile, I love him, I don’t doubt, so when he searches for something in his pocket, I nod and give out my hand, and then what’s that that he’s taking out? It’s a small envelope. Maybe the ring is in there.

“Please give this letter to your uncles,” he says excitedly. But, the ring where’s the ring?

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#Bonus5

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 45

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I take the letter that he gives me with a smile. He gives me a kiss, I never get enough of his kisses, he always makes sure that I yearn for more. I break the kiss before it wakes up his third leg, his third leg is always ready for action. Sometimes, he gets too horny to make me cum, most of the time he makes sure that I feel the pleasure too.

“I love you,” he says, his voice is husky, ahh, I think I stopped the kiss late

"I love you even more," I tell him. He gets up and goes to his seat. His walk is funny. I'm sure the big man is already up and ready to fight.

"Mthombo, where's my ring?" He raised the left side of his brow.

"We were not getting married, it will happen soon though," he grins.

"Hawu Mthombo, you propose with a ring," I find this whole thing funny, I'm just glad that there are no people here.

"Bese ngihlawuliswe? And then I'll be fined, sorry mama, take this to your uncle, we'll then talk about the ring later," he says. I laugh, it's not like he doesn't have enough

money to pay for the fine. I understand what he's saying and also getting his point, but why was he kneeling? Also, he had to set up a private dinner just to give me a letter to pass on to my parents? This guy.

We are driving back, we are probably a few kilometers away from his home. I enjoyed my night with him, honestly. I couldn't put the envelope down throughout the dinner, if I use my left hand, then my right hand would be holding it. I'm excited and nervous, maybe I'm scared toom

The envelope with the letter he gave us in my sweaty hands. I feel like we are moving so quick, I mean what's the rush?

“Mthombo, are you sure you want to marry me?” I ask.

“Where’s that question coming from?” he asks, giving me a side eye.

“I don’t know Mthombo, I feel like a rebound, you just jumped from her to me, without fully healing, I’m scared that you will heal one day, and realize that you’ve never really loved me,” I didn’t know I was feeling this way, honestly. But now that I’m saying it, it makes sense. I feel like he’s just trying to prove a point.

He just goes mum, if I was wrong he’d say something. His silence is speaking volumes. I place the letter on the

dashboard and look out the window, although it's dark, and just think. I wish I could open the window, and let the air breeze hit me.

His guards are in their rooms, they are never outside at night, I don't know why they are guards if they are always indoors. I'll never understand it, but right now I'm hoping for one to come out because we are stuck outside. His gate is electronic, he always has the remote with him. But, right now there's no electricity, and I don't think he has the manual key with him.

"You doubt that I love you, Thandekile?" I don't know what it is that changes his tone,

but it's cold.

"I never said that," I say. He sighs and chuckles.

"Don't make me a fool, I can read in-between the lines, what you asked was valid, I would have also asked. But, I traced in your 'question' that it wasn't a question, but a statement," he could have said that while I was interested in talking about this.

"It's okay Mthombo," I hate confrontations, they always freak me out.

"It's not okay if you are angry Themba lam, I love you, and only you. I kept quiet because I wanted us to talk when we get home, I would never lie and say I don't love you

while I don't," he says. It melts my heart, but my face remains cold. "Sondela Sthandwa sami, come closer I feel cold," he runs his hand in my thigh. It's unexpected so I feel the hairs on my skin rising. He adjust his chair, and helps me to jump over to his side. I sit on him, my legs wrapped around his waist.

"Ngiyakuthanda, ukudlula isibhakabhaka," he tells me that he loves me more than the sky. I giggle and nod. "Ngicela isidlo sami, can I have my food?" his fingers are tracing my thighs. My heart starts beating fast, I've never been in this position before. I still need to do my research on how to please a

man, while he does nothing. His fingers find their way underneath my panties. I should stop wearing skirts.

“Usuyashisa, ubungasho ngani ukuthi uqhanyelwe? Why didn’t you tell me that you are horny?” His touch always has an effect on me. I bury my face in his neck. Mthombo is so blunt, he makes me shy. He unbuckles his belt and takes out his cock. “I don’t have condoms,” he whispers. I’m on birth control. He grabs my waist and helps me slide in his dick. I feel like he is stretching me! “Shit!” he cusses under his breath.

He's fully in. I sit on him for a minute, asking myself what to do next. Pet talking yourself is best. I tell myself that I've got this. I wrap my hands around his neck. I'm about to hop on him when I feel his hands on my waist again, he is holding me in place. He starts by moving slowly.

"Can this one be mine? I'll make it up to you?" his voice sounds strained. I want to feel the pleasure too, but I nod.

"Yes, baby," it comes out as a moan. He starts pounding mercilessly in me. Oh God, the pleasure starts kicking in, I'm so close, I feel my toes about to curl, but he loses control and hits another spot, I feel his

semen filling me as he groans like an injured bull and digs his fingers in my waist. This was indeed his round! I still need to be touched.

“Thank you mama,” he kisses my forehead, and closes his eyes. I slowly remove myself off of him, and go back to my seat, I take off my panties and wipe myself.

Moguy is still catching his breath.

“This lights are not on yet?” I want to cum. Like Mr President gears my cries the lights come on, good. Business awaits on the other side of the room. It’s called 'Mission: make Tsandzekile cum.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 46

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

By the time we get to his room, he is all over me. His hands are on my butt. He helps me get naked. I lie on the bed, sexily, watching him undress himself. My elbow is balancing on the mattress, my cheek balances on my palm, I feel like a pornstar right now.

“Lithathe, elakho lonke, take it, it’s all yours,” he points to his penis. I swear I flush in embarrassment. He smiles. I sit up, not for long because he takes my hand in his and helps me up. He leads my hand to his cock and lets me stroke it while he kisses my lips. It’s getting harder and bigger.

He scoops me up and lays me on the bed, carefully. He gets on top of me. His hands are balancing on either sides of the bed, he kisses my lips. He deepens the kiss, making me even more wetter. His fingers go to my clit and gently rub it.

“Oh my,” I moan, I can’t even focus on the kiss because of the pleasure. “Mthombo,” I cry. He chuckles and leaves my clit, he gives his member a stroke before he grabs my leg and puts it on his shoulder before he enters me! God, I feel him in my womb! “Mthombo,” I cry. His eyes are shut as he moves slowly. He’s not fucking me as he was doing in the car, he’s making love to me, and it feels so good. I close my eyes when he stops and drags me to the edge of the bed.

“Vula amehlo mama, ung'buke,” (open your eyes and look at me) he says and re-enters me. I open my eyes, they meet his

bloodshot. He mouths 'I love you' I nod and close my eyes. "Ngizolikhapha ngikunike uzibhebhe, vula amehlo, I'll remove my penis and give it to you so you can fuck yourself, open your eyes," what have I gotten myself into? I open them, his are also barely open. He gives me a small smile before he shuts them and brings his mouth to my nipple, his breath is warm. He sucks my it and squeezes the other. I wrap my legs around his torso, I want more of him. He holds me in place before he pounds me hard. I start shaking, he feels it the wave, he pulls out and rubs my clit. "Mthombo!" I scream while squirting.

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Untangling myself from him is a mission but I manage to do it without waking him up. I slowly walk to the bathroom even though I'm pressed, what Mthombo did to my Vagina yesterday can only be fixed by Gynaecologists. I asked for him to make me cum not to put it on fire.

I get to the bathroom and carefully sit. I feel like a 70 year old! The way I'm so careful!

I urinate bit by bit, to avoid hurting myself. My pussy feels like it's burning.

“Wathatha iskhathi esingaka uyabhosha yini?” (Why are you taking so long, are you taking a shit?) I raise my head, he’s standing by the door and grinning at me, this devil!

“No, I’m trying to pee,” I say, and flinch.

“Sorry baby,” he says and chuckles, is he Mthombo? Mthombo never used the word baby. And the smug on his face! Yho!

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ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

He’s back home. He’s been here for a month without going anywhere. It’s a mess

at home, and only one person can fix it, Khayelihle. But he seems to be in his bubble with his wife, they look so happy. Zanothando wonders until when the happiness will last.

He does call Tema here and there, they communicate a lot about the baby. He offered to help with the baby while it's still in the stomach, he makes sure that her cravings are fed and she's sustained. He connects a lot with the child, he has no doubt that it's a Nxumalo. That's the only reason why he's always travelling to Mpumalanga. What's in Tema's stomach makes him forget about what he goes

through in a daily basis, and he thinks she understands it, that's why she never questions it. He can't wait for the child to be born.

Their relationship is all co-parenting, and nothing else. Temaswati is a great person, while Londeka is someone who does whatever she has to do to survive. She changed her name, not realizing that she was trying to keep her morals with Temaswati. No one understands her, that's why they judge her.

He takes his phone and dials Mthombowolwazi, he wants to ask if he's really sure about his marriage with

Tsandzekile. Temaswati and Mthombo never really broke up, so the fact that he is moving so fast makes him raise his brow, he doesn't want a repeat of oMaDladla in the new generation.

"Bafo," Mthombo answers the call.

"Bafo, do you have time, I want to talk to you," Zanothando says.

"Yeah, what's up?" Mthombo asks.

Zanothando closes his eyes.

"Are you ready for Marriage Bafo?"

Mthombo chuckles.

"I love her, yaz angfun ang' lahlekele, I'm sure about her and I don't want to lose her," Mthombo knows that his words only are

not enough, he knows this seems to be rushed to, but he loves Tsandzekile, God knows he does.

“I hear you, I hope you don’t become uNxumalo when time goes by,” Zano says.

“I would never bafo, I love Tsandzekile, that’s it. Living without her is possible, but it would be hard. She just completes me,” he says. “What, are you asking this because you want to date Temaswati?” Mthombo asks laughing.

“Nah, I know better bafo, she’s older than me, I want someone younger, otherwise uzong’ donsa ngekhala,” (she’ll control me) he says.

“I’d give you my blessings Bafo, I’m over her. She’s over me too, I had a conversation with her, and we understand that the only thing that Binds us yingane,” (is our child) he says.

“Oh, kwakuhle ke, Bafo, your sister has a boyfriend,” Zanothando changes the topic.

“What the fuck? What does she know about boyfriends?! Who the fuck is the boy?”

Mthombo raises his voice. Zanothando chuckles.

“Take a chill pill Bafo,” he’s trying to neutralize all their conversation before he brings out topic that pushed him to call

him. There's something important he wants to ask him, it takes a lot in him.

"I think I should buy hijab so that she wrap her face," Zano cracks up, Mthombo is crazy. He has his days though, when he is like this it means that he is at his happiest.

"Bafo, someone referred me to the best therapist in Town, her name is Nelly Ntshangase," he says.

"Oh, but why is her surname Zulu? Isn't it supposed to be white? She married a black man?" Zano laughs.

"Hhay bafo, she's black wakwa Magwaza!" Zanothando says and hangs up. Mthombo will finish his airtime!

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 47

MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

He's driving to Pretoria, that's where Zanothando is. 10 minutes ago, he received a call from Zanothando, begging him to come with him for Therapy, Zanothando said he needed him by his side, and his therapist also told him that it

would be better if he had a family member in his side.

He left everything he was got into his car, he's currently driving there. The location is put in the GIS, just hopes he gets there in time. He doesn't want his brothers to be like him, someone who gave up in their emotional well-being, and if that means he should sit with them during their therapy sessions, then it's cool with him.

Her office is in a public clinic, it's deep in the hood. Mthombo gave Zanothando money, so him coming to a public psychologist– or whatever they call it–

means that this woman is good. He parks his car where the security told him to park and calls Zano, his phone rings unanswered, damnit! This boy, how does he think he'll find them?

He climbs off his car and locks it, he then heads back to the security by the gate.

"Mnumzane," (sir,) he greets yet again and asks for directions to Dr Nelly Ntshangase.

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Her consulting office is at the back, there's peace and quietness in this space. He

knocks and gets in, the first thing he notices is that Zano is not here.

“Mr Nxumalo, I’ve been waiting for you, how are you?” okay, this big eyed woman knows him.

“Mrs Ntshangase, I’m good how are you?” He brings his hand forth for a handshake, she touches him.

“I’m good sir, you can take a seat,” he nods and looks around, there’s no sign of Zano.

“You are here for me, not Zanothando,” he nods, but he is lost. Zanothando set him up? “I’m Nelly Page, you can call me that,” he smiles.

“Mam'Ntshangase is okay for me,” Nelly nods her head.

“You don't look okay, please take in a breath and relax bhuti,” he nods so quick and closes his eyes. He takes in a breath and releases it, it feels like the first breath he is taking. “Please tell me about yourself,” Nelly says.

“I'm Mthombowolwazi Nxumalo, I'm 33 years old, a brother to 3 boys– one passed on– and one sister,” he says.

“Okay, Mthombowolwazi, is that all?” he nods. “What do you like?”

“I don't know,” it's true, he's never had the time to focus on what he liked, he had to

work hard to have a better life. "I know what I love though; I love my Tsandzekile and my unborn baby, my family too, all of them," his eyes shimmer. Nelly nods, he's not a hard nut to crack, it's probably because he's calm by nature.

"You look scared," Nelly says. Already? She already has analysis about him?

"I'm not scared," he lies and taps his fingers on his thigh, he feels suffocated, like he can't breath.

"It's okay, please breathe," Nelly says, staring at him. He tries but he can't, the pain on his chest is too much.

“Mr Nxumalo, are you okay?” he nods, a tear sliding down his face, it sold him out. He tries again, this time breathing slowly. He releases it. He broke it, his rule of not crying in the presence of someone.

“I’m not okay, I’ve never been okay,” he says and sighs. Tears burn his eyes, he will let them flow and he will not wipe them, maybe this is what he needs.

“Do you want to tell me about it?”

“We can start again,” he says and nod sighs, he gets up and goes stand next to the door. “I’m Mthombowlwazi Nxumalo, 33 years old, I’m soon-to-be a father and a husband. I have 4 siblings, one is late, I

have two mothers and one father," it's not all. "From birth till I turned 15, I was raised by my single mother, my father was there financially, but emotionally he wasn't there, physically also he'd come here and there," he blows out a sigh. "I left school I don't remember the grade and came here because I thought that I didn't need my father, I hated him because he lived with all his children but me. My mother suffered with me, I'm really grateful for having her in my life. Can I sit here?"

"On the floor?" he nods, she nods even though she's not sure. He sits down, his knees are put up to his chin.

“When I got here, I worked for whites called Roois in their farm. They didn’t care about what I ate or where I slept, they only cared about me getting their work done, I had a father sisi,” he shrugs and scratches his head in frustration. He didn’t know how much he needed this! “I worked my ass for that white man, I slept under bridges,” he puts his head against the door takes a breath. “I hot diagnosed with Angina because of that, my chances of having a heart attack or stroke are high because my blood flow is reduced, I got too cold in the streets,” he chuckles. His face is a mess, but he keeps on declining the tissues Nelly

keeps on offering him. "I blamed my father, almost all the time, but now I understand him better because I'm a man, I still think that things could be fine differently though," he says. She nods.

"Have you forgiven him?" he nods.

"I love him, even," he may not tell him, but he loves his father a lot.

"You should go home and talk to him, does anyone know about you being sick," he shakes his head no.

"It will only stress him out," he shrugs.

"They are all already stressed, I don't want to burden them. If anything, ubaba should be stressed by his last born, I'm the first

born I should know how to handle myself,” Mthombo says, still seated on the floor, balancing his chin on his knees. His hands are wrapping his legs. Fuck, he's never felt like this before, yeah sometimes he does think about it, but today it feels like he is reliving the moment. “I've recently been accused of rape, it strained me. The whole process of trying to prove myself innocent took away from me, my mental health was strained, my brother died kuningi, there's only one positive thing that I can point out in this whole situation, it's Tsandzekile,” Nelly nods.

“You don’t tell me exactly how you are, it’s like you live for other people more than you do for yourself, which is a great thing. But not paying attention to yourself will hurt you, it will destroy you,” Mthombo sighs.

“How many days would you like meet me for in a week?” she doesn’t decide herself, she lets them take the decision. But if it were up to her, Mthombo would see her everyday of the week, there’s a lot they need to talk about.

“3 days would be okay,” Mthombo says. She nods and writes it down, she writes everything down.

“That’s totally fine.” She smiles at him.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 48

MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

He asks Nelly to go to the bathroom just so he can wash his face, Nelly directs him to the bathroom. He heads there and gets in, he closes the door right after getting in. He sighs and stares at his reflection. It sinks in, what he just did, he just spoke to a stranger about himself, he feels guilty. It's

like he shouldn't have spoken about how he feels. Now it feels like Nelly knows the naked him.

"Fuck!" He hisses. "What have I done?" He sighs. He reminds himself that he needs to leave. He quickly washed his face and waits until it's dry. He walks out without looking at his reflection, he probably looks like a hobbo, back to his life before he stole half of the Roois things.

He finds Nelly wiping her eyes, she was crying? She's a Psychologist, why is she crying? Isn't she supposed to talk and listen to herself?

“Uhm, hey,” she gives him a smile. He clears his throat.

“Sorry sisi, are you okay?” She nods.

“I’m sorry, I just got triggered, I’m okay,” she smiles again, warmly.

“Alright, I’ll take my leave, uberight, be well,” he says and leaves. If anything z he feels like going back and talk again, he has a lot to say, but words fail him. He forces himself to get inside the car and ignites the engine. Tears well up in his eyes, every emotion he ever neglected to feel are all coming back to him, and they are overwhelming him! He dials Zanothando. “Gaz’ lam,” Gcinulwazi says.

“You are sly, son of a handsome man!”

Zanothando laughs.

“If you say baba is handsome then you mean that you are also handsome, which is not true,” Mthombo hears his father cussing Zanothando.

“Uyanya wena, ngiyisoka elibukekayo mina, I’m handsome,” Zanothando chuckles, he chuckles too. “Please give uNxumalo ucingo,” (the phone) he says. He hears some shuffling, and the Zanothando tells his father that he’ll be back, he’s giving them space to talk.

“Bafanas,” he’s not a boy! His father seems not to understand.

“Sure taima, are you okay?” he asks.

“I’m okay, how are you?”

“Aii kunzima baba, it’s hard. I would like to apologize to you about how I disrespected you baba, that was utter disrespect, it will never happen again,” he says, he feels the need to say more, but he just doesn’t want to stress his father. He’s a first born, he shouldn’t be running to his father about his issues.

“I understand that you were angry mfanawam, but let me warn you, if you ever spit in disrespect, I’ll kick your black ass, your eyes will be black in a minute,” they laugh, and then they have a moment of

silence. He stops at the traffic lights. “You know I love you right?” baba says, again, tears fills his eyes.

“I love you even more taima,” he says and wipes his tears, but they keep on welling up. They hang up after talking. Mthombo reignites the engine and drives off.

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It’s 5pm when he gets home. He didn’t inform Tsandzekile that he wouldn’t be able to fetch her. This is why he hates being lost in his feelings, he becomes clumsy and forgets a lot of things.

The door is not locked, meaning she is here; it's only Khayelihle and her that has keys to his house. He gets in.

"Qo, la ekhaya!" He says, walking in to let his presence known. She tells him that she's in the kitchen. He goes to the direction of the kitchen. She's in an apron, she looks good, no lies. He can only imagine her as his wife, he can't wait to marry her.

"Owakhethwa yinhliziyo yam, the one that was chosen by heart," he says, she smiles.

"Hey, you are back," she says. He walks furtherly in, he hold her wrist and pulls her to him, he kisses her lips.

"I'm sorry for not telling you that I wouldn't be able to fetch you," he says.

"It's okay," she smiles at him. "My boss gave me a lift," he nods, although he's annoyed. He personally has his beef with whites, and on top of that Tsandzekile always comes home to tell him of how sweet working with him is, he gets annoyed! Honestly.

"Weee, aii you should have called a cab, Instead," he says. She laugh. "Where's uMa? I thought you said you would never cook until I married you," he says, grinning. "Today is an exception," she smiles at him. His grin becomes wider.

“Okay, mama, how was your day?” she tells him that it was tiring, she had a lot of work to do. He nods his head.

“I’ll go take a shower,” he informs her, she nods her head.

The both of them are having dinner, they are silently eating. Mthombo keeps on sighing.

“Uthi ubaba he wants to pay inhlawulo before we get married,” (baba says that he wants to pay damages,) he breaks the silence.

“Oh, that’s a good thing, I guess,” she says and stops eating, she looks at him playing with his food.

“You know that I love you, right?” she swallows and nods her head. She’s sensing a ‘but’ in his statement. “I need to know if you love me too Sthandwa Sami, sengaphulwa inhliziyo Mina, my heart has been broken a few times, my trust too, but that doesn’t mean that I should hold back othandweni, but what I want to know is if you really love mez, I don’t think my heart can take any ache anymore,” he says, fuck it, he needs to pull himself together! He doesn’t want to be over emotional.

“I love you Mthombo, so much. I also want to be sure that you won’t leave me one day and run back to my sister, because to be

honest, I don't think your love for her has faded," he takes in a breath. Sometimes he wishes that he could remove his heart, and show it to her.

"She really hurt me, yes. More than anything, she broke my trust, even if she and I were to get back to each other, it wouldn't work, ngiyamenyanya umuntu ok'hamba emuva," (I hate people who betray others) he says and shrugs. He had a conversation with her not so long ago, he felt like he needed reasons, she told him that she did what she did for her baby, he asked her if she didn't think he was capable of protecting them, he has money, she

knows that, she could have thought about him hiring security or something, he felt like there was something she didn't want to tell him. 'I wanted to protect our church' he doesn't buy that story. Also, he found out that Wandile had a thing going on, Wandile was his friend. Wandile and Londeka knew each other after they were introduced to each other by him, that meant she cheated on him. "The only thing that binds us is the child," he says, they both agreed that they couldn't have worked out. "I would never break your heart, I swear," he says and smiles at her.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 49

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

He's overly happy today! Well, half happy, he can't be fully happy when his brother's wife and child are missing and nowhere to be found, they are still in the process of finding them though. Anyways, he is happy because his favorite singer released an album, he has his volume on max.

He loves how Ntencane sings about real life things, well almost all Maskandi do. He can't imagine himself listening to the modern rap, it's all about cussing and naked women, he's too old for that... Well, not that old, 33 is not old, right?

His whole mood gets ruined when the track 'Ukube Ngangazi' plays. It takes him back to losing the two people he loved in his life! He parks on the sidewalk, he needs a moment, to listen this song, and maybe cry his eyeballs out. Losing them was the hardest thing in his life, it doesn't even come close to the childhood traumas. He had to burn her pictures, to respect his

wife, she didn't force him to do anything, but he felt like keeping her pictures and memories would be some form of disrespect. He wants her to always know that he loves her. But in all honesty, he hasn't really healed from their death, because it was his fault.

They were having their usual fights while he was driving, she told him that she's leaving him, and for good. Just like that, he lost it, and started shouting, it triggered him a lot, he started speaking to himself, that's what he does to 'calm' himself, but that day, all it did was to laugh at him, telling him how useless he was, he caused

an accident, they died, and all he got was a chest and knee injury. It's been more than three years, but it feels like it was yesterday. He still blames himself, sometimes he sends messages to her, apologising about ending her life; if he could, he would go back in time and let her leave him, because she couldn't handle him and his love, he was also toxic, which took her life away from her.

He lays his forehead on the steering wheel and wonders how Kea must be feeling right now, he knows exactly how it feels to lose a person who gave you the reason to live; what he doesn't know is how it feels to

have the chance of mourning them fully be taken away from you. She had to be buried in her home because he hadn't married her by then, so he couldn't go visit her gravez but at least he's a man and was not in the run.

He takes his phone and dials her, yet again. He just wants to talk to her. The phone rings, and his heart starts beating fast.

"Hello?"

"S'bo?" he says, his voice breaking, bus God playing games with him?

"Hello bhuti, this is Thembeke, how can I help you?" this is not her voice. How dumb

can he be? Her service provider might have gave her numbers to someone else's

"Uxolo sis, apologies sis, I was looking for Sibongile, I guess it's a wrong number," he say. She says okay and hangs up, he quickly deletes the number after blocking it, he deleted everything of her, it's time to focus on his wife and his happiness.

Maybe even having a child will make him forget about his son,

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ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

Out of all things he's done in his life, this was the most important; Gcinulwazi told him that if it happens that one of them, between Gcina and Mthombo, dies— especially if Gcina dies— then the one alive would have to get Psychological help, because they were almost like twins, but in their case Gcina would feel pain for Mthombo. So when he dies, it would all come back to him. Now that he looks at everyone of his family, he feels Khaya and his father need to see Mrs Ntshangase, because wow! But where would he even begin with these two? Khayelihle is the craziest, and he's stubborn, his father, he's

just too damn African! He can imagine Khayelihle being the one asking Mrs Ntshangase questions about her life instead, or worse, he could be rude! He laughs and shakes his head to shake off the thoughts off him.

He takes in a breath and lies on his bed after taking his phone from the pedestal. He logs into WhatsApp, there's nothing interesting there, just texts from his regular fucks! He's had enough of rural Slay Queens, he has no friends, so there's no one else texting him. He logs out and goes to Facebook, he has a message request. It's Audrey White. Her account only has one

picture. She doesn't have a friend list, meaning it's a new account. He checks the time her profile was updated, it was updated 9 hours ago, which is the exact time she sent him a dm, it's interesting. She goes back to her profile picture and zooms it, she looks beautiful.

****Hey.**** he sends a text, replying to the dry 'hi' she sent him. After the message goes through, it makes them Facebook friends. It doesn't take long before she views his message.

"How are you?" the text reads, he waits for at least 5 seconds before he views the message.

"I'm good, how are you?" he texts back.

He's now waiting for her to text back.

"I'm good too, thank you. You are handsome," it throws him off, but again the girl is a white, what do they know about what black men consider as morals?

"Oh, thank you, you are gorgeous too," he makes sure to punctuate, this might be his snack for the month. This is a blessing, he really feels important, this is not just any girl, it's a white girl, he's always wondered how they feel like when they are under you. He makes sure to keep the conversation going, well he knows that there might be what we considered red flags about this

whole account, but again it could be that she really created this account today. She tells him that she's a 23 year old student at the University of Johannesburg, she's doing Law apparently, he tells her that he's just a garden boy that makes ends meet.

A man that hustles is everything and more, the text says. Well, he smiles. Even though he is not a Garden Boy, it just melts his heart that she's not judgemental.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 50

It's been a month after they've paid damages for her child, she's happy because they even paid for the child to be uNxumalo, nothing makes a parent happy like the fact that their child will have a home, it's just... heartwarming.

Today, they are here to pay Lobola for her sister, obviously, she does feel a bit jealous, but it's nothing deep. It could have been her, but it's not so she needs to move on.

It's about 6am, but they are already done cooking, right now, they are dressed and

chilling in the bedroom. The girls present here are, Dignity, Tsandzekile, Winile, and her. Winile is Dignity's sister, a childhood friend of Temaswati.

"I even forgot to ask sesi, babe wengane yakho uphi, solo ngiyacabanga, where's the father of your child? I have been thinking all along, the day they came to pay for the damages, I didn't see him," Winile asks.

"He was there, sesi, what do you need from the Kitchen, I'm heading there," she says and quickly changes the topic, she doesn't want anyone finding out about this, that her sister's husband is her baby daddy. Her mother almost died when she heard, she

had a mini heart attack. But she's fine now, she's the one that ordered them to wake up early even though the negotiators will come at 9am.

"I won't need anything sesi, bomalumr bafikile?" (have the uncles arrived)

"Yeah, they have long arrived," she says and heads out. She makes cereal for herself, she eats a lot these days. Her stomach is growing too, she's inlove with her baby.

"You love food hey," you know, when you accept that a person you love will never love you, that's her current situation now. No matter how hard she tries, she knows that her mother doesn't love her. In her

mother's head, there's competition between Tsandzekile and Tema.

"I do," she says and flashes a nervous smile. Thanks to Zanothando, she also buys grocery and helps take care of their mother, she also buys medication, if it weren't for that, she knows that she would probably be out on the streets right now. She chuckles coldly and leaves. Tema releases a breath and brushes her belly, she can't wait for her baby to be born. She will try to be the best version of herself for her and her baby. This is her first, yet stressful pregnancy. Yet the baby is still moving. There was a time where she had to

survive on bread and biltong, this child has been through a lot, yet it hasn't even been born.

She's just eaten, she's absent-mindedly sitting with her sister. She's been thinking a lot about that guy that helped her realize that not only was she wrong, but she behaved like the world revolves around her. Zwelihle, he was always troubled by the way she does things, he thought she was a spoiled brat, if only he knew how she grew up, he would be surprised.

The time reads 8:39am, the negotiators will be here in no time, so they start fixing themselves.

“Nkhalanga, Ngobe, Nyangembili, Mahholwa-hholwane, wena lowabuya neti ntshontshonono enkokoba,” a voice from the gate shouts praises of the Nkhalangas. Tsandzekile looks nervous, so Tema squeezes her hand and smiles at her. A cousin-brother of theirs will go and fetch the Negotiators outside, Tsandzekile just wants all this to be over and done with.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

He had to balance being a man, and a child in the past month. With Nelly, he

discovered that the little boy in him is still there and wants to be freed of all the pain he had injured. The first step was to go through the emotions, just like Nelly had said, for one day, he did not get out of his house, he locked the doors and gates and relived everything. The times where he had to fight an old white man off him, because he wanted to rape him, the pain of finding out at an early age that you have a possibility of dying at an early age. The pain of being rejected, the pain of failing to protect his brothers, the pain of losing his brother because of his sins.

And now, he has to say that he feels a lot better, he feels lighter. He still does see Nelly once a week.

He was curious about her crying, so he asked if their issues affect her mental health, she just said that she was triggered by his story because she lived in the streets too, her family had chased her away from home. He nodded and never asked again. He had thought that she had it simple, seeing how she was. In her late 30s and has a stable life and a family, he's just yet to build that.

"Uyajuluka," (you are sweating) Zanothando makes remark. A stupid one at that. He's

left with Zano, only. Khaya is amongst the Negotiators inside, he's a married man so he needs to act like it.

"I'm nervous," he says and chuckles. He just hopes that everything goes well, he can't wait for her to be his fiance.

"Relax, you'll be okay, you really love her, I see," Zanothando wiggles his brows.

"I do, so much," Mthombo says, "You are glowing these days," Mthombo says.

"I'm pregnant. Kuglowa abafazi, only women glow!" Zano says.

"Uyakhazimula-ke, you are shining," Mthombo says and shrugs. "I thought I was

your least favorite brother,” Mthombo says, with a serious tone.

“You got me through school, you helped ubaba with us, how the hell did you conclude that? I respect you, that’s all,” Zano says.

“Financial support doesn’t mean love, bafo, but you know I do love you right?”

Mthombo says. Zano nods. “I was just assuming, like I did with Gcina, I’m sorry, and thank you for the hook-up,” Mthombo says and slaps Zanothando’s head, playfully.

“Hawu, that hurt bafo. I was just fulfilling Gcina’s wishes, he loves you.” He nods.

"I know now," he says. "I want to set an appointment for Khaya, eyyy but I don't know where I'll start," Zanothando laughs. "He's also suicidal, I don't know man, we have to try," Zano says Mthombo nods. He gets a call from Khayelihle, finally! Khayelihle tells him that everything is done and finalized. They only paid half the price because paying it all at once would seem like disrespect.

Akavele ngaphandle umuntu osezoba umkami, sifuna ukum'bona he sends a text message to Tsandzekile telling her that he'd like to see her.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 51

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I sneaked out, just to see this brown eyed and single browed man of mine. They are in a taxi I don't know of, before I come inside, Zanothando climbs off, he greets me of his way out. I greet him back and climb inside the taxi. Whatever it is that he

called me here for, it has to be done snappy because I have to go back before his elders come here.

“Mkami, my wife” he grins while saying that.

“Myeni wami,” his grin widens.

“Wamuhle, you look really beautiful,” his definition is a pinafore.

“Thank you babe,” I say and smile at him.

“Even though I’m your fiance you still call me a baby? Yho!” he whines, I laugh and sit down next to him. I lay my head on his chest.

“I love you,” he brushes my shoulder and kisses my forehead.

“I love you too,” I tell him and close my eyes, his arm is tight around me, I love him, I love him so much. I feel like lying on his chest like this, forever, it feels so good being in his arms. It feels safe too.

“You know, when they say there’s light at the end of every tunnel, yeah that’s you in my life babe, you are my light, u love you so much.” I blush, I don’t respond, but my heart does.

He keeps on kissing my forehead and telling me how much he loves me. I love the way he keeps on assuring me.

Mthombowolwazi, my brown-eyed Zulu man, I love him so much.

It's been a week since I've been a finance to Mthombo. I live with him, well I've been living with him, but the difference now is that I live with him and my mother knows. Mthombo said that they will go finish off the money at home in three months, and that's when our wedding will be, I have to start planning my traditional wedding! I've been communicating a lot with my sister about the baby, although having her as Mthombo's baby mama is weird, I think it makes the situation even better because communicating with her about the baby won't be awkward. She's my sister, I love her, and I know she loves me too.

“Bekatsi Temaswati ngikubute kutsi emagam wemtfana uwacabangile?”

(Temaswati said I should ask you if you have thought about the names of the child) he shrugs.

“You guys will cuss us one day! No, my father or Zano will name him or her,” I nod and pass on the message, I hate doing this. This is something they should be discussing together, I mean I trust them, I’m not insecure, but Mthombo wants nothing to do with Tema, but everything to do with a baby. My life is miserable.

“Awufuni sidlale umabhebhana?” (don’t you want us to play sex) he asks, his hands

already grabbing and squeezing my butt cheeks. Before I can't even answer, he kisses my lips. Mthombo will send me to an early grave!

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SAMKELISIWE NXUMALO

"Oh fuck, mama!" he spills his seed inside me and collapses on top of me. I'm also lying like a lifeless chicken under him. I'm catching my breath. He kisses my neck.

"That was so good, thank you," he says. I smile, guiltily. I'm still taking my pills, I don't

want a baby yet, I don't think we are there yet.

"It was great," I say. He gets up after some time and walks to the bathroom. He comes back and scoops me up, he takes me to the bathroom. The water is running, he stands for a minute or so before places me on the bath tub. Once my Vagina makes contact with the water, I feel like it's burning so I flinch. He smiles and whispers a low sorry. He gets into the bath too, and bathes me. "Did you get your periods this month?" he asks. I nod my head. He keeps quiet for a moment. "Can we go to the doctor and check?" he says, lowly.

“Can we wait until next month at least?” my heart is beating fast, I know I could tell him that I’m not ready for a child, I’m just scared if what he might say because it might hurt me.

“Alright, mama,” he says and continues to bath me.

Once he’s done bathing both our bodies, he dries us with a towel and hands me my lotion. He takes his and lotions himself, I keep stealing glances at him. He seems so down, I will let him be and talk to him at night. I’ll come clean, and I’ll stop taking my pills.

Once I'm done and clothed, I head to the kitchen and dish for the both of us. I call him to eat, we eat in silence. Be doesn't seem angry, he's just hurt.

"I know I'll conceive Khaya, we should give it some time and have less stress," I say.

"Of course you'd say that, awusho, ubungasho ngani ukuthi usaphuza lama philisi?" (Why didn't you tell me that you were still drinking these pills?) I freeze, he knows? "I have you so many chances to come clean, kuyasho nje ukuthi ngislima kuwena," (it goes to show that to you, I'm just a fool) he clicks his tongue and pushes his chair back before chuckling. "Less

stress sokunuka!” (my foot) I sigh and close my eyes. So he knew all along. I have to apologize and tell him my reasons, I know he will understand. But first, I need to clean up here.

I’ve just washed the dishes, I’m just putting everything in place when I receive a call.

It’s MaDladla, it’s been long since we talked. I quickly wipe my hands and swipe my phone to answer the call, I take a seat.

“Ma,” I say. I missed her, she’s the one that kept me going, so I still have a soft spot for her, regardless of what she did.

“My baby, how are you?” she says, I sigh.

“I’m okay ma, how are you, I missed you,” I inform her.

“You missed me yet you don’t call,” she laughs. “I’m surviving, I was just checking up on you my child, keep safe,” she says and bids me farewell. That was the shortest call ever! But it was still meaningful. Anyways, I get up and finish off with my packing up.

By the time I get to the bedroom, Khayelihle is already snoring softly, I sigh and get in bed. I face the other way, I feel his hands wrapping around me, he pulls me closer to him. I guess he’s not that angry.

It took time for me to fall asleep, that's why I'm waking up late. I try to get off bed but Khaya is tightly hugging me.

"Khaya, wake up, aren't you going to work?" he snaps his eyes open.

"Why is it dark? Switch on the lights," he tells me. What does he mean? The lights are on.

"It's lit Khaya," I tell him.

"What?" he blinks twice and rubs his eyes.

"Why the fuck is it dark?" he almost yells. I move my hand on his face, his eyes don't follow, oh my God.

"Khaya," I whisper.

“I can’t see Samkelisiwe, why the fuck can’t I see?” how would I know?

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 52

It’s been a week since Khayelihle has lost his eyesight; he’s not speaking to anyone, he doesn’t want anyone in his room either, he says he just wants to be alone.

Zanothando knew that he’d have to learn the hard way of his duties, Gcinulwazi

wants him– only him– to raise his baby.

Kea could continue with her life as soon as she gives birth z but the question he has us will she want to leave her baby here?

The child is the gift that woman was talking about, and ungeno is what is wanted by the family elders. Now, once something is said in any rondavel of the ancestors and pleaded with, it will be bound to happen; whether you like it or not, it will have to happen.

This child is not Gcinulwazi's but Khayelihle's child. Khayelihle has to name and take care of him.

He sighs before getting off bed, he doesn't even check his messages like he always does before he gets off bed. Audrey has him by the balls, she's sweet, and he thinks he loves her. They've spoken through phone calls and video, she's just as gorgeous.

This weekend, she's coming to visit Durban, well, him. So he'll be heading to Durban, hopefully Khayelihle would have listened to him by then because he doesn't want to miss out on what's beneath Audrey's panties. He likes her very much, it's not only about pussy. It's about how she carries herself too.

He brushes his teeth and washed his face before coming back to cleaning his bedroom. He then sits down and sends a good morning text and a Bible verse to Temaswati, she needs to clean that evil rale accusing heart of hers, well that's just a joke. But he sends those Bible verses just to cheer her up because he knows what kind of a mother she deals with on a daily basis. He then replies to his 22 year old white early bird, she send him her recent pictures attached with a good morning every morning.

At first, he thought of her as a catfish, until they video called each other. She didn't

even hesitate when he asked. The only problem they might have is, English.

Imagine waking up and speaking English, it must be tiring. His English bundles always activate at 8am, not fully though.

He pushes his phone in his pocket and heads out after hearing a car screeching outside. Hawu madoda, inkunzi! The bull.

Mthombo is probably the only one that will be able to get through Khaya because all of them tried but failed, even his wife.

“Where is he?” he doesn’t greet.

“He is in his rondavel,” they had to fetch him from his house because it’s not safe for Samke, he was starting to say a lot of

things that didn't make sense. "Mthombo! Wait!" Zano tries to stop him, but Mthombo doesn't budge.

"Uzokwata, he'll be angry," Zanothando says. He sighs.

"He'll understand, we had to do what we did," Nxumalo sighs too. He loves Khaya too, but if he starts posing as danger to them, then they have to do whatever they have to stop it.

"Zanothando masimba mani la eniwenze la? What type of shit is this that you've made here?" Mthombo roars from Khaya's room.

“Ah’ha, what did I say? Aii Mina I’m going to my room,” he doesn’t likr drama.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

They should have told him earlier about this! He could have come and helped out. They waited until he was not mentally fit to be around people, and that’s the only time they told him; he wonders how his better half is. Khayelihle is almost like his twin, they know about each other on a deeper level.

“Where is he?” he asks looking at Zank, Zanothando breaks their eye contact and looks over to his father, now he is certain and sure that something is very wrong. His father sighs and nods at Zano.

“He’s in his rondavel,” Zanothando says, and he wastes no time. He heads there, and ignores Zanothando when he calls him.

The door is shut, he opens it. The only source of light here is sunlight, if he closes the door fully there won’t be any light. The window are closed. He searches for his phone and puts on his flashlight before

closing the door. What he sees makes his heart sink to his feet.

“Khaya?” tears start to burn his eyes. His brother is chained like an animal.

“Zanothando masimba mani la eniwenze la? What type of shit is this that you’ve made here?” he yells, and sits down next to his brother.

“Oh Khaya bafo, you stopped taking your pills, again,” Khaya is asleep, he looks tired and not refreshed. He hasn’t been taken good care of. “Khaya,” Mthombo shakes him. Khayelihle snaps his eyes open, he doesn’t squint his eyes even though the flash light is directly across his eyes. “It’s

Mthombo,” He tells him, swallowing a lump on his throat.

“I can’t see,” Khayelihle says.

“Where do you put your pills? Tell me, please,” Mthombo asks.

“In my safe, the safe is in my spare room, you know the pin,” his son’s date of death.

“I’m sorry mfana, I’ll make sure that you get back your eye sight,”

“I’m not crazy, I’m just frustrated,”
Khayelihle says.

“I know, when last did you eat?”

“They will kill me,” he says. Mthombo sighs.

“Remove these things from me, they will kill me,” he cries.

“I’m here Khayelihle, they will not touch you,” these chains are what makes everything worse. Mthombo is crazy, couldn’t they think of a doctor or something?

“Are you here to finish me off?” Khayelihle starts pulling his hands, it’s an attempt to get these chains off of him.

“No, I’m here to help you,” Mthombo says and gets away from him, the tears that he was trying so hard to not let go of, leave his eyes. “Please hold on, Khayelihle, I’ll bring you your pills, you’ll be okay,” he says and sighs, and heads out. He sees his father standing and leaning on the main house's

door, he sighs and shake his head in disappointment, why the hell didn't they tell him? He would have helped him take his pills.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 53

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

His mental state has been better since Mthombo arrived, he keeps on monitoring

him. Though his heart beat is lower than it always is. He feels like his chances of living and surviving are shortened every time. If it's not this DID sickness then it's being blind, when will he finally get a chance to breathe? He hates his life so much.

Zano didn't know about him being on pills so he can't really blame him for chaining him, his father too, he doesn't blame him.

He sighs and lies on the bed. Now he understands those that say it's better to be born blind than to see and then finally turn blind. Couldn't they at least take his feet? They went for his feet! There are still things he needs to see.

“Bhut’ Khaye,” he knows her voice, it’s different from all the others he’s heard before, she doesn’t have a deep Zulu accent. You can just tell from her voice only that she grew up in Gauteng. “I heard about, you know, I’m sorry,” she says.

“Ubulaphi? Where were you? We’ve been looking for you,” he says, calmly.

“I was living with a friend, while I was job hunting,” she tells him.

“Uhlala emzini uzilile? You live in people’s home when you know very well that you are a widow,” Khayelihle asks, still calm.

“The fact that I’m a widow doesn’t mean that I have bad lucks,” Kea says.

“Okay,” he says. He can’t say nor do much, he can’t see, so what’s the point.

“Ubaba said you needed the child to do that you can see,” that Zion lady, MaKhoza, was called by Zanothando, and she told them that Gcinulwazi wanted his child home with him, only him.

“Yeah, I know,” Khayelihle says.

“I don’t want to be your wife,” Kea says and sighs. “What would people think of me? That I’m some object that can be inherited from the younger to and older brother?”

“You speak like being your husband was my dream, I’ve never even looked at you

like someone I'd want to get married to one day," Kea chuckles.

"You talk as if you can see, I'll sleep on the floor, apparently, you need to be with the baby all night," Kea says.

"No, it's okay, you can sleep on the bed, I'll sleep on the floor, only if you will help me lie down," the first thing he will do after regaining his eye sight is, remind his wife of how much he loves her. She didn't take the news very well.

"Before you sleep, can you please call uNxumalo for me?" he asks and holds his breath, this girl is not at all ashamed to say

what is on her mind. She also doesn't sugar coat.

"Alright," oh... wow, he expected her to explode!

It's been minutes since Kea left the room and told him that she'll come back soon.

He hears the sound of the door opening.

"Imina Khayelihle," his father tells him that it's him.

"Thank you, I didn't know you were looking for her," Khayelihle says.

"I started looking as soon as that lady told me that it's the only way to help you. I'm sorry for chaining you, taking you to the hospital would mean that you would be

taken to a mental institution,” he says.

“What was going through your mind when you were telling us that you’d kill us?” they still haven’t said anything to them about his condition.

“Eyy baba, can we revisit that topic?” he says and sighs. “I can’t see the point of talking about it now, I’m blind.”

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ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

It’s a Friday afternoon, a bright one at that. His brother’s eyesight is back and they are overly happy. Their father found

Keamogetswe in just a matter of few days, while they couldn't find her for 2 months. Her baby bump has grown bigger, not as much as Tema's, but it big. His calculations tells him that Kea is four months pregnant now.

Anyways, he woke up today and helped Slindokuhle with breakfast, something that he never does. He then ate and went to bath. Right now he's in a tuxedo that he rented. He doesn't like being formal, he just likes casual clothes. Today is all about impressing Audrey.

"Weeee Waze wababa Bafo, you look hot uyaphi?" (where are you going) that's

Mthombo whistling. "Turn for me lapho sheni lami," (my brother) He does a 360, his brother whistles for him. "I wonder which Vagina it is you will be ripping apart today) Mthombo says.

"Mthombo take a soap and go wash your mouth!" he father appears.

"Aii sorry, father," Mthombo says.

Zanothando bursts out laughing.

"I'm going to see my woman, I hope she's not those typical white girls with a flat ass, I want me a big ass," Mthombo laughs.

"You know, in this home we have an eye for flat assed women, the person that

bewitched us is probably dead,” Khayelihle chirps in.

“What do you know about asses, I’ll ship your small asses,” Nxumalo says.

“Eyy mina, I’m married,” Khaya says.

“I’m a fiance to someone, I think you should whip this one,” Mthombo points at Zanothando.

“I’m the first one to have a white girlfriend, so leave me alone,” he says and takes the car keys from Khayelihle, he’ll be driving an Audi. You see it’s rhyming, Audi and Audrey!

He had to drive a lot, it’s already 5pm when he gets to You Oki in uMhlanga. Well, they

said they would have dinner at 5pm sharp. But he's late, 30 minutes late. It's African time! Everyone knows that no Black Person is ever early for a meet up, if they are early, then it means that they are planning to kill you. Then the whites in the other hand! Those people are punctual!

She's seated by the corner of the restaurant, looking at her phone. He heads to her and stands over her.

"Hi," he says. She looks up, well she's beautiful, like she is in her pictures, she just looks better in real life. She smiles, she has straight and not white teeth.

“Zenotando!” Yohhh! Zisuka, his name is already being butchered.

“Call me Zano, mama, how are you?” he says and clears his throat. She gets up and hugs him. She smells nice. Also she’s dressed well, but the dress is too short, also who wears black to a date? Does she want to be a widow already?

“Why do you call me mama?” she says with a frown. Yohh kill him again, this will be a long night, a weekend even. He’ll have to explain why he farts the way he farts!

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 54

SAMKELISIWE NXUMALO

It's true when they say don't count your chickens before they hatch. My heart is shattered. We don't even have a year of love, and already we have a third person in our relationship. They didn't consider my feelings, Khayelihle didn't fight enough for our love.

I don't know what came over him last week, he was threatening to kill all of us, in order

for us to be safe, they had to chain him like he was a wild animal or something, I hated it, honestly. It hurt me so much seeing him in that state.

Mthombo came and he was okay, suddenly, but he still hadn't regained his eyesight. He didn't come back home to me, he continued to stay there, he didn't even call me to apologize for everything he had said, I know he wasn't himself, but he surely does know if the things he said to me.

Some say that if you are 'pure' you can keep a man, I came to this relationship as a virgin too, but it still didn't give him enough strength to fight for our relationship.

Yesterday, Keamogetswe came back, and he didn't hesitate to sleep with her in his rondavel, while I was here in this big house, I was cold. He didn't care. He didn't even text me goodnight.

What I'm doing now, is something I should have done the minute I heard that she was being arranged him. It will be easier for him to fall in love with her because now there's no dead ex that he still feels guilty over.

These tears that are falling from my face are annoying the hell out of me. I should have known that Khayelihle is not mine. He never was! I'm leaving, I don't know if I'll be accepted or not at home, I don't even want

to try. I do have money in my bank, it will last me longer. Now I wish I had gone to school, maybe my life would have had direction, I was stuck in a loveless marriage 3 years, I did nothing with my life, which goes to show that I'm just dumb!

"Hey, where are you going?" I don't know where his coming from. I quickly wipe my tears and sigh. He is behind me.

"I'm going home Khayelihle, I'll give you and your wife space," I tell him. Surely

Keamogetswe means a lot to then than I do, he never went blind when he was neglecting me, but I am his wife!

Ngethelwa ngenyongo ngithelelwa yena! I

am his rightful wife, even the ancestors know that, God too is my biggest witness.

“Oh,” he sits down and watches me packing. “Where is my wife, Samu?” He asks after some time.

“Where did you leave her? Your wife that was chosen for you by your ancestors?” I almost yell. He chuckles and gets up to lock the door. He stands by the door and looks at me, I turn and continue to pack my clothes in my bag.

“Ubanga umsindo, ubangela Mina?” (you are shouting, are you shouting at me?) Mxm! I close my mouth. “Ngiyabuza phela, I’m asking you a question, are you mute

now?" still, I don't say anything.

"Samkelisiwe," his voice is calm, yet authoritative.

"Khayelihle!" I yell. Everyone has a breaking point, and this is mine! "I'm tired of you!" I say, tears are streaming down my face, again! I don't wipe them, I let them form tributaries! I'm angry, angry at the fact that he's so calm!

"I can't hear you, sondela," he says I should come closer, but he is the one breathing on my neck now. "I'm sorry Themba lam, and I love you, you only." I close my eyes and let my tears flow.

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ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

He should have known, she was too sweet!
Too sweet to be true. He ignored it all and
came to her room with her. Unlike the black
girls that make you wait for 90 days before
they give it up, she threw herself at him,
and told him that she wanted him. He tried
putting on a gentleman façade, and said
no. She ran her hands on his chest and
whispered sweet nothings in his ears. He
got hard just by her running her tongue on
his earlobe. He took over and fucked her,
hard! She wanted to come on top, but he

didn't let her! His ancestors would wake up from the dead, it would be a disgrace! If he let her, it would mean that he would have to let her tell him to wear her g-strings one day! He doesn't really remember what happened after they took a bath. Right now, he is awake, his wrists have cuffs that are attached to the bed. He knows, he knows something is not right! Fucking God, this is the first time he's ever not felt a person's energy. Maybe it's just the fact that he let his guard down, but still!

"Audrey," he grits. She is sitting on a chair, with nothing but a gown on, she has her legs crossed.

“Baby boy,” she smiles, her smile doesn’t reach her eyes.

“What do you want from me?” he asks.

“Your dick,” she says and giggles! What the fuck? She just changed, over the night, who was the sweet girl she was with the whole night? Yes, she was not as innocent as she sounded like, but he liked her even better!

“Awuyeke lamasimba owenzayo usho ukuthi ufunani,” (cut the crap and tell me what you want) she frown raisinh her brow.

Okay, he has to commend her! It needs skills for you to be able to do that.

“What are you saying, have you forgotten that I’m not one of your Zulu bitches?” oh

his God, what have he gotten himself in?

“I’m say, eish!” he sighs, his English

bundles have ran out. “I mean, I am saying

that you, you are beautiful and the kind of

game you are playing right now is very

uncomfortable,” he lies.

“Oh, I want to know something, just before I

release you, I have you and my brother has

your sister in law, that naïve journalist! Is

she even a journalist? Anyways, think

before you answer me, alright?” she gets

her naked body up and walks to him, oh

she even has a gun in her hands. She sits

on him and starts running the gun on his

chest. “Who broke the fire, between you

and your brother? Your eldest brother? It was the two of you left inside the house, so tell me, who broke the fire?" he closes his eyes and sigh, what now?

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Yesterday's bonus

Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 55

ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

"I did, I broke the fire," he says. If this is the end of him, then so be it. What he won't be

doing is, selling his brother out. Anyways, if he dies now it won't be a problem because he had already released his tension.

"No, it can't be you," she does it again, her frown and eyebrow raising. "Zeinotando," so he calls for his attention.

"Zanothando is my name wesis, it was me, I burnt them to ashes," he says. He feels something stinging his face! He looks around for a bee, there's none. Oh, it was her, she slapped him. He laughs, really laughs.

"Why the fuck are you laughing?"

"And why are you cussing at me?" these cuffs are frustrating him already.

“Because you are laughing at me,” she says.

“Well, what am I supposed to do? Cry?”

“Tell me the truth, who broke the fire?!” she says frustrated. Well... it seems like little girl here doesn't want to accept the fact that he killed her family.

“Why are you asking if you'll assume that I'm lying?” he asks.

“I can see it in your eyes that you are lying,” ha-ha-ha, he laughs, again. This amuses him, honestly.

“Sucking my dick doesn't mean you know me, get the fuck off me and then come back when you have the balls to pull the

trigger on my forehead, if not, fuseg!” he says and clicks his tongue. He will not beg, if he’s dying then it means that it’s his day. She doesn’t move. Instead she sits directly on his cock.

“Please tell me the truth Zeino, my brother is coming if he finds out that you did if he’ll kill you,” she begs.

“You don’t want me dead?” She shakes her head no.

“No,” tears fill her eye. Ah, he’s not falling for it. He let his guard down once, if he does it again then he would be a fool.

“Hambonya didi lenyoka,” (get lost, you ass of a snake!) she raises her brow.

“What are you saying?” She asks, he grins.

“I was just saying you are beautiful for what you are doing,” he says and smiles.

“Audrey, or whatever your name is, do you really blame us for having your father killed? Well, we should have thought thoroughly and let your other family members go, but your father, your father was a monster, he was a rapist, he raped your mother day in and day out, and then he paid people to lie on my brother,” He says, his voice calm. He needs to say the right things, otherwise she won't let him go. “I know,” a single tear slides from her face, Zanothando doesn't know what to trust

now, he doesn't feel the need to be scared or afraid, he just wants to embrace her. "I didn't want this too, it's all my brother's doings, it's only him that I'm left with in this earth" she sighs and purses her already small lips to a thin line.

"Well, you could release me, I won't do anything to you," he says, staring into her eyes.

"What will I tell him when he gets here?" she asks.

"I won't leave," he won't, he will be here with her, waiting for her brother to kill him, and that will only happen in her dreams. She

uncuffs him, he gets up and asks to take a shower with her.

The shower they took was innocent, they shared kisses here and there. They couldn't get their hands away from each other.

Zanothando takes the bag he came with and takes his clothes to cloth himself.

"I liked you," he says. He really did, he just hates that what they had has to come to an end like this.

"You don't like me now?" he shrugs.

"I hate that you played me," he feels small, so small that he fell right into her trap.

"I'm sorry, but I really do like you Zeino, I do," he huffs.

"It's Zanothando, don't you know your vowels?" he asks, combing his hair. To say he's annoyed would be

"Zanothando," she says and sighs.

"You don't mind being naked, I see,"

Zanothando says, this is one of the things that doesn't make them complementary.

He loves her, he knows he does. His heart beats differently now, but the fact that she's a Rooi is a problem. He doesn't really care about her 'kidnapping' him, he's just worried that his brothers might lose it.

"My brother will be here by 6pm," she says and gets up, she catwalks to him. She puts her hands underneath his t-shirt and

brushes his chest. "We can make the most of the time we have," her hand travels down to his waist, she finds his belt and unbuckles it. He gently pushes her away before she can do much. His cock is already fighting to be freed.

"I think this is not a good idea," he says and swallows back his tears.

"I want you," she says.

"Trust me, I want you too, but we are won't work, this won't work," he says.

"I don't want a relationship," she says and taps her pale fingers on his arm. He sighs and pulls her closer to him, he wraps his arms around her waist and kisses her lips.

He deepens the kiss and runs his hands on her back. He grabs her portable ass.

Maybe, just maybe, if they both had different families, they would have worked out.

She's petite, so she's easier to carry, he puts her on the edge of the bed. He rubs his penis on her clit. He taps it twice before pushing it all at once, she gasps. He closes his eyes before he thrusts in, he pounds on her.

"I'm close!" she screams. His body tenses before he slightly opens his mouth and shuts his eyes. He pulls out, and spreads his semen on her stomach. "Zanothando!"

hawu, now she knows how to pronounce his name? He doesn't say anything, he just gets himself a towel in the bathroom and wipes himself before he wears his clothes. He checks in his little bag, there's a few thousands, he takes it and puts it on the bed. Oh, before he forgets! He takes a paper and a pen, he pens down his address. "My sister in-law, where is she?" he asks, clenching his jaw.

"She's probably home now," she says.

"Don't fuck with me, where is she?"

"It's true Zanothando, we didn't touch her, but my brother monitors her," she's wiping herself.

“Okay, tell your brother to look for me and fight me like a man,” he takes his bag and leaves.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

Season Finale

CHAPTER 56

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

Mthombo is still not home when I wake up today! I think he is testing my patience, he

doesn't understand the fact that I miss him.

I waited for him for the whole weekend, he kept on telling me that he would come back after he's done sorting everything out at home, but still, nothing.

He left because there was something he needed to take care of at home and I understand that fully, I just miss him, he left me with two guards and a driver, just to feel safe. Feel safe from what? I don't know either. He promised to come back on Sunday, but today is Monday morning.

"Mthombo what do you want?" I ask when I finally answer my phone. He's been

blowing it up. I haven't been ignoring him purposefully, I was just too tired to answer. "Do not go to work," I snap my eyes open. My eyes were half open. It's Monday and I haven't even prepared myself for work, but that's not what jolts me awake, I'm surprised that he now thinks that he has the right to tell me what to and what not to do.

"Mthombo, hey," he sighs, I can sense his tiredness over the phone, he's probably closing his eyes and rubbing his temple in frustration, I've learnt a lot about him since I've started living with him.

“Sthandwa Sami, please don’t go to work, I’m on my way there, your boss is one of the Roois, they want to avenge their,” I gasp for air, what the hell is he saying? I’ve been working under people who we assumed were all dead? Does this mean that I’ve been working with ghosts? Sigh.

“What?” my reports are supposed to be here by 1pm. I had investigated them and their company, but I didn’t think it would be this bad.

“Just that nkosazana, they hired you because they had an agenda,” he says. It would have made sense if they had come up to me and asked me to work for them, if

they had approached me, then it would have been better, now I job hunted, they probably saw their chance there, 'naïve girl will bring us closer to Mthombo' they must have said, and that's exactly what I did!

"Okay, I'll wait for you," I say and sit down, I'm really defeated.

It's 1pm when one of the guards knocks and tells me that a parcel has been delivered, and it's mine. I thank him and open the envelope, indeed there's nothing like Eric White, his name is Josh Rooi, I feel so dumb and stupid!

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NARRATED

She feels so used!

Zanothando made sure that he doesn't make her cum just to prove a point, she didn't even get a chance to complain because he was angry.

She's lying on her bed crying, it's been two weeks already but she keeps on thinking about him, he's so genuine. He made her feel important in just 2 weeks of chatting. He made sure to text her every morning, even though there were some emojis that were misused. He made her feel special, something she's never felt in her whole life.

Gcinulwazi is probably 6 feet tall, he's not too dark, her favorite part of him is his eyes that shimmers every time he smiles.

That day, after he left, her brother got there and shouted her asking her how she could let an enemy get away, someone that killed their mother and little brother when they were away. She just told him that she didn't want to be included in all that drama. He was disappointed but he had no choice but to let her be. They all hated their father because if the things he did to their mother, they could thank the Nxumalos for getting him out of their way, what they hated is that

they killed innocent people, people they both still needed.

“Seven, aren’t you gonna eat?” that’s her brother, Noah, coming in.

“I’m not hungry,” she says and frown when she sees that he has a plate in his hands.

“Are those eggs? Oh God, they smell so weird!” she says and quickly covers her mouth before running to the bathroom and vomits. Noah sits down and releases a deep sigh, damnit he’s just so tired.

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KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

Life is very difficult without him, my husband. A lot had to be done in order for me to have the rights to my childm I had to stop mourning my husband which makes me feel like shit, I wonder what he thinks of me in the other side. He probably thinks that I don't love him enough. But I'm hoping that he can see that I don't even share a bed with his brother, when he comes to his Rondavel, he sleeps on the couch.

Yep, I'm in a polygamous marriage, except that I'm an inherited wife, I've been passed from one brother to another. Nothing has changed, I still don't like Khaya, it's even worse now, I think he doesn't like me too,

he just tolerates me. For the sake of the elders, Khayelihle rotates between MaZwane– Samkelisiwe– and I.

MaZwane– I'm yet to get used to addressing her with that name, she's my sister wife now– is not as scornful as I thought she would be. I understand why she is cold towards me, but I think she also has to understand that my hands were tied, I tried running away, hoping that they would forget about me, they did, but it only lasted for 2 months.

Today is my day, and I'm definitely not looking forward to it. We don't even converse. We exchange greetings and

sleep, probably one of the reasons why comes in late.

I hear a knock, I shout for him to come in. What I like about him is that he is always respectful. He always makes sure that I'm decent when he comes in.

"Sisi," he says and sits on the couch. He seems like he's tired.

"Bhut' Khaye," I acknowledge him with a small smile. He lies flatly on the couch. I get up and go to the bathroom, I run the water for him. I go back and tell him that I've ran water for him he thanks me before heading to the bathroom, well this won't be an every day thing, I'm just doing it because

I can see that he's tired. I get in my sheets and close my eyes, but sleep doesn't come. I hear movements in the room after sometime, and then I hear sniffs and sobs. What do I do now?

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 57

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

I don't know what to say, he's trying by all means to keep it low, maybe if I was asleep like he thinks I am, I wouldn't hear him. If it was Gcinulwazi I would know what to do to make him feel better, he loved how I would always brush his head, it didn't calm him down fully but at least I knew that he knew I was there with him, all the way, but with this one I don't know what to do or to say. I don't know him at all.

It's been probably 20 minutes of him crying, I don't think he'll stop now.

I quietly peel the blanket off me and switch the lights on, he quickly buries his face in his hands and quietens his sobs. I stand

next to my bed and look at him, I don't know what to say.

“What’s wrong bhuti?” I say once I find my voice. He doesn’t say anything so I continue, “I’m sorry for being a burden in your life,” I really don’t want this too, he still doesn’t say anything. “Please bear with me, I’ll give birth and I’ll leave the child after he or she turns 2 with you and your wife,” I don’t want to be what comes between him and his wife. Still, he says nothing. “Bhut’ Khaya, you can go back to your wife,” this time, I overstep our boundaries and put my hand on his shoulder and pat it. “Just make sure that they don’t see you, I mean the

elders," I tell him and quickly go back to my bed.

"Please switch off the lights," he says, his voice sounds strained, it's hoarse. His face is still in his hands. I switch them off.

"Thank you, I'll make sure no one sees me," thank goodness.

He quietly walks out, I switch in the lights and get up to lock the door. I hate Londeka, she lied about bhuti being raped, if she hadn't, none of us would be here, I just wish to see her one day, to ask her how she feels about ripping a family apart. I go back to bed and lie down, thinking about my late husband. I don't think I'll ever get over him,

especially because everything here reminds me of him. I don't want to forget him, but I would like for the pain to fade, it's too much. I'm surprised that my baby is still alive, I'm so stressed out. I'm glad that he or she is stronger like his father was.

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SAMKELISIWE NXUMALO

My heart pains. Not only does it pain when he goes to her. It pains even when he kisses my forehead before leaving.

When he's supposed to spend the night with me, he respects it and does not even

look at her, even when it's her turn, he spends the whole day at work, he passes here to eat, and then takes a bath before he kisses my forehead and reminds me that he loves me. I don't think that it's enough, he didn't fight for our love, even though he knew that we had just made up for the years that we let pass us.

Tonight is her night, he just left. It's time for me to go to sleep. I quickly get my room ready before I get in bed, I do my small prayer before I close my eyes and let sleep takeover.

I'm woken up by the door slightly opening, who the hell is that. I pretend to be asleep

and pray to the Lord that he saves me from whatever it is that's about to attack him right now. I hear footsteps coming closer and I hold my breath.

"Sthandwa Sami," What the hell is he doing here? I quickly release the breath I was holding in and peep, indeed it's him, but what is he doing here? He'll put me in trouble.

"Hey, what are you doing here?" I whisper, like this is not my husband, I quickly switch on the lights and watch him squint like the light is blinding him or something. His eyes are bloodshot red. "Hey, what's wrong?" I ask, alarmed. I'm panicking, I hope

everything is okay. "Is Kea okay?" I hope he didn't hurt her. I quickly get up from my bed and hold my waist expectedly. I'm expecting an answer.

"She's okay, but I'm not," okay, I quickly put on my gown and sit next to him.

"What's wrong, what happened?" I have to be there for him. It's not allowed, him coming to my room because he has problems with another wife is not allowed. He has to deal with them and come to me like he doesn't have any problems, but I turn to him and tell him to tell me what's wrong. "This feels like it's over me, I feel like I'm failing, both you and I, my brother's

son too,” he says and sighs. “I held on to my baby mama and son for the longest time and rejected you, ngiyaxolisa,” he says and a tear slides down his cheek. I quickly wipe it, my heart is breaking. We were told that ‘indoda ayikhali’ I want to tell him that our elders would be disappointed if they would see him this vulnerable, but I’m glad he is doing this with me, I’m the one that sees his vulnerability. He places his head on my lap and smiles, his eyes are staring into mine. His bad finds mine and kisses it. “Thank you for standing by me, I appreciate you and your love that kept us until now,” he says and sighs. “The fact that I agreed

taking over my brother's duties doesn't mean that I don't love you, she's my brother's wife and if will stay like that." I nod my head. "Eyy kodwa I'm failing Themba lami, every time I see her," years fill up his eyes, everytime he sees who? Is he starting to love her? My heart starts beating at a quicker pace. "I remember her lips kissing my chest, her hands wrapped around my manhood, it disgusted the shit out of me, I tried to ask her to stop but she told me that she would call Uma and tell her that I wasn't changing and that meant I would stay longer with her," what is he trying to tell me? Oh God. My hands start

trembling. He started having sex at an early age? With older women?“I hate her and her sister-in-law, Uma,” I’m lost, really lost. “She raped me,” how does that happen? It’s not possible. Men cannot get raped.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 58

SAMKELISIWE NXUMALO

I let him lie on my lap and brush his head until he falls asleep. I don't know if I'll be able to sleep after this. I just don't understand the concept of men being raped. With women, it's better to understand because there's forced penetration involved. Men??? Come-on. These people get hard the minute they see an ass, okay, not exactly that. But then what I mean is, you can't have sex with someone whose penis is not hard, and if it is hard, then it means they want it too, period, well that was what I thought, it's what I still think.

Sleep didn't come, the sun just rose but I'm still awake. I get off bed and go to the bathroom to take a bath. I head to the kitchen to prepare breakfast after refreshing. Soft porridge and peanut butter for him, and bread and scrambled eggs for me. A knock comes through, it's still early, it's not even 6:30 am and we already have visitors? I sigh and go to open. Oh it's my husband's wife.

"KaMailula," this is how I address her now that she's also my husband's wife.

"MaZwane, sorry for disturbing you, I brought this, I had ironed them last night," I give her a smile and thank her before

taking the clothes, she leaves and I close the door. I go to the bedroom and place his suit on the bed. Khaya is never this formal, he loves wearing casual, I don't even know why he has a wardrobe full of suits if he doesn't wear them. He doesn't like suits but we have to honour his wife, he has to wear this otherwise she'll feel bad. It's grey pants and a grey blazer, a cream white shirt and a black tie. Now this would really make him look dashing, there's a lot of convincing I need to do. He appears from the bathroom, he's wrapped in a towel. He looks at me and smiles.

“Usunenye indoda wemkami? You have another husband now, my wife? You know I don’t wear these,” he says.

“Cha, KaMailula ironed this for you, please wear it myen wam,” I say and get closer to him, I kiss his chest. He hold my waist and looks down at me.

“For you, I’ll wear it,” he says and kisses my forehead. I take a seat and watch him lotion his body. I don’t understand how he got over yesterday this quick. He seems fine, like he wasn’t crying himself to sleep.

“Breakfast is ready,” I inform him and walk out.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I've left work, again! I don't know whether it's me or the career I chose. But, it's between the two. I don't know whether it's not for me or I'm not for it. You know, I've also decided to stop looking, I think I should give myself time to figure out what it is that I really want– that was an advise given by Mthombo.

We are in his home.

We came here last night, when we got here, everyone was asleep, so we just headed to his Rondavel and slept. Right now, I'm

being woken up by him kissing my forehead.

“WeNhliziyo,” he says and smiles. I smile too, and check the time before I jump out of bed, why didn’t he wake me up? “What are you running away from?”

“Mthombo! You should have woken me, you know I should be in the kitchen,” I say and run to the bathroom to brush my teeth, I’m so frustrated. They’ll think that I’m doing this on purpose.

“They don’t even know that we are here,” he says following me. I roll my eyes.

“Your car is outside,” I tell him, he scratches his head.

“But we got here very late, you deserve to sleep,” he says and leans on the door. I watch and laugh. He’s in his boxers only. “Yeah, but kusemendvweni, this is my marital home, I need to act like a wife should,” I say. He grins, ahhh this one! I brush my teeth and put on a long skirt and a long sleeve t-shirt, I put on a head wrap and a shawl, and then just like that, I’m a full makoti! I kiss his cheek and leave the room after fixing the bed.

“Good morning,” I greet Keamogetswe . She’s the only one in the kitchen, Samke lives a but far from home, u guess she

doesn't come here as often as I thought she does.

"You are glowing girl!" Kea says after greeting me back.

"Thank you, I think it's the happiness," I say and smile at her, she smiles back at me.

"How are you feeling?" I ask. I've never really asked her this question. She's pregnant, she just lost her husband and was given to his brother soon after.

"I'm okay," she shrugs. "There's nothing I can do, I just need to accept everything as it is," she says. My heart falls to my feet, I think all she needs is a hug, she's been

through a lot already. We catch up while preparing breakfast.

Through the window, we see one of the Nxumalo brothers, I'm not sure who it is between Zano and Khaya. Oh he's bigger, it's Khaya. Kea sighs and tells me that she's coming back, he looks angry.

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KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

He looks angry, I know he's angry at me but I'm not sure what I did. I tell Tsandzekile that I'll be back and rush after him.

“Keamogetswe!” he almost yells. I fold my arms and look at him. “What is this?” he asks.

“What is what bhuti?” I’m really confused. He’s not greeting me, he just lashes out on me but I didn’t do anything to make him angry.

“This that I’m wearing Keamogetswe?”
Hhay-bo?

“Hawu, uzibona ugcokeni wena?” I mean really? Can’t he see what he’s wearing?

“Believe me my brother’s wife, ngiyaz’ bona ukuthi ngigqokeni,” well, it’s not my fault that I can’t pronounce those words. “I don’t like suits Mina!”

“But you look good in them,” I say. He really does look good. And, also, I iron what I think will look good on him.

“Maybe, but I don’t like them. Keep it in your mind that I’m not Gcina! Don’t try to change me,” I blink thrice. Does it seem like I want to change him? I want to tell him that I’m not but at the same time I don’t want to seem like I’m disregarding his feelings.

“I’m sorry,” I sit down. I don’t want to argue. He closes his eyes.

“Eish, I’m sorry for lashing out on you,” I nod my head. “I just don’t like suits,” I know it’s deeper than that. Maybe the main problem is what made him cry yesterday,

maybe the main problem is me. I don't know man.

"Are you okay?" I ask him, he heaves a sigh before he nods and smiles. "Are you not going to work?"

"I am," he says.

"Come and eat," I tell him.

"I've eaten," he says. I nod my head and tell him that I'm going back to the kitchen.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 59

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

He's been unable to work the whole day, at work. He lashed out on the wrong person. The suit thing was just an excuse. He just feels angry and hurt, the only person that was available that time was her and now he feels like shit, not only did he hurt her, he hurt his baby too. Today, all he was thinking of was her.

He doesn't need to be here most of the time, he just comes here to check on the destinations of his trucks, he also tracks them, and where they are needed. Well, he

just supervises because there are people that are hired to do that.

Today, his brothers are coming to his office, so is Rooi, they summoned him to come because they don't want more bloodshed.

"Ya, ucabangani Bafo!" Mthombo doesn't even knock, he just lets himself in and assumes that Khaya is thinking about something.

"Hayi wena!" he says and closes his laptop. He gets up and pushes his hand in his pocket, his brothers sit down and do not pay attention to him. He walks to the window just to feel the air breeze, but still

they don't notice him. He goes back and sits down.

"This tie is too tight!" he complains and readjusts it. Mthombo nudges Zanothando and they burst out laughing.

"We saw you, and you look handsome," Zanothando says, Khaya grins.

"Aii stop lying bafo," Mthombo says.

"Don't pay attention to bhut' Mthombo, he's just jealous," Zanothando says.

"I know bafo," Khaya says, he's still grinning.

"Uyaphapha wena, you are too forward, you tend to forget that you were kidnapped by a

girl, ahhh!" Mthombo says and bursts out laughing, Khaya Joins him.

"So much for being supportive," Zano says, and shakes his head, looking at Khaya.

"Infact, you look like you can't breathe, nxa," they laugh.

Noah arrives 15 minutes after Zano and Mthombo arrived, he knocks and gets in. He greets and takes his seat.

"I feel so disrespected, you came alone, jwabu la Somizi?" Mthombo says with a smile, like he didn't just cuss at him.

Zanothando gives Mthombo a look, Khaya is cracking up, well being Mthombo's brother is nice when he's in a good mood.

“I didn’t get the last part,” Noah says.

“No, I was just saying you are a strong man, whenever you see a black man just say, Jwabu la Somizi,” Noah chuckles says.

“How do I say I am strong?” Mthombo grins, he thinks he’ll get along with this Noah boy.

“Ngiyi jwabu la Somizi, say it after me” (I am Somizi's foreskin) Noah repeats after him. Khaya and Mthombo crack up laughing, Zanothando just smiles and shakes his head.

“Let’s be serious gentlemen, I called you here to confirm what we talked about over the phone, Noah. I don’t want any funny

business, I'm really sorry about what I did, burning your whole family down, I'm sorry," Mthombo says, he still doesn't know what came over him that night, his family kept on reminding him that they were innocent, but he just didn't listen.

"I think staying away from each other is okay, thank you," Noah says. Zanothando gets up and pours drinks for them.

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KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

As soon as I got into the kitchen, my mood changed, it went from 0 to a 100. You can

never be bored when there's baba and Slindokuhle in one room, they are funny. You know, they have a really healthy relationship, they fight, always, it's just adorable to watch. Sometimes I just look at them and wonder how my life could have turned out if I had my father with me, or, at least a father figure.

I'm preparing for bed when Khaya knocks, hawu what is he doing here? He should be with his wife. I open the door for him and wait for him to tell me what he is doing here.

"Samke said I should come here, sawubona KaMailula," I smile and greet him back

before I let him in. He's lost weight, not that much but it's noticeable. "I'm sorry for today morning, I really shouldn't have done that, I felt handsome throughout the day," he says and sits down on the couch.

"Okay, thank you," I say and sit on my bed. We fall into uncomfortable silence. I play with my hands. This is really weird. This man is a man I hated since I came here, but now I have to warm up to him, or leave. I'm planning to leave as soon as my baby turns 3, I'll go and do my articles and fully become a lawyer.

"Have you eaten?" I ask. He shakes his head no. I guess he's really hungry,

becomes he always comes here and sleeps, he comes to me after he's eaten. I get up and put on my robe and slippers and tell him that I'll dish up for him, he offers to accompany me to the kitchen, I don't protest. We silently walk to the kitchen. I warm up the lap and tripe, he says I should put it in a Tupperware because he'll eat in the room. Ah, I don't like people that eat in the bedroom, but I do as told.

"Come eat," he says.

"I'm full," I tell him, ye shakes his head no. Imihlola! He tells me whether in hungry or not now?

“You are full but my son in there is not,”
well, that’s what the prophetess said, she
said that the child isn’t Gcina’s but Khaya’s.
I roll my eyes and sit next to him, and eat.
I’m eating more than I thought I would.

“You says you are full bhuti,” he laughs and
gives me the Tupperware, good! I eat, I feel
him watching me, well I don’t care. I’m
enjoying this food so much. We go and
wash our hands in the bathroom. I give him
a blanket and a pillow before I get in bed. I
switch of the lights but don’t sleep.

“Kea,” I hear him say after heaving a sigh.

“Yes?” I say.

"I have a friend, he has so many issues, I don't know how to help him, can I have your opinion in on this?" he asks. I sit up, I have a feeling that the 'friend' us him.

"Yeah, that's okay," I say.

"My friend was raped by his aunt," my heart stops beating for a while. "That's what he says, he says that he told his wife but she didn't say anything, he said that he sensed that she didn't believe him," I hear his voice break, he clears his throat. "Sorry, I'm just close to this friend of my," he says.

"No, it's fine. Why? Can't he go and see a therapist or something?"

“What no! I can’t do that, I mean he, he can’t do that,” he corrects himself. He just confirms that the friend is him. He continues and narrates how all this affects 'his friend' my heart sinks when he tells me that he’s been diagnosed with multiple personality disorder. I can’t hold it in, I let my tears make their way out of my eyes. I switch on the lights, he freezes, his face is a mess. He quickly covers his face.

“Hey, hey,” I get up and rush to him. It may not be much, but all I can offer now is a hug. He lets me hug him and sobs on my chest. I close my eyes, he doesn’t deserve

this, nobody deserves this. He needs to tell me which aunt it is that he's talking about.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 60

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

Mthombo always tells me about his days, he tells me what pissed me off and what made him laugh. You know, although he doesn't really touch on deep issues, he

knows how to communicate. I love him because he is not those typical men that want to be thought for. He says his mind, I just love him, man. He gets in bed after taking a shower and pulls me to his arms. "I was thinking," I say. I have been thinking a lot lately, because it's the only thing that keeps me sane.

"Okay?" he says tensing, ahh he probably thinks that I'm leaving him.

"I think it would be great for the baby to be born here or in Johannesburg," I tell him. He heaves a sigh and kisses my forehead. "You think so? Thank you mathandana wami," (my love) I laugh. He can be such a

dummy sometimes. Next month in going home, we'll be preparing for the wedding ceremonies that should take place.

"Yeah, unless, you won't feel comfortable," I feel him shake his head.

"No, it's okay, as long as you are comfortable, I'm comfortable," he says and rubs his hand on my back, he gets to my butt and squeezes it.

"Ave ngilithanda ididi lakho, I love your ass," at this point I've gotten used to him. But, I still blush and look away whenever he says things like these. He kisses my forehead and then buries his face in my neck and sucks it. His fingers go underneath my

panties. He finds my clit and rubs it. His other hand cups my breast and then his warm mouth covers my nipple, he sucks it and lightly bites it. Damn! He gets me naked and gets over me.

“I love you,” he whispers. I want him inside me already.

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KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

We fell asleep on the couch, I don't know when sleep took over but I think it must be after he had quietened and slept. Dammit, my heart really hurts for him. I gently push

him off me and get to the bathroom to take a shower.

He's sleeping on the bed and looking up the ceiling when I return to the bedroom. I sit on the edge of the bed and heave a sigh.

"I hope you know that this is not your fault," I say. He shrugs his shoulders.

"This is why you should never trust your extended family with your children," some are not even bad, but I nod my head and get off the bed. It's almost 6am.

"Aren't you going to work?" I ask him.

"No, I'm not," I nod my head. "Can I feel him?" I wonder which doctor told him that the child is a boy. I roll my eyes and nod.

He comes to me and kneels before me before he places his head on my tummy. "Sawubona Mkhulu," he greets the baby and places his ear on my stomach. I feel some movements, he feels them too and laughs. "He hears me," he says, excited. "He does," I say and smile. He talks to the child for so long, I don't think we could ever hold a conversation like this.

"I'll take a bath," he says. I check the time, Jesus! It's already past 7. "Uyaphi? Where are you going?"

"To prepare breakfast," he shakes his head.

"Slindokuhle is here, also Tsandzekile is here to give you a break, you need to rest,

uz'thwele" (you are pregnant) he says. Well, I take my phone and scroll through it while I wait for Khaya.

Everyone is here, they are already eating, even MaZwane is here. I greet and sit next to Zano. Khayelihle takes a seat next to his wife after kissing her cheek.

I'm glad Samke is here, there's something I need her to hear, I actually want her to hear that men do get raped. I would blame her, but I know it's the society that allows that mentality.

We've eaten breakfast; Khaya, Zanothando, Mthombo and Tsandzekile leave, they say

that they are going to see mam' Lahliwe. Honestly, I miss her too, even my mother-in-law, I miss her. She's been gone for far too long, but uBaba doesn't seem to care, at all.

We offered to wash the dishes, because they all seem to have somewhere to go, Slindo and baba have a date with 'some boy' so they also left.

After washing the dishes, we settle on the sitting room, just to chill. She says she'll leave when there are other people. I don't know man, but I think that she's sweet, I would have never been like her. I would never warm up to my husband's wife, but

also I think she understands that Khaya and I don't want this.

I put on the podcast, and pretend to not know about the topic while introduce it.

"This is really interesting, please put up the volume," good!

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NARRATED

God has never, ever, liked her. She should have known better than to have unprotected sex. Even though Zanothando pulled out, she knows that a person can get

pregnant by pre-cum. But the question is, does Zanothando know that?

She's been sitting on her bed, crying. Her brother came here and told her that the Nxumalos have agreed to let this war go, what they have to do is just stay away from each other, and that Mthombo paid a lump sum of money just for peace to be maintained.

She's scared to even say something to her brother, he will be angry as hell.

She wipes her tears and dials Zanothando's number on the phone that she just bought, Zanothando blocked her on all social

platforms and her numbers too, so she bought a new phone and a sim card.

“Hello,” he says when he answers.

“Zanothando, it’s me Seven, please don’t hang up,” she says. Zanothando heaves a sigh and keeps quiet. “Are you still there?” she asks.

“Ya,” he says, coldly.

“Look, I’m sorry for what I did, I hope you understand why I did it,” so he says and sucks in a breath. “I’m pregnant Zano,” silence. “Zano?”

“Uh, I’m busy right now, can we meet up later? Are you still in Durban?” he asks. She nods her head.

“Yes, I am,” she says.

“Alright, I’ll come over later,” he says and hangs up. She puts the phone away and cries. This is hard on her, she’s only 22 and not yet ready to be a mother, but she was raised by a die-hard Christian mother, so she knows that she can’t abort the child.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 61

SAMKELISIWE NXUMALO

I need to apologize to Khaya. I didn't think that men can get raped. It was so dumb of me to even think that he was a man when he was just a little boy. I keep on rubbing my palms together. KaMailula is not even paying attention to me, I'm glad because I know that I would blurt it out, and that's not what I want. I don't want her to know that there was a time where Khaya was emasculated. What would she say? Jesus. I think I now see men differently. All my life I've been taught that men are strong people that should never cry, they said men should

wake up everyday and go to work. Men are ,and that they are always ready for sex.

I don't know how I'll start apologizing because I didn't tell him straight up that I didn't believe that. I swear it hurts me so much.

The day goes by very quick. He's here to fetch me so that we go home. Khayelihle is strong, no honestly. I don't think I'd survive being a victim of rape. I bid goodbye to everyone and then we head to the car. He opens the door for me and then gets in too, and then he drives off. Silence fills the car. His hand is on my thigh.

“Uyaphila?” (are you fine?) he asks, I nod my head. There’s a lot that is in my mind. We get home, and he parks the car. I ask that we stay in the car.

“How are you feeling Khaya, with everything that has happened, how do you feel?” I ask him, I see him blink, I guess he didn’t expect that.

“On some days I’m okay, some, I’m not,” he says.

“You know that I’m here for you, right, and that I love you? This doesn’t change anything, you are still the Khaya I loved, ngiyakuthanda yezwa?” (I love you, alright?) He nods his head, I kiss his temple. I love

him, I loved him throughout the years, this just made me love him more.

“Do you want us to go and visit u- Isibusiso?” I know how much he loves his son, even when he lies on the grave he loves him, he nods with a smile.

“We’ll go tomorrow, I love you,” I feel so relieved.

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MADLADLA

It’s time for her plans to be orchestrated, it has been too long since she’s laid low.

MaJiyane is starting to get on her nerves, she wants to go back home now.

She takes her phone and dials

Samkelisiwe's numbers. The girl doesn't pick up at first.

"Sawubona ma," she says once she picks up.

"Hey, ngane yam, how are you?" Thando asks.

"I'm okay ma, how are you?"

"I'm not okay baby, can you come and see me? I've been sick these last few days, and there's something I want to tell you," she says and crosses her fingers.

“You are sick ma? What is it?” she starts to sob, Samke has a soft spot for her, they have always gotten along. “Ma, where are you?”

“Are you coming?” she asks.

“Yes, let me tell Khaya,” she says.

“No. No don't do that, Khaya doesn't really like me, please come alone, I'll send you a driver,” Samke says okay and then hangs up. Now, this, this is all going her way. This umangena thing will only make things easier for her. It's time for her to shine.

“MaJiyane Ntombi, kumnandi ukuphika, living is so nice!” she says and sips her coffee.

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ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

This always happens, and it frustrates him. He can't read not analyze her. He's been here for more than 20 minutes, staring right into her eyes, yet there's still nothing he's able to pick up from her eyes.

"Skhombisa," he says and smiles at her, she frowns and raises her brow and frowns. He smiles. "How are you?" he asks. "I'm okay, you?" she looks tired, and he's enjoying the sight of it.

"I'm okay," he says and watches her sigh.

This is where she's supposed to offer him something to drink, but nope, she's not doing that. She keeps on sighing and scrunching her nose.

"Do you have anything to drink here?" he asks.

"Yeah, I have lemonade," she says, he releases a sigh and puts on his hoody. He's not here for water and lemons. She's white, don't they always keep hot stuff?

"It's okay, I'll have plain water," he says. She blankly stares at him. "What?" he asks.

"Go and take water for yourself, I'm pregnant and tired," he laughs.

“Babazani bo! How far are you?” he says and raises his brow.

“I’m 2 weeks,” he cracks up.

“Yeah, you are lazy. You look really beautiful,” he says and shifts closer to her.

His guard is let down, he doesn’t know how he should feel about her, whether he should trust her, but he has feelings, and maybe just maybe her pregnancy is a sign that he should hold her and never let her go. He takes her hand in his.

“Please look at me,” he says, she looks at his chest. With his forefinger, he lifts her face to face him. He brushes his thumb on her cheek. “Umuhle, you are so beautiful,”

she's a blondie, he doesn't know whether she's dyed her hair or not, but it sure does make her look gorgeous. Her pale skin, and her small yet so full lips makes his heart dance. "You want to know what my favorite color is?" he whispers. She nods her head, he smiles and lays a peck on her eyes. "Sea blue, the color of your eyes," she blushes and throws her eyes away from him. He's never really been in any relationship, he's had hit and runs here and there, but he just wants to try, try being loved by someone that's not his father or siblings.

"Zano," she whispers.

“Shhh,” he says and links their foreheads. Is it normal for his heart to beat like this? It beats like it will fall out. He takes her lips in his and smooches them. She moans in his mouth. His front throbs. He breaks the kiss once he’s breathless, but he doesn’t move his forehead from hers. His eyes are smaller than they normally are.

“Skhombisa wami,” (my seven) he says and chuckles.

“What do you want from me?” she asks. He intertwines their hands and kisses her forehead.

“Love,” he says. “Do you think you can give me that?” He asks.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 62

MADLADLA

I know Nxumalo, I've lived with him for more than 34 years. I met him when he didn't even know how to iron his own shirt, I loved him and taught him many things that he didn't know. He's never had any love from his parents, it's what messed his life.

Just like any child, Nxumalo needed to be held in his parents' and be assured that they loved him, but they had much better things to do than to love him.

He would cry on my shoulder and I'd let him cry, I'd be his pillar of strength, and this is the thank you I get. I as always think back to those days and laugh alone, it's true what they say, never trust people.

Umuntu ujika es'swini njengo tshwala! (a person turns on you very quick) I hate him and his seed, well except the one that left me and Mthombo.

I know Mzikayifani's strengths and weaknesses, it's his children. They are his

strength and weaknesses. I'll start there, from the first born to the last, well not first born because I will not touch Mthombo.

Mthombo would be my target, but he is the only reminder of Gcina I have, and also he is not that close to his father. I love him, my second love after Gcinulwazi.

Khayelihle is the first one I will deal with, that child has always been disrespectful. I saw it from his birth. He never cried when I birthed him, he just kept quiet, it was like he was dead, my heart sank, I wanted to cry, I wanted to scream, I had already chased Mthombo and Lahliwe away, I had thought that I was capable, but Khayelihle

just kept quiet, until his father came, he held him in his arms and gave him a name, he cried. From that day, I knew that I would never mean anything in his life.

The only child I had a bond with was Gcina, he loved me just as much as I loved him, he knew that I was his mother not those brats!

Samkelisiwe is coming, she's on her way.

I'll first talk to her, I'll lie and say I'm giving her a love portion, but I doubt that she will agree to that. One thing I know about

Samkelisiwe is that she loves that big head, Khayelihle. She persevered three years of not receiving love from him, she would never betray him, that's why I have plan B,

one way or another, she'll kill that husband if hers. I can't wait to be the first one in the row wearing a big hat in his funeral. I can't wait to see Nxumalo shattering and coming to bow to me for forgiveness, he surely will come back to me. After Slindokuhle, I'll kill him, it's as simple as that. He killed my soul, and I'll kill his children, one by one.

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SAMKELISIWE NXUMALO

After receiving a phone call from MaDladla telling me that she's sick and that she'd like

to see me, I quickly dressed up and waited for my ride, while I was waiting for my ride, I texted Khaya and told him that I was going to visit uMa, I told him that she said that she's sick so I'm going there to check up on him. He hasn't responded, nor did he view my message. I guess he's busy because he's been offline since morning, but at least he will know where I am. I'm not okay, I feel like something is about to happen. I sigh before taking a bottle of water and drink just to calm myself. I'm currently in a cab driving me to wherever MaDladla is. The driver introduced himself as a son to MaDladla's

friend. Thobani is what his name is. He doesn't say a lot, he's just quiet, I'm not a talker to, but I'd like to converse just to calm myself

My heart is very unsettled, if it were up to me, I'd tell this driver to take me back home, but Ma is not feeling well and she has no one wherever she is, I just need to check up on her and then I'll come back.

We get to the deep rural areas, thank car that this car is big, otherwise I don't think we would have gotten through this place.

This doesn't look like a place ma would live in. Although she was a rural wife, she had class. I feel sorry for. The driver shows me

off to a rondavel that looks like it's about to collapse.

I knock and let myself in once she tells me to come in. Okay, she doesn't look as sick as she sounded, but she's lost weight, also she looks like she's tired.

"Ma," I say and hug her. She sits down and offers me a seat, I sit down.

"I knew that I could count on my baby, how are you feeling?" I tell her that I'm okay, but she takes my hands in hers and tells me that she understands the situation I'm in, she knows what I'm going through. But I'm lost, what am I going through? "You see what Nxumalo did to me, that's what they'll

do to you if you don't become wise," I swallow, it might be true, but if it's destiny then I'll let it be, I'm young... I mean there's a lot of things I could do with my life. But, I'm willing to sit right now, I believe Khayelihle loves me, it hasn't changed, when it does, I'll gladly leave. I'll be broken hearted but I'll heal. "I have a solution," she says and searches for something from her pocket, she places it on the table but doesn't let go of it, and then she pushes it to me. I look at it and then her, hhaybo!!! Is my name Witch? She's giving me uMuthi? I chuckle, not because it's funny, but

because I'm shocked that she'd think I'd do that.

"Hhay-bo ma, what is this for?" I might be anything under the sun, but I am not a witch! How dare she!

"This will make him think of you only," she says! I get up and laugh.

"Eyyy, I thought you were genuine, hhay-bo ma, thank you, but I won't trap uKhaya with uMuthi," yho I can't believe this. I head to the door, but suddenly I feel my head getting lighter and then I feel like the room is spinning, my head hurts the ground and then, lights off!

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 63

MADLADLA

Genuine? What does that word even mean?

I doubt she'd even be able to define, let

alone spell it. Samkelisiwe, I thought she

had my back, clearly not! I'm glad I

prepared myself enough for this. Now,

she'll be under my spell, whatever I say she

must do, she'll do. She's just woken up, looking lost, just like I wanted her to be.

"Who are you?" I ask her. She doesn't say anything, good! She doesn't know who she is. "Samkelisiwe is what you are, a wife to my son, and you do exactly what I tell you to do, do you hear me?" she nods. Good! Umkhov' wam. "Now, tell me, my darling, who are you?" she nods.

"I am Samkelisiwe," good. I give her uMuthi and instructs her to put it in his drink. I will keep her with me, I'll let her leave by 7. So she will be too tired to be intimate with Khaya when she gets home.

It's time for her to leave.

I summon her and ask her a few questions, she looks and sounds normal, the only difference is that I tell her what to do at what time. As I'm still talking to her, I hear a car screeching outside, who could it be? I know it's not Thobani, Thobani is MaJiyane's neighbor's son, he lives in Durban, but he's here for a few weeks. The only reason why he came here is that I asked him to. I go to the window and peep. Oh it's my first son! What is he doing here? I guess he came here to say goodbye to mama.

"Yewena Thando!" he yells. The nerve of this boy!

“Who the hell is Thando wena?” I gave birth to this boy you has the nerve to come here and call me by name! Lord!

“Mthakashana, where is my wife?” I laugh! This is why he needs to go, he needs to rest and let go of his anger, otherwise we’ll never have peace in this world.

“Your wife came here willingly, don’t you want to give your mother a hug?” I smile at him and open my arms. No? Alright, I thought I’d give him a goodbye hug or something. I watch him stomp his way inside, he drags his wife out and puts her in the car. I smile and wave a goodbye, the final goodbye. I can’t wait to sing for him,

Ngiyolala ngingedwa ethuneni lami, what's nice about this whole thing is that the person that will be arrested is his beloved wife.

“Kwaze kwamnandi ezweni la MaDladla,”
This is my world. I rule! I check my watch, it's almost 7pm, MaJiyane is probably on her way back from work. I'll prepare something that's quick to cook, and celebrate the downfall of Nxumalo.

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NARRATED

Khayelihle is shaking, he's angry, as much as he's angry he knows that he can't shout at his wife because they were never let in on MaDladla's cruelty to them as her kids. And, besides, Samke and MaDladla were always close.

"But I would have appreciated it if you had waited for my response before you went," he says and sighs. It's almost 8pm, there's no food, and he's hungry as hell.

"You were offline, I couldn't have waited for long because she said that she was sick," Samke says and shrugs. She tells him that she'll prepare a drink for him before he goes to Kea, it's her turn to have him

tonight. She makes orange juice and quickly puts the small umuthi she was given by her mother-in-law. She stirs.

“Wenzan?” her heart stops beating for a minutes. She closes her eyes and takes in a sharp breath. “Samke, what are you doing?” Jesus! She’s dead!

“Uh- Nxumalo, I’m just stirring your juice,” she says and laughs, nervously.

“Oh,” he says and takes the juice from her and gulps it down. He kisses her cheek and says goodbye before heads to his car and drives off. His head feels a little light.

He gets to Gcina's rondavel, he doesn't knock nut just barges in. Kea is asleep

already.

“KaMailula,” he says. She peeps through the blanket and rubs her eyes.

“Oh, bhuti,” he smiles and undresses himself. He’s only left in his boxers. He gets into bed.

“Hhay-bo!” Kea exclaims.

“What’s wrong?” he says and laughs a little.

“You sleep on the couch,” she says sitting up.

“Aw’kahle, you are my wife, and that couch always strains my neck, I want to feel my child too,” he says. She releases a sigh.

She really didn’t see this coming, she feels like going outside and screaming, this is

not how she had imagined her life to be.

“I’m cold,” he says and runs his cold hands on her stomach underneath the covers.

She hold her breath. “Kea,” he says, his voice sounding strained. His hands runs up to her breast, she closes her eyes. “Should I stop?” he asks. She doesn’t respond. He pinches her hard nipple lightly. He also sits up and makes her sit on him. “Are you okay?” He asks.

“Yeah,” she says and a tear slides down her face. The last time she was intimate with her husband, he died. She doesn’t want to disrespect him. But, also, she’s pregnant, sometimes she does get too horny.

He doesn't break the eye contact, his mouth finds its way to her other nipple and sucks it. She closes her eyes, and pushes the thoughts of betraying their partners at the back of her mind.

"Why were you naked?" he asks.

"I had thought you were not coming," she says. He nods and puts a pillow next on the side and makes her lay on it. Fuck! His head gets lighter and lighter.

His front is throbbing, and fighting to be released behind his boxers. He gets her out of her panties and feels her sex, it's wet. He hisses and kisses her lips, it takes time for her to respond to the kiss. His fingers

keeps on brushing her clit as he kisses her. "You feel good," her mind is failing to stop thinking of Gcina. Tears fill her eyes. He comes down to kisser tummy and stays a little bit longer there. "Ubaba uyak'thanda, daddy loves you," he says and wipes a tear that just fell from his eyes. He positions himself and enters her. She slightly opens her mouth and moans lowly.

"Please open your eyes," he says after wiping her tear. She can barely keep her eyes open. The pleasure she's feeling is too much. He's thrusting it slowly, hitting it correctly and well.

“Oh fuck!” he says and intertwines their hands. Breathing is hard but he wants to finish what he’s started.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 64

ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

Maybe if he felt this earlier than now, maybe just maybe, he would have been able to stop it, but it’s already 9 pm, and

he's already drank the concoction, there's no way he could save the situation, he's too far from home.

"I'll be back, Seven, they need me at home," he says, dressing up. Seven raises his brow.

"How do you know, you didn't even receive a call," she says. If he had time, he would have explained. But right now, Samkelisiwe needs his help. Before she wakes up and sings about her killing people. He knows that it's not her, she's hypnotized, but he doesn't know who the person behind it is. It frustrates him!

“I’ll be back and I’ll explain everything, babe,” he says and kisses her cheek and tells her that he loves her.

She gets up and walks him to the door, she shuts the door and locks as soon as he gets out, she goes back to bed and sighs.

This always happens, and it frustrates the shit out of him, every time someone’s about to die at home, they always make sure that he’s not home. Right now, he’s driving like a maniac, hoping to get to Samke before she does something really stupid. He keeps on making small prayers, hoping that God spares them, Kea and

Gcina otherwise, everyone home will be shattered! They can't both die.

He just got here, he knocks and gets no reply. He kicks the door thrice before it opens, he will come back in the next life as a burglar because what the hell? These are skills.

"Sisi!" he shouts. Oh, here she is. She's sitting on the couch, not moving. She's just... a living corpse? He's already called uMaKhoza, she's on her way with isiwasho. "Who are you?" he asks, hoping to find who her creator is. The creator of the Zombie in her.

“Samkelisiwe, a wife to Khayelihle,” she blankly says. Holy shit!

“Who made you?” he asks, Silence. Ahh Jesu!

MaKhoza arrived, she prayed over Samke, Zano could say that she’s okay now, but not fully because she’s trembling. They put her in bed, and Zano will spend the night here, just to guard her.

“Ma, couldn’t you see anything?” Zano asks, they need to find this person, otherwise it will be the end of them. This person will keep on striking and striking until Everyone of them is dead.

“No, I couldn’t, they’ve hidden themselves, I couldn’t see anything,” MaKhoza says and sighs, this is the first time she’s in a situation like this. She had to wake her son up in the middle of his sleep to drive him here, and now all she can see is nothing? It’s really unfair. Zanothando closes his eyes and sighs.

“This is a mess ma, I really don’t know what we did, I think my family is cursed,” he says. MaKhoza pats his shoulder and shakes her head.

“You should come to me, we need to talk,” they really need to have a serious talk, but

right now Zano needs to deal with the situation at hand.

“I’ll come ma, I’m just waiting for them to announce who is dead, so that we can finally focus on what it is that is ending is,” Zano says. He’s crying.

“Don’t let them see your tears, be their strength,” how? When he’s just as broken as they are, if not worse?

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

Fucking God, he shouldn’t have! He shouldn’t have done what he did yesterday,

he wonders what she'll think of him. He's been awake for some time, but he hasn't opened his eyes, he's scared, or maybe he doesn't want to face reality, the reality that this woman in his arms is not his. He sighs before he flickers his eyes open.

"Keamogetswe?" She's quiet. She doesn't seem like someone who's been breathing.

"No, no, no no!" He shakes his head no, she can't do this to him. He shakes her. "Uthule nje? Keamogetswe no! You can't do this to me!" tears have already filled his eyes, he is on his knees. He pushes the blankets off her, and almost faints when he sees blood

all over the bed. He shakes her, her body is cold! Cold, like a dead person's body.

“Keamogetswe! Vuka!” He asks her to wake up, he’s a crying mess. He gets on his feet and looks for his clothes, he takes his boxers and throws them in and puts on his trousers. He gets her clothed too and carries her to the car, and drives off, tears are still flowing from his eyes. He connect to the Bluetooth and calls Mthombo.

“Yohh!” Mthombo exclaims, he’s been up all night, trying to impress his fiancée with new moves in bed, he’s only getting his rest now, and Khaya has to ruin.

“Bafo! I’m in deep shit, I might have murdered Keamogetswe, she’s not breathing neither is she responding when I talk to her,” he says.

“Relax, Bafo, relax,” Mthombo says and gets up from his bed. He’s panicking, but for the sake of keep Khayelihle can, he tries to sound cool.

“How do I relax when I know that Gcina’s wife dies just after I fuck her?” he wipes his stubborn tears. He doesn’t know what got over him yesterday. It felt like there was a pulling force... Like she had a magnet that kept on pulling him to her.

“You didn’t kill anyone! Tell me where the hell you are!” Mthombo almost yells, Gcinulwazi’s rondavel is locked.

“I’m on my way to the hospital,” Khaya says.

“No, you aren’t, take a U-turn and drive to my house,” a house that only they know about.

“There might be a chance if her being alive,” He’s in denial, he failed her, both her and his son.

“That’s I’m calling Lumka now, she’ll know what to do,” Lumka is their doctor. He hangs up and does a U-turn, for once he’s

praying that God help him. This is the time that he needs him most.

He gets to Mthombo's house and takes Kea into his arms, he doesn't have the keys with him, so he puts her on his lap, he's seated on the stoep. Trying to figure out what the hell happened after they had sex, but his mind is just blank. He doesn't recall her telling him to stop, so what could have happened?

He looks at her, her eye are not fully closed, he can see the white part of her eye, dammit! This is just fucked up, what will he say? How does he even explain this?

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 65

Everything that is supposed to be green is green, there's leave and quietness. It's quiet, the peaceful quiet, so quiet that you can hear the waters flowing. The birds chirp every morning. Rain comes once a month. This is just a beautiful land, maybe it's a land that doesn't exist, but to him, it does.

No one has ever been to this place, well, except him, Gcina. He's been here since that second bullet penetrated and burnt his skin, it was when he took his last breath. He died on the second shot.

He's failing to go to the other side, because apparently, it was not his time. He still had a lot to do. But they couldn't possibly expect him to be the glue that kept his family together when he was the most rejected. Everything started falling apart in the Nxumalo homestead as soon as he left. His mother found out that his father was busy with her sister on the side. His siblings found out that his mother was

abusive towards his father. His mother, that woman! He hated her as soon as he turned 8, she got between him and his siblings. Some were too busy for him because he already a parent they didn't have, a mother! And now, she's scheming against him. It's too hard to communicate with Zano because he's also a child and he has a lot in his plate, he has a child that's on it's way. So, whispering things in his ears is not fair. Mthombo, he only is able to take over Mthombo when he is wearing his traditional bracelet, but right now, Mthombo has placed it in a safe because

he's scared, he becomes ruthless when he wears it.

He's failing to reach the earth because fates have turned, now the only way he can get to his forefathers is if he reunites his family like he was supposed to do from the start.

She appears, bloody, with a baby girl that he's been waiting for. He didn't want her here, but she had to come, as a sacrifice, the child!

"Gcina," she's still as petite as she was before he left. The sight of the blood stains us really disturbing but he soldiers on and smiles at her.

"Mawengane Yami," she sits down next to him and sighs. She's tired, her life is tiring, maybe now she'll get some rest, and peace. "Please give her to me," he says, so tiny his baby is. This one is his. He takes her and holds her in his arms. He kisses her forehead, she's so beautiful.

"I missed you, what's her name?" her voice is echoing. He smiles and looks at his little baby that looks like him. Well, maybe he might be exaggerating but nothing makes a man— dead or not— proud like his fertility being proven.

"Onikelwe," he says. She had to be taken to give his brother life. "I missed you too my

baby," he says. She gets teary. "Don't cry." he says and focuses on the child in his arms.

"Why that name?" she asks. The name is really weird and... She doesn't know why he would think that name is a good name for a child.

"You will understand, some day," he says.

"I'm sorry for leaving you behind Themba lam," he says. "She's gone," he says, Kea raises her brow, the baby still has her eye open, it's weird for a tiny baby like this but it's also adorable.

"Shhhh, I'm here with you now, I'm happy, I just need to take a bath," he smiles and

nods. She lays her head on his shoulder and closes her eye. With his free hand, he brushes her stomach...

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Khayelihle is crying, this is the second person to die in his hands, what did he ever do to God? Why didn't God take him instead? It puzzles him why God enjoys watching him suffer because this is not funny at all?

From a distance, he sees Mthombo's car, he quickly get up. He sees the car stopping, and Mthombo climbs out and Sprints to

them. He must have figured that the car is slower than him– imihlola!

"What happened?" Mthombo asks, breathless. He crouches and puts his two fingers in Kea's neck, he looks at Khaya.

"There's a pulse ndoda! kanti where is Lumka?"

"There's a pulse?" Khayelihle is stuck there, there's a pulse which means there's hope! Why the fuck didn't he think about it? he didn't feel her pulse. Dammit.

Lumka finally arrives, Khaya and Mthombo carry Kea inside.

"You'll out me in trouble Mr Nxumalo, this that you are making me do might cost me

my license." She's always dramatic, she always complains before doing a job.

"I will double the normal price, just make sure she's alive," Mthombo says and walks out. Right now, all he cares about is Kea being alive. He can't fail uGcina, again!

"What happened kanti Bafo?" Mthombo asks. Khayelihle shrugs.

"We had sex," Khayelihle says, and looks away.

"She's your wife that was bound to happen Bafo, nothing out of the ordinary happened?"

"I felt dizzy throughout," Khayelihle says and sighs. In normal circumstances

Mthombo would be bursting out laughing right now, because what the hell explains him being dizzy during sex?

"Yho, we need to pray," Mthombo says and pats Khayelihle's back. "Baba wethu, Our father in heaven please bring Kea back, in the name of the Lord Amen," he says, it's short but God knows what is in his heart.

"She's back!" That's her, Lumka yelling from the inside. "Oh my God, she's back!" They quickly run inside. Khayelihle goes to her. Her eyes are slightly opened and teary.

"You are back," his voice cracks as he says, he takes her hand and kisses it. "Thank God you are back,"

"Where's my baby," she's crying already.

Mthombo and Khaya turn to Lumka, she takes in a breath.

"Unfortunately...", Kea doesn't let her finish, she shakes her head no.

"Don't say it," She says, weakly and lets her tears fall. "Onikelwe, that's her name," Keamogetswe says and closes her eyes, to say that her heart is shattered would be an understatement.

"We need to take you to the hospital so that they can clean your womb," Khayelihle is on the floor, crying. He feels cursed, why would the child die just after they get

intimate. He thought he loved him, he kicked when he heard his voice.

"Bafo, get up," Mthombo say and clears his throat, there's a lump on his throat.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 66

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

Anger? It does not come close to what he feels towards wife right now. He

understands that she might have felt neglected for the past three years, if she didn't want to forgive him she could have left, simple.

"Do you realize what you've done," two days ago, she confessed that it was MaDladla who changed her to whatever it is that she was when she Poisoned him.

"I said I was sorry nje Khaya," she says.

"You said you were sorry, Sorry? Is that supposed to make everything better?" he almost yells! It's been two weeks since that incident. What hurts him the most is that couldn't lay his child to rest like any other child because apparently "she vanished"

and her tissues went back to her mother. He's referring to the child as a girl because Kea kept on insisting that it's a she. They will name her spirit and let her to rest because they don't have her physical body, neither do they have her bones, it's just mess.

"Eyy kodwa Khayelihle, one mistake?, Just one?" she's crying, it's not like she did this thing willingly. She didn't know that MaDladla would use her as a pawn.

"One mistake that killed an innocent child," Khayelihle says and chuckles. All the love he had for her turned into hate, sitting with her here makes him want to puke.

“Wow! Just wow! At least I didn’t do it willingly, she hypnotized me,” Samke says and gets up.

“That’s what makes me angry! Didn’t I tell you that I was raped because of her? You still went behind my back and ran to her when she called you because it’s me you don’t like, angithi?” she sighs.

“She accepted me, when you couldn’t even hold me, you used me for sex,” she says.

“Come-on! Sex is not only for men, I cum, you cum, ungalinge nje mina ungibhedele, I’ve never had sex with you and left you lying like a bitch. I made sure that you get the same amount of pleasure. Do not fuck

with me. I've talked to my lawyers, I think I'll be better off single, I can't! I've overlooked a lot of things Samkelisiwe, this one is something I can't get over! When I see you, I see a murderer of my child. I asked for a child and you didn't want to give me, and now because of your recklessness I've lost the one that was given to me," he says and sighs.

"It's a good thing that child died, you are heartless you wouldn't be a good father," she says and walks to her room, tears are streaming down her face. He follows her. She's crying on her bed, he shakes his head.

“I’m going back home, sengikhathele Mina
I’m tired,” he says and sighs.

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ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

Again. MaDladla is a course of pain in his
home. He found her, the plan was to kill her,
but he doesn’t have the strength to. This is
his mother.

“What do you want here?” she asks! He
blankly stares at her.

Cigarette. Lighter. He lights and then pulls.
He keeps it in for a few seconds and then
puffs. “Do you realize that this is

disrespect? You are smoking in my presence, but I'm your..." he doesn't let her finish.

"Unyoko? Don't tell me that you are my mother, that's one thing you've failed to do all your life," he says.

"What do you want?" she asks again, coldly.

"I come bearing bad news," she's been waiting. Finally, Khayelihle is dead. And now this one is next. "You had plans to kill Khaye, but you know what happened next? The only thing that linked us to Gcina is gone, and you killed it, usale kahle mthakashana ndini!" well, Keamogetswe

was pregnant with twins one is dead and another one survived, Mthombo took her to another place just so she can be safe with the baby, no one knows of that place.

The look on MaDladla's face right now! It's a pity he can't celebrate it because he's lost his niece too.

"Go away," she says and her voice breaks.

"Ushawe zinduku zakho, I wish you die mthakathi, if it were up to me, I would kill you myself, because that would mean I would have to buy a goat and ask for forgiveness, and that will happen ngifile! I don't see myself bowing to you, whether

you are alive or dead,” he says and gets up to leave.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

It's been a month since we've lost baby Onikelwe. I'm still hurt, I haven't made peace with it. Everything in that home is just a mess. Keamogetswe left and came back on the day we were 'laying' the child to rest. I was surprised that she still had a big stomach. Samke and Khayelihle are divorced, eyyy I don't know man, Khayelihle tells us that he hates Samke that's why he

decided to not drag the case and gave her the house and some of his money. I say that she deserved the money because she put her dreams on hold because of him.

Anyways, I'm still trying to figure everything out. I'm trying to navigate my future, I don't think I'm ready to go back to journalism it's just not me!

"Do you want me to make you food?" ses' Tema asks me. We fetched her, she'll live with us until the baby is born. I don't think they've discussed the living arrangements of the baby, her and Mthombo but I just hope the co-parenting they are planning to do becomes a success.

“No, I’ll make food for you,” I tell her, her tummy is big, very big, in two months, we’ll be welcoming the baby.

“Utsandza kutihluphekisa, you like troubling yourself,” she says. I laugh. She’s the one that troubles herself always.

“It’s my turn to take care if you,” I tell her.

“San’bona,” Mthomb greets when he walks in. We greet him back. He kisses my forehead, his whole attention is turned to his phone. He keeps on frowning. I wonder what it is that is wrong. In this home there’s no peace. We had to even postpone our wedding because of the unfortunate events that keep on happening.

“I’m heading to work,” he’s not dressed up, neither did he eat.

“You haven’t eaten breakfast nje,” I say.

“I’ll grab something on the way,” he kisses my forehead and bids goodbye before he leaves.

“The love you guys share is amazing,” Tema says, I laugh, not genuinely because this is her ex, and her saying this is weird.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 67

SAMKELISIWE ZWANE

I think I need a cleansing. Just to get the Nxumalos off my system, they've made my life a living hell. When my mother told me about an arranged marriage, I should have ran away because it brought tears more than it brought joy. For three years I stayed when I was receiving no love at all from him. I guess he's right, I'm still angry about that, I also do

I have nothing against Keamogetswe, really, it wasn't my intention to kill her child. She knows I'm really sorry for what I did,

also she understands that my hands were tied.

I guess Khayelihle is holding grudges against me because of his mother.

MaDladla stood by me, well I thought she stood by me, that's why I was shaken when she told me that she was sick.

To be honest, I haven't gotten over Khayelihle, sometimes I feel like it's a good thing that we are over, but sometimes I just feel my heart being heavy, and being in this house, where we shared our moments, happy and sad ones, just triggers everything. I've packed my clothes. I'm leaving. I've called myself a cab. The

furniture will be taken by one of Khaya's trucks, I've hired it.

I'm moving to Johannesburg, I'm not sure what I'll be doing but I have enough money to keep me going, I'll find a job or something, just so I can add on that money.

A text comes through, my ride is here. I'll be in a car, with a stranger for hours.

"Hi," I can't shake off the feeling of knowing him, the cab driver. He helps me put my bags in car boot.

"You look beautiful today," his voice sells him out, it's Thobani.

“Oh, thank you,” I look beautiful TODAY like he sees me everyday, I could roll my eyes.

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

There's a void, it won't be easily filled.

He misses her everyday. She was a big part of his life, maybe the best part of it even.

But, maybe they were not meant to be.

Divorcing her was probably a rushed decision, but it doesn't change the fact that for him it's the best one he could have made.

Now, Keamogetswe is still around as his wife, breathing in the same space as her is kind of weird and scary because he feels guilty, guilty of killing her child. If he wasn't a child to MaDladla, none of that could have happened.

"Bro! I'll be back in minute," Slindo says.

This child! She does whatever she wants in this house, including speaking like those people who sing like they are speaking, yes, the ones from America!

"Eyy, if it were up to me, you would call me ubaba," He say, Slindokuhle laughs. "Don't take your own time wherever you are going,

Zanothando asked us all to be here by 5,"
he says.

"What, do you think it's about his white
baby mama?" Wait? White what?

Zanothando has made that white girl
pregnant? Jesus, at this point, their
ancestors have not turned their backs on
them, they have their asses up, they are
bent over shame! He wonders how
Mthombo will take this, his history with the
Roois is bad.

He laughs when he imagines his nieces
and nephews with silky hair, inwele
eziyephuyephu.

"I didn't know that he had impregnated someone, nawe do not come here with a pregnant tummy! Everyone is pregnant la ekhaya!" he shakes his head.

"Relax, she knows how to use condoms," Nxumalo says and sits down next to his son.

"What? Baba? You are teaching the child about condoms? Do your condone her having sex," Nxumalo shrugs.

"It's not like I have a choice, whether I educate her or not, she still will have sex," he says.

"I'm 26, guys," Slindo says on her way out. Nxumalo takes in a breath.

“How are you feeling?” he asks.

“I don’t know baba, I just miss her,” he says and chuckles, his heart is sinking.

“I know how it feels, it’s either you go and apologize or you carry on with your life like she’s never existed,” Nxumalo says and Khaya sighs.

“I don’t want to go back,” he says. Nxumalo nods.

“When last did you speak to Makoti?”

“This morning, she’s troublesome, hay I’m tired,” now, apart from feeling guilty for the death of Onikelwe, he is staying away from her because she’s always hungry! Yohh.

“You need to constantly check up on her because she’s pregnant,” he sighs and nods his head.

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She has a book on her hand, she’s reading. He takes in a breath and walks furtherly in. She raises her eyes up and smiles at him, oh it’s a first.

“Hey, Khaye,” she says and adjusts herself on the bed. They’ve gotten over the 'bhuti' stage after they had sex.

“Uyaphila? Are you okay?” he asks.

“Yeah, I’m okay,” she says and takes in a breath. “Are you okay?”

“Uk’khala ak’sizi, complaining won’t help,” he says.

“I got a call from bhut’ Mtho, today,” she informs him.

“Oh, did he tell you when he’ll come?” she shakes her head no.

“She said I should come up with a an to get you to talk to a Psychologist,” she tells him.

“A shrink?”

“Not a shrink, a Psychologist, I wasn’t supposed to tell you, but I’m telling you, well asking you if you want to go, if you go

there with no means of talking then you will not heal," he says.

"I could try," heck how will he even start?

"Okay, that's better," she says and sighs.

"So, what are you? My wife now?" he asks, grinning.

"Yeah, your inherited wife," she says, she can only thank God that people don't pay much attention to Mthombo's life and surroundings that much, journalists and the media people only focus on him when there's a scoop or something, he's not big on TV, if they paid attention. They would be reading about them right now, this 'A Wife Inherited By Another Brother Causing A Rift

Between The Inheritor And The Wife' would be the headline.

"No, you are my wife and baby mama," he says and they laugh.

"You know, I hated you all my married life," she says.

"I didn't hate you Mina, I've always liked you, not for Gcina though," he says and shrugs.

"I hate that I came between you and your wife, I hope some day you make up," he shakes his head no.

"MaDladla came between us, this is not your fault," but it feels like her fault.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 68

SAMKELISIWE

He's a nice guy. He knows how to keep a conversation, he keeps on telling me that I look good, well, I smile and thank him even though it's weird! I had gotten used to hearing those words from Khaya.

"Kanti siyaphi? Where are we going?"

Instead of seeing people from

Johannesburg, I see people carrying buckets on their heads, they are coming from the river. Thobani is taking me straight to the villages. "Thobani, Johannesburg! Johannesburg is where I said you should take me," I say. He shrugs and pressed something inside the car! The car locks! Dammit! I should have known. This is the guy that took me to MaDladla the last time I saw her. And I still went inside his car.

"Thobani, siyaphi? Where are we going?" I'm crying right now. What makes me more emotional is that I recognize this place, he is taking me home, but I don't want to

believe it. "I shouldn't have gotten inside your car?" I say. He shrugs.

"I do what I'm asked to do," I hate him! I hate him so much I wish this car could roll over and kill him, only him though, I still want to live!

He parks right in front of a big house, not a very big one, but it's bigger than those that are in this section. I only recognize that it's home because of the rondavel we use for ancestors.

"You are home," No, I don't want to be in this place. I had already gotten myself a flat in Johannesburg, with the help of

Tsandzekile. "I have somewhere to be, please get off," he unlocks the car. I don't budge.

"Who sent you to get me here?" I ask him.

"Your mother-in-law," he says. That woman is not ready to let go of me, I swear. I wouldn't even be surprised to know that she and my mother works together!

Thobani climbs off and locks the doors, he I see him opening the boot and taking my clothes inside, I sigh and close my eyes. I let my tears flow! I just wish there was rain, rain that could wash my tears and flow away with them, along with the pain.

I decided to go inside, because really I had no other plans, it was either that or I wait for another cab, but I don't have that time for it, I'll leave tomorrow first thing in the morning. My mother is not aging, she's still the same old Mam' Zwane with an attitude for years, if attitude could cook, she would cook idombolo and samp with her attitude!

"You are divorced," she says. I could roll my eyes right now. I haven't even greeted.

"Yebo ma, he divorced me," I say.

"Because uyislima! I gave you a small task, just a small task and you failed," Lord! Help me. I'm shaking, MaDladla is here too?

Lord, I hate my mother, I hate my mother so much. Does she even deserve to be called a mother. "Instead of your husband, you killed my grandchild, mthakathi womfazi," I swallow the lump forming on my throat and purse my lips into a thin line. She has the nerve to call me a witch when the witch is her.

"You will finish off what I started, I swear," I will never! But I will play along.

"What do you need me to do?" I say and pretend to be interested.

"Ah! You think I'm a fool, I know you love Khayelihle, you wouldn't do anything to hurt

him willingly," she say. I want to cry again, when will my miserable life end? I want to be happy too. I look at the devil I call my mother, she has a smile on her face, ewu! I'm cursed.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

They love each other, that's what matters to him. The ones that he didn't like are dead, so why would he stand in-between two people who love each other? He doesn't understand why Zano would call this meeting.

“You know I would never stand in-between you and what gives you happiness,” he says.

“I just wanted to tell you that I love her, also that I don’t know how things are done in the white families when you get them pregnant.” Khayelihle cracks up. Mthombo and his father throw him a look, he quietens and covers his mother.

“I heard that you buy them a house,” Khayelihle says.

“No, we will do everything as per our tradition, otherwise our child will not be accepted in our home,” again, Khayelihle cracks up. Mthombo sighs.

“Uhlekan’ wena slima? What are you laughing at Moron?” Mthombo asks. Khayelihle clears his throat and looks to Zanothando.

“Eyyy bafo, we will have to look for the Roois clan names, do they even have ones?” He asks. Zano takes in a deep breath.

“I don’t know, but if they do have I think they are in Afrikaans,” he says.

“Saze Sasha!” Mthombo says. The whole room goes into a fit of laughter, where would they even start?

“You don’t look okay, wena,” Khayelihle says to Mthombo. Mthombo releases a sigh.

“Is it not your sister in law?” Khayelihle raises his brow. “She’s so insecure these days, Bafo I don’t even think I’d fuck Temaswati even if she was naked and had her thighs wide open, she doesn’t even turn me, every time I look at her, I think back to how people looked at me, heck they still see a rapist when they look at me, it’s something that will never be erased, isilonda engiyohlala naso ngize ngiyofa,” Khayelihle sighs.

“Eyy but I understand Tee though, Temaswati is your ex, and it’s her sister, on top of that she’s your baby mama, can’t you bring her here, we’ll take care of her until

she gives birth, Zanothando understands her better," Khayelihle says.

"I'll do that, thank you Bafo." Khayelihle grins. "You are growing, I see you," Mthombo says.

"You are not even a year older than me," Khaya says.

"You can't say he's growing when he can't even handle his wives, remember bhuti, her tears do not fall to the ground, wathelwa ngenyongo, and she came here with a kist, which means that our ancestors hear her complains about you," Zanothando has been quiet all along, and now he randomly

says this and then leaves before they can ask for an explanation.

“Don’t mind him,” Mthombo says. Khaya nods. Fuck, his day has just been ruined!

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 69

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

Some things you are just meant to carry on your back as a man, being fragile messes

up with one's mind! He's spent his whole life being fragile, everyone might have perceived him as a weak person, but in all honesty, he's just as weak as an infant at heart.

So, he's decided that he's not seeing any therapist. Whatever will kill him, will kill him. It will mean that it was meant to kill him. He's had a conversation with his father, he wanted to tell him about uMaNxumalo, the woman who molested him as a child, but he couldn't, he knew that it would break his father's heart, so he decided that if he wants revenge, he'll get it, himself, but all in good time.

MaNxumalo is a lonely old lady, she does not have any kids and she's never been married before, it's probably the reason why she thought kissing an eight year old like she would kiss her husband was appropriate. She ruined him, and how he perceives some sexual pleasures! He doesn't like having a woman on top of him, not because he is close minded, but because he gets a vivid imagination of that old woman, his baby mama tried giving him a blow job, but he lost it! He almost hurt her.

"You should ready yourself for the day I take you on like a man, maybe you'll stop

raping kids, I want you to feel the pain I felt! The emotional pain that distracted me. I couldn't even pass at school because I thought all female teachers were like you, prepare yourself, for our night," he wouldn't stoop that low. He knows who he is, but he just wants to shake her up before she says her final goodbyes to this earth!

"Seng'hembel!" He says and leaves Mthombo's house.

"Only you can help her!" Zanothando says when he gets home.

"Who?" He asks.

"Samkelisiwe! Go and help her, she's waiting for you! You still can track her,

right?" Khayelihle nods.

"Hamba ke bafo, take this" he gives him pearls, it's a neck piece. "Make sure you don't kill uMaDladla, if you do, she will an ancestor that will always trouble you," he says.

"Thank you, I'll go tell uKea," he says and rushes to his Rondavel, she's busy in her phone.

"Mkami," he says. It wasn't hate, he just didn't like her for Gcina, she was too forward for him. If it wasn't for this Ungeno thing, he wouldn't even have stopped her, he fears girls like her! Feisty ones. "Samke

is in trouble, I need to rush to her, MaDladla has her,” he says.

“What?! Do you need me to come with?” he laughs. What could she possibly do?

“No, woza Lana, come here,” he says, she comes to him, he holds her hands and pulls her to him, he kisses her lips.

“Mhmm, leave Khayelihle,” She says and pushes him away from her. He laughs and takes a jacket and then heads out. He just hopes that he gets there in time. He gets to his car and ignites the engine before he drives off.

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MADLADLA

She's honestly hurt, Gcinulwazi shouldn't have died, just when she starts to accept his death, this girl kills the second thing that connects her to Gcina. She's beyond angry! She made so many sacrifices for Gcina to live. She knows that she could have killed uMthombo because by then, she hadn't loved him the way she does now, but she didn't want to physically murder a person, so she asked for concoctions her witch doctor, concoctions that would keep Gcinulwazi for a year, time was running out, he had already told them

about Mthombo's whereabouts and he had started to lose weight, she got pregnant, with twins, when she gave birth, she took one and made him a sacrifice, she didn't even name that child, Nxumalo didn't know about it, so what was the point? But, now the agreement was that she should give up one of her son's fertility after he impregnates and gets a son, the only option was Khayelihle because she would feel guilty everytime she looked at Zano. She doesn't want Zanothando to know that she could have made him a sacrifice, although she will kill him soon.

“Ngu MaDladla Mina, please do not take me lightly! I’m not a loser, everything happens when I say it should happen. I brought you into that marriage, do you think you can betray me because of it? You see, that son of your useless husband? What do you think happened to him? And your husband why do you think he failed to be a husband to you for 3 years? And I was the 'best' mother-in-law to you? Everything happens according to my plans, awungaz Mina, you don’t know me, how dare you cross me!” After Isibusiso was born, she knew that he had to die, Khayelihle was meant to give birth to one son that would

also be a sacrifice for Gcina and Mthombo, and from there he would be infertile but only three years after his son dies, so she made sure that Khayelihle gets a wife that he would never love, she went to his baby mama's grave and put uMuthi just so she visits him in his dreams and made sure that he never warms up to Samke, she's been in this game for far too long, they should never make the mistake of underestimating her!

“Ma!!! Do you understand the trauma you put him in? Do you hate him that much? Eyyy you're heartless” Samke is in tears, Khayelihle used to cry himself to sleep

because he missed his son, what the hell?

What kind of a mother is this?

“I don’t care, that’s the thing wena Samke,

angithi yena he only proved to be alive

when his father got into the room, eyy Mina

I don’t care for that child,” they say that she

hated Zano, it’s not hate, it’s just guilt, but

Khayelihle? Eyyy that child disgusts her!

“You are not supposed to be a mother

wena, uyislwane, you are an animal,”

Samke says, a slap lands on her face.

“Mama?” She looks to her mother who’s

just quiet and sipping her coffee. Oh! What

a mother God decided to give her!

“Those are his children, my children are only uGcina and Mthombo,” she says and sits back down. “You need to call him and tell him to come here!” She says.

“I’m here!” Khaya! When did he get here?

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 70

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

It wasn't even a day ago when he decided that he'd be a man that society always expect someone who has a third leg to be, but he's back, back at it again! Back at feeling worthless and useless, heck he couldn't protect his son because his mom had his life planned out before he could reach his teenage years.

"It's funny because I also never liked you, uyinto nje kumina, you are nothing to me, Lahliwe is the person I've always regarded as my mother." MaDladla rolls her eyes, she was caught off guard. "Do you know what is funny about this? It's the fact that even uGcina that you loved so much loved

uLahliwe more than you! You are saved as Ma while she was saved as Ndlovukazi," he says and chuckles. Fuck these tears, and fuck Thando. "I've abused her, sengisho uSamke, it's enough, yeka ingane yabantu, let her go and deal with me, it's me you don't want, buya," (come) he tells her. "Fucking let go of her and her mother!" by the looks of things, Mam' Zwane doesn't like any of this. If she did, she would have told uMaDladla about him being here an hour ago. Maybe he's wrong, but he's the type to give people benefits if the doubt. "You don't tell me what to do," he says. Khayelihle laughs.

“Really?” he outs his gun and cocks it. Her eyes shift from him to his gun, she chuckles.

“You don’t scare me wena, who the fuck are you?” oh! She knows how to cuss now? Well, he laughs and shakes his head.

“You know very well that you will never do anything to me when I have this,” the gun didn’t work? The neck piece might work. He shows it to her.

“Okay! Okay! I’ll let go of them,” Khayelihle laughs.

“Nazoke! Mthakashana! Eyy kodwa Kade ngasho Mina ukuthi uyathakatha, I long said that you are a Witch, they just didn’t

believe me because I have so many personalities because of your right hand woman that took away my innocence,” he says and looks at Samkelisiwe and her mother. “Asambeni, come let’s go,” Samkelisiwe is the first one to shake her head no, oh? Right, his head is all over the place, now he knows that he wronged her, but just like her, he was under MaDladla’s spell. “You want me to send you a cab?” she shakes her head no, again.

“Ma, I don’t know what your intentions with your daughter are, but mi, take this it will protect you, wena kaMgabadelo, let’s go,” if they don’t want to move away from the

problem then he will move the problem away from them. “MaZwane, the ancestors still acknowledge you as my wife, just so you live a peaceful life after our divorce, please come so we can let the elders know, bazosishwelezela,” he says and looks to his mother and raises his brow.

They head out, he puts her to the front seat and fastens her seatbelt. He jogs to his seat and sits, he buckles up and drives out. “Hold on, this is gonna be a bumpy road,” he says.

“Slow down, Khaya!” she cries! Khaya laughs and shakes his head.

“Destination reached, I guess you will fix something for yourself, something like a broom to get you home, phuma emotweni Yami, get out of my car!” He says and clicks his tongue, they are in a place he doesn’t even know. It’s forbidden! He’ll have to get to GPS if he wants to get home peacefully.

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SAMKELISIWE ZWANE

I couldn’t believe it! I saw him and my heart didn’t skip a beat! All he brought into my

life were sorrows and pain, eyy Khayelihle! I hate him.

I'm do glad that I'm free and in my mother's arms, I'm crying and she's shushing me. I'm not crying for Khayelihle, I'm over him. I am crying for my wasted years in that home!

MaDladla played us all, Khaya and I would have long separated if it wasn't for her! Eyy maybe, just maybe he also enjoyed hurting me.

I just realized that I'm okay without Khayelihle in my life, I'll go to his home and do whatever it is that supposed to be done just for him and I to part ways!

Khayelihle! A man that I thought I loved.
Well, I did. But now, I don't care, as soon as I saw him, I just felt disgusted. I heard the hurt in his voice but it didn't move me, I just can't get over him wasting three years of my life! He's fallen in love with uKeamogetswe only because I was there for the last three years. If I wasn't there, he'd probably give her the same treatment. It's unfair that I had to iron everything for her to find a perfect Khayelihle, but life has never been fair to anyone.
It's time for me to claim my life back and move on!

“I love you,” she keeps on kissing my forehead. I don’t know if I’m dumb to believe it, but I am and I am hoping that she’s genuine. Apparently MaDladla had a hold on her, my father was abusive so she killed and MaDladla knew because they were friends. She used it against her so that she gets me as her daughter-in-law. I hate everything that has to do with her! Her kids and everything, they’ve put me through a lot, I don’t think I can ever live in a room with them and be civil! They all disgust me. From the father to the last born daughter of the Nxumalos.

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

He's not home. He doesn't think that he's in a right state of mind to face anyone at home, so he went to the place where he finds his peace, well, most of the time. The River.

He lies down on his back, he faces the sky and lets his tears fall. All along, he thought he had a grave at home, a grave that had his son, but he doesn't, his son's spirit is somewhere out there, in a hut of some witch-doctor.

'Ngasho ngathi qeda lento, didn't I tell you to end this?' he closes his eyes and shakes his head.

"It's all in my imagination, you do not exist," he says.

'That's what you think, but open your eyes Lihle, open your eyes and look at me, I'm bruised and tired, help me, I'm tired,' he shakes his head no, he will not surrender.

'Don't you feel the pain? Are you not tired of suffering?'

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 71

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

He slept by the river yesterday. After talking to his alter ego, he let sleep take over him, he slept peacefully, really peacefully. He just woke up, the sun hasn't risen, so he decides to get inside the river and bathe himself. He'll take a proper bath at home. After bathing, he heads to his car and drives off to his home. He gets to his Rondavel and knocks. After some time, Keamogetswe opens the door for him, the

first thing he does is pull her in for a hug. He just wants warmth, he doesn't want to cry or talk, but he feels her questions coming by the way she's brushing his head. "What happened?" She asks. He takes in a breath and breaks the hug before he pulls her to the bed, he sits down and puts her in between his legs.

"I just found out that the woman who birthed me never loved me because I only cried when uNxumalo got into the ward," he laughs after saying that.

"Who told you that?" Keamogetswe asks.

"I heard it with my own ears, every event that was happening in my life till date has

been controlled by her, she killed my son and made him a sacrifice, I guess his mother was caught in a wrong place at a wrong time, but behind them dying in my hands was my mother.” She takes his hand brushes it. “Samkelisiwe is so angry at me,” he says and chuckles.

“She’s not wrong, you gave up on her too quick,” he says.

“Yeah, I know, I’ll apologize too, but I don’t think we can work out, she’s still angry that I wasn’t the best husband to her, on top of that I divorced her even though I knew that my mother was behind everything,” he says, he sighs.

“Phephisa, I’m sorry,” she says, still brushing his head.

“If I could, I would be killing the woman that I call my mother,” he says and closes his eyes, he’s tired and drained.

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It’s been two weeks since his mother and him fought, well not really, but it’s been two week since he called his mother a Witch.

Samkelisiwe is coming today, they are about to let their parents know why they want to cut their communication. He’s in his house, a house that he shared with her,

it brings back the good and the bad memories they shared. He's be a monster of a husband to him.

"Khayelihle!" This is reality, he is no more her Khaya, he's just... Khayelihle.

"I'm coming," they agreed that they need to talk before they go to their parents and the elders.

"Sawubona," she says and leans on the cupboard, she looks around. These things should have been taken to her apartment in Johannesburg.

"Hey, how are you?" he asks and buries his hands deep inside his pockets.

"I'm refreshed, wena?"

“I’m okay,” he says, and she laughs.

“Ey, Khayelihle what do you want us to talk about? I’m tired already, I want to get over and done with this and go home,” she says and folds her arms to her chest.

“Yin’ndaba unje wena? Why are you like this?” Khayelihle asks raising his brow.

“What? I’m like what?”

“You are inhumane,” Khayelihle says and shakes his head.

“That’s where the problem lies, you think the world revolves around you and sorrows! Everyone has their problems but you do not see them crying every day,” she says. He

swallows. He did this, he turned her into this bitter woman.

“I did apologize,” he says.

“I apologized too, nje, but you had already had your inherited wife, it didn’t take you even 3 months to love her, but it took you three years to be a husband to me,” she says.

“Everything is just messed up, you know very well that even though uMaDladla hadn’t done what she had done, it would take time for me to fall in love with you, they married you to me 2 days after I had lost people who meant a lot to me,” she rolls her eyes.

“They were gone nje, stop making it your excuse,” she says.

“Yazin, I have no time to fucking explain everything to you, everything about you, asambe,” Khayelihle says.

“Everything is about me? Like those years were about me, right?”

“You could have left me if you didn’t want me and you were not a supportive wife, you stayed with me because you had no place to go, you had no choice, your mother was in on this she told you to never come home, if you wanted to leave I wouldn’t have stopped you, but because you are a woman that stayed in a loveless marriage I’ll be at

fault, uMaDladla took you and made you umkhovu wakhe but whose fault is it? It's Khayelihle's right? Uyagula wena, you need to taken to asylum. " he's tired, tears are already burning his eyes. This is what angers him, if you bottle everything inside, when your breaking point comes, almost everything makes you cry.

"I have my ride, I'll find you there," Right.

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SAMKELISIWE ZWANE

What he said struck a nerve in me. He just went out. I sit down and try to collect

myself. I don't cry but I think.

I feel like a failure, I've failed my marriage.

Putting the blame on Khayelihle feels good

but I know very well that I had my own

share of some kind of abuse to him. It's fair

to say that the marriage ended because if

the both of us, I tend to say a lot of things

without thinking, it was always a habit I

had. Even after our marriage, although I

stayed and slept with him, ironed and

cooked for him, it didn't make me a wife. I

wasn't emotionally supportive to him. And

heck, I know I stayed because I had no

where to go. To be honest, my mother

doesn't deserve my forgiveness but she's

my mother and the only parent I have left in this earth.

Maybe I'll have the strength to apologize to him, some day, but right now, I'm still hurt.

I am mourning our marriage for the last time before I get up and leave. I'll walk to their home, it's not that far, after that I'll relocate to Johannesburg and find something to do, my mother and I will not suffer just because I left the Nxumalos, they are not Gods, life goes on...

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 72

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

“Khayelihle!” My tears are dry on my face, I’ve been crying and calling for him the whole night. He says weird things, things like he’ll be killing a lot of people, I’m just glad he’s not manhandling me even though he keeps on shouting at me, and himself too. I’ve been living this kind of life for 2 weeks now, I’m heavily pregnant, I have to care of myself and Khayelihle every night. “Listen, Khayelihle, I’ll slowly come to you,

do you hear me?" I suck in a breath and move closer to him. He's hugging his knees, rocking them back and forth, he keeps on whispering things to himself. Just to test waters, I hold his shoulder, he doesn't fight me off, so I know that it's safe for me to hold him.

"You'll be okay," I say and rock his back, back and forth. I keep on telling him that all this will pass. "Khaye, come, come to bed and sleep," I tell him, and abides, wuuu thank God. He's snuggled closer to me and snoring lightly. It's hard for me to sleep, because I'm thinking if I'm safe around him, I know that he's not doing it on purpose, but

I'm honestly wondering if my child will be safe around him, what if one day he loses it and kills us? Jesus.

I don't know when I slept, it took time for me to sleep because I had a lot in my mind. Right now I'm woken up a kick. Yep, a kick on my tummy.

"Khaye..." I say.

"Oh, you heard that? I'm sorry, my boy will be a striker in the ground," he has his head on my tummy, I laugh.

"You are convinced that it's a boy, how are you feeling today?"

"I'm okay," no he's not okay, and I know it.

“Do you mind telling me about him? The person you talk to?” Being a wife to Khayelihle is hard for me, with I have to tread carefully. Gcina was straight forward, and not as fragile as Khayelihle. He laughs and scratches his head and laughs nervously. He takes my hand and plays with my fingers.

“It’s not only one, but there’s only one that troubles me, it’s just a little boy that is able to feel,” he sniffs and plays with my ring finger.

“So you can communicate with them all?” He nods. “Do they go away when you drink your pills?”

“No, they don’t fully go away, but I guess they become less angry and protect me more than hurting me.

“Why don’t you want to go to therapy?” he sighs and lets go of my hand, here comes the excuses.

“Because I still have a lot of things to do, I need to deal with MaNxumalo, maybe after then I can start my journey of healing,” he says and shrugs, well...

“Don’t you want us to go and burn her house?” I laugh and he laughs too.

“I already have her,” oh? Then that’s good.

“Let me dress up, I want to watch you ending her,” I say and get up, I look for my

tracksuits and change into them. His eyes are on me the whole time.

“You are crazy wena, do you think I’d be able to live with myself after killing a person in your presence?” He laughs and gets up.

“I’ve seen worse, I grew up in Chiawelo,” it’s true. “Come, you’ll be killing for the last time, and burying your past angithi? It’s the only way you can heal and be a father to your kids,” I tell him, he smiles and kisses my forehead.

“I don’t want you to be there when I kill a person, you are pregnant,” he says. I pull

him close to me and try to wrap my hands on his trunk, I look up to him.

“I’ll see a therapist, too,” I say.

“Yohh! Awudeli, you don’t give up!”

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

Mthombo! He’s just godsent. I love how he loves me. He always reminds me, he doesn’t let a day go by without him reminding me that he loves me. Whether we are fighting or not. Sometimes, when we are not talking to each other, he writes it down on a piece of paper and leaves it

where I can see. 'Ngiyakuthanda Mama'
that's what he writes.

My life has been great lately, my
insecurities have went from 100 to 0. My
sister being here made me really doubt
uMthombo, and he understood and took
her to KZN, even though I was the one that
came with the idea of her living with us.
"Yohh it smells divine!" he says. I didn't
even see him coming. He was at work. He
just live checking up on his farmers,
sometimes he takes me with and be the
herder of his cattle. He comes behind me
and wraps his hands around me and then
kisses my cheek.

“Go freshen up, we are leaving in an hour,” I tell him.

“Uh, is it okay for me to call a driver?, I’m tired mama,” he says.

“Well, I can drive while you get some sleep,” he smiles and thanks me before he goes to the bathroom.

As soon as I’m done cooking, I pack the food into Tupperware containers.

Mthombo takes our bags to the car, I follow him with the containers with food. I take over the steering wheel and drive off while he eats.

“Waze washayela kamnandi, sengathi ngingathi ga,” (you drive well, I feel like

sleeping) he says and I just laugh shaking my head. He really sleeps after eating, eyyy, he should consider going to the gym! He'll get fat, wuu I can imagine a fat him.

After 2 hours of sleeping, Mthombo takes over the wheel, he says I drive too slow, if it were him driving, we would be home right now, he keeps on cracking jokes here and there. His personality is nothing like how he looks, if someone were to judge him by how he looks, they'd think that he's the type that doesn't even laugh, but in reality, he's just a great person, he has flaws here and there, but overall, he's a sweetheart.

"I hope you are thinking of me on top of you," he says. I laugh.

"You are crazy," I say and continue to browse on my phone.

Livezandlebe, tjela mak'wakho asiphumele emtin webantfu, aphindze akutjela kutsi babe wakho mbamba mbamba ngubani (tell your mother to leave people's home and also tell her that she must tell you who your real father is) the number is unknown. What does this person mean? I do know who my real father is.

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Season Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 73

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I've been distracted.

I'm trying to crack my brain hoping that once it's cracked, I'll have answers, but nothing. I grew up as a Nkhalanga, I know that I'm a Nkhalanga. Mom gave birth to Nkhosingiphile, Temaswati, and then me; I don't know who the hell it is that would send a message like this to my phone. I

just delete both the message and the number on my phone and toss it in the back seat. I deleted the message from my phone but I can't delete it from my brain. "Yin'ndaba, kwenzenjani? What's wrong?" Mthombo asks me. I sigh and shrug my shoulders.

"It's nothing, babe," I don't want to ruin his day. He is easily affected by small things, this one is not small but it has to do with my mother's dignity.

"Do you want me to fuck the truth out of you?" His voice is gentle, so gentle I know that it won't be nice when he 'fucks' the truth out of me.

“I got a message from an unknown number that was telling me that I should ask my mother to tell me who my real father,” I tell him and sigh.

“Give me the phone, I want to see the number,” I tell him that I deleted it. “Why would you do that?”

“I don’t want to be stressed, we are about to welcome a child, and next month you are going to pay the rest of the Lobola money at home so we can do our traditional wedding, there’s a lot I have in my plate, I don’t want to worry about tintfo letingekho,” really this is not something I would like to abuse my brain with, but who am I fooling?

This will probably haunt me for the rest of my life. He places his hand on my thigh, it's just assurance from him.

"I love you," he says. I smile and brush the top of his hand.

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KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

I thought he'd agree but he didn't. He went out and told me that he'd be back, I should just sleep. I let him leave, because I thought he was going to end that woman, and now he's back and not talking to me, he just came into the room and took a bath,

he changed his clothes and left without saying a word to me, I'm wondering about what I did.

I finally get off bed and make it up and then I head to the bathroom to take a quick bath and then head to the kitchen. Tema and Slindokuhle are both here, Tema is sitting and Slindo is cooking, this is something that rarely happened. Slindo didn't like doing house chores, but now she has no choice because, well, her sister-in-laws are pregnant, heavily.

I greet them and they greet me back, I take a seat and watch them.

“When last did you see Khaye?” I ask them, I’m worried, I’m hoping that he didn’t do anything stupid. I don’t question his decisions, but in hoping that he didn’t think doing what MaNxumalo did to him was the best revenge, it’s just gross and it will affect him more than healing him. I’m now praying that he didn’t think of raping her.

“Ekseni, in the morning, he went out with Bhut’ Mtho now,” Slindo says and I nod and look over to Tema. She looks frustrated, she’s busy looking at her phone, like there’s something she’s expecting.

“Gheli, what’s wrong?” I ask her.

“Ahh, it’s nothing sesi, don’t worry about it,” I raise my brow, I’m hoping she’s having no trouble with her pregnancy. I know that there’s something wrong. We’ve had our chilling moments when she was still with Bhut' Mthombo.

“Kea,” baba calls me, where is he coming from?

“Ba?” I say and get and go to him. He asks to take a walk with me.

“I’ve seen how happy he looks with you, thank you,” erhhh, this is weird but I smile either way and nod. “Take care of him and if you have any problems, do not die inside, come to me and I’ll fix him,” he says and I

nod before thanking him. He's taking me to the graves, I haven't spoken to Gcinulwazi, they just got me off inzilo when I came back, I've never really had much time to talk to him.

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BAB' NXUMALO

His daughters in law mean a lot to him.

They are more of children to him more than they are his sons' wives. Samkelisiwe knew that in him, she had a father. He'd always remind her that she can come to him if she ever had any problems with Khayelihle, but

she never did any of that, he guess that she had always respected the bond they shared, they were strictly father-in-law and daughter-in-law to her.

There's nothing that makes a father more happy than seeing his children happy, right now, all of them are happy, from Mthombo to Slindo, and it puts him at peace.

Samkelisiwe too, they do communicate over the phone, he told her two weeks back that he found her a job. He knows that it's very hard finding a job without qualifications in SA, so he contacted his friends and they said they only can offer her to be the face of their company, a

receptionist and then they can take it from there. She thanked him and said she'd take the offer, he sent her money, money to last her for a month or so.

He believes that they are all happy, and maybe now is the time for him to be happy to. So he calls the person he has dreading to call, someone that was always invading his privacy in his head, Lahliwe.

"Nxumalo?" she says when she answers.

"Mama, kunjani, how are you?" he asks.

Lahliwe sighs, he smiles, he already knows that she's about to complain.

"I thought you were calling me for something serious, kanti it's this?" She's

always like this.

“Do you mind coming over?”

“For what? Nxumalo?” she says.

“Okay, I’ll come over, I’ll be there in a few minutes,” he says and hangs up. He looks at Keamogetswe kneeling next to Gcina’s graveyard, she’ll get over him, soon. He takes in a breath and walks away.

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She looks as beautiful as always, her breasts are full, he loves them like that, he’s noticed that she doesn’t like her breasts, but they are his favorite part of her body,

his face is buried in them as he keeps on moving in and out of her.

“Nxumalo, kumnandi,” she tells him that it feels good. Her legs are wide opened, he feels every part of her and she feels so good. Normally, she doesn’t moan loudly, they are old, there’s no need to show off with their loud moans, but today, he’s hitting every spot dam well, she’s crying for him not to stop.

“I love you,” he says and picks up his pace. She moans out his surname before she shakes and rolls her eyes.

“Ohhh! Thank you mamaaaa!” he groans before he fills his semen in her.

“I have this, here for you,” he says and kisses her forehead before he hands her a letter.

“Nxumalo...” she whispers.

“It feels wrong, I know, we shouldn’t have fallen in love but it’s you that I love,” he wants to make her his wife.

“Bht what will people say!” she sighs, he’s the only man she’s been with, he broke her virginity, and when she was chased away by her sister, she decided to put her whole attention to Mthombo.

“I don’t care about people Sthandwa Sami, we are too old for umacashelana,” (sneaking around) he says. “Awungthandi

yini wena? Don't you love me?" he asks.

She giggles.

"Ngiyakuthanda Zwide kaLanga," (I love you) she says.

"Nazoke, do you want to be under me?" she heaves a sigh and nods.

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Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 74

TEMASWATI NKHALANGA

Nkhosingiphile is back and she's back to cause problems for me and Tema! My mom and I had already made peace, Tsandzekile and I are close, just the way we should have been! But right now I'm getting texts from unknown numbers telling me that we need to claim our home from mom! Nkhosingiphile is back and she's back to cause problems for me and Tema! My mom and I had already made peace, Tsandzekile and I are close, just the way we should have been! But right now I'm getting texts from unknown numbers telling me that we need to claim our home from mom! I told her that I don't want anything to get

in-between us as a family. I know that she also doesn't care about me, if she did, she would have taken me along when she left.

I don't want anything to ruin Tsandzekile's happiness, that's why I'm impatiently waiting for the message I sent to Nkhosi to go through.

"What's wrong sisi, do you normally wet yourself?" Slindokuhle asks. I laugh, hawu does Kea wet herself? At her age? "You sis' Tema, do you wet yourself?" I look down, and indeed I urinated.

"Breathe," Keamogetswe says. She's the one panicking but she's asking me to

breathe. I blankly look at her and then back at my phone.

“Call your brothers and father, tell them that she’s giving birth!” What? She must... Oh fuck! I’m giving birth. Abdominal pains strike. I hold on to it and cry.

“Shhhhh take a breath in a breath, sisi,” Keamogetswe says, she’s heavily pregnant too, I hope this is not contagious. “How are you feeling?” She asks me.

“Like I’m dying,” I say honestly, and I see fear on her face! Well, I will not lie, her face is making me want to laugh... “I’m joking, it feels so good,” I tell her. She shakes her head.

“Come-on, let’s get her outside, bhut’ Khaya is on the way,” Slindo says.

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BAB’ NXUMALO

Right now? He feels like a proud father. He just received a message from his daughter telling him that Tema is going into labor.

“Come, we are going to the hospital,” they had already eaten. They were just chilling and enjoying each other’s company. It feels good to be loved by someone you love. He knows that she loves him, he sees it in her

eyes, and early today when she confessed it, his heart jumped for joy.

“She’s giving birth? Our second grandchild,” she says, getting up from bed. Their first grandson was from Khayelihle.

“I have a feeling that the child will be our peace to our new beginnings, Siqalesihle,” Lahliwe smiles.

“It’s a beautiful name,” she says.

They are all sitting quietly, waiting for the Tsandzekile and Tema, Tsandzekile said she’d be there to hold her hand because Mthombo is already sweating, he would faint.

“They’ll come out alright,” Nxumalo says and pats his son’s shoulder. Soon after his phone beeps, he checks it, it’s Thando, apparently she’s home and is waiting for him with divorce papers, so it’s either he comes and signs or they will forever be married, he wonders what changed her mind. He sighs and tells his son.

“You should go baba, you know how crazy she can be,” yeah, maybe that’s a good idea. He tells everyone that he’ll be back, he asks Lahliwe to walk him to the door.

“I’ll be back, I love you,” he says and kisses her forehead.

“I love you even more,” she says it for the second time, he smiles hugs her like his life depends on the hug. As he walks away, Lahliwe calls him. He turns to look at him. “I love you, Nxumalo,” she says. “Even more,” he says and leaves.

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TEMASWATI NKHALANGA

I felt him playing in my stomach, he was what kept me going. I was looking forward to seeing him. He got me closer to Zanothando. Zano and I bonded with him more than the others.

Last week was the last time I came for an appointment, his heartbeat was still there and he was 'healthy' but, today, they are telling me that he doesn't have a heartbeat. I don't know what to do, I don't know if I should laugh and think that they are joking, or I should cry. But judging by Tsandzekile's facial expression, it's true.

I don't have tears. I don't think I have tears to cry. This is probably why I took five hours to bring him to earth, I was doing all the pushing, and he was gone, just like that. "Can I hold him?" my voice is shaky, I quickly purse my lips into a thin line. "Hey," I say. His eyes are opened, I don't think I've

ever seen a new baby with their eyes wide open like his. I can't hold it in, my eyes are burning with tears. I let it leave my lip, a scream of pain. Why would he do this to me? Why would he hold on for the whole 9 months and die as soon as I give birth to him?

"Luswana lwami, ngiyalufuna, I want my baby," it's not helping, the crying is not helping. "I'm really sorry that I failed you," he gave me hope, hope that I would hold him in my arms. But I'm glad that I didn't fail to push him out of my vagina. The doctors would have taken me to surgery if they had detected that he was dead. "I

miss you and your kicks, I miss the conversation I had with you every night before we went to sleep, every time I was down, you'd make sure that you move so that I can remember that I had the best thing to live for," I ask the nurse to give me warm water and a cloth after I kiss his forehead. I raise my eyes and see the his fathers, they are all blankly staring at me. "Why?" Zanothando is the one asking, we all don't know why. I'm confused too. I see Mthombo's mom holding him, I wish I had a mother to hold me too. Tsandzekile seem to have been frozen, I don't see Kea and

Bab' Nxumalo anywhere. Slindokuhle is on the floor, crying.

"We are sorry, he's gone," I silently let my tears fall. I'm still holding him in my arms. I close his eyes and sniff.

Someone's phone is ringing, it's Khayelihle's. He answers and speaks politely to the person on the other end. He hangs up and sighs.

"That was Mam'Mkhize, they say ubaba has committed suicide, he hung himself on a tree at home," Mam'Lahliwe lets out scream that pierces right through my already broken heart. Zanothando and Mthombo sit down and cry too.

Tsandzekile looks lost. I'm just unable to feel. The nurse takes my baby away from me, Khayelihle is holding both Mam'Lahliwe and Slindokuhle in his arms.

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Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 75

TEMASWATI NKHALANGA

I've accepted, but I have not healed. Today I'm being discharged, and I'm going to

attend my baby's funeral together with his grandfather. Mam'Lahliwe said that we should name him Siqualesihle, that's who he is my baby. I had hoped to see him grow old, I had hoped to see how he'd be like when he starts showing interest in a certain gender, I guess it wasn't meant to be. I had only bought him a onesie, he hadn't worn it, I wish he had because now I feel like smelling his scent, I don't know how it was.

"Hey..." that voice, hoarse yet so calm. I lift my eyes to meet his. "I'm sorry he whispers," tears fill my eyes but I look up, trying to stop them, it's not working. "Hey,

Tema, shhh,” he hugs me from behind and whispers that it will be okay, and that he is sorry. I turn and lay my head on his chest, he covers my shoulders with his arms, I feel him kissing the top of my head.

“It hurts,” I’ve never been this close to him, but funnily enough, he’s the only one I’m able to cry to and tell that my heart hurts. I don’t remember the last time I saw him, but I know that I thought of him.

“Phephisa,” he says and squeezes me in his embrace.

“How did you know I’m here?” I ask when we finally break the hug.

“Ngu Zwelihle Mina,” he says and I roll my teary eyes.

“I missed you, not a day went by without me thinking of you,” he says.

“Why didn’t you come?”

“I had some things to sort out, I’m here now,” he says and pulls me back to his arms, he smells like heaven, I feel like nibbling on him.

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

For some reason, he feels like his father didn’t commit suicide. It made no sense.

MaDladla calls him and then suddenly he dies? Nah, it makes no fucking sense.

Tomorrow they are putting him and his son to rest, but there's just something he has to do before they bury them, he just wants to have a conversation with Gcina, so he gets up early in the morning and heads out to the river, Gcinulwazi's safe place.

He walks to the river, he has a clear picture of his son in his head, he has his and Gcinulwazi's brown eyes, his forehead was full of hair, that meant he would be as hairy as he is. His son's death took a great toll on him, heck both the deaths took a great toll on everyone, Khayelihle is the only one who

has been busy with the funeral arrangements, he's sure that he's not okay too, but one of them had to step up.

“Nihlezi nomthakathi oyoniqeda nonke nya, ngoba nisaba ukunxenxeza nje?” (You are with a witch that will finish you all just because you don't want to ask for forgiveness from her) this message seems to be his, but when he looks back he sees a child, maybe the child is just a 10 year old. He ignores him and walks on. “Ngisho wena, Malume omude, I mean you, tall uncle,” he looks back and sighs. “She'll kill all of your siblings and your children, but if you kill her the only thing that will have to

die would be a goat, you'll just apologize for killing her, and the place where you are going, you won't find what you are looking for, he's desperate for you to connect to him, and you've been told that you will only communicate with him through your traditional wristband, how do you expect him to protect you all if you don't listen to him? Zanothando, for the first time has found something that makes him happy, so he doesn't want to disturb him, protect them and kill that witch," the boy says and leaves Mthombo in awe, what the fuck just happened?

Is he spiritually gifted? Because if he is, he says clear things, it's rare for a spiritual gifted person who's as clear as him, he goes back home with a heavy heart.

Tonight, he's ending all this shit, it's been too long, it's better to apologize to when she's dead than to live with her.

"Ubaba didn't kill himself, so you won't whip him," Zanothando's voice is yelling from one of the Rondavels that aren't used.

"Didn't you see his body hanging?" it's one of their uncles.

"That doesn't mean he really killed himself," Zanothando yells again, he quickly rushes to the Rondavel. His father's body is lying

down on a mat, they want to whip it, but Zanothando is fighting, where is Khaya? “Babom'ncane, Zanothando is telling you that he didn't kill himself, how else do you want him to tell you?” he asks.

“Like this!” a gunshot follows right after, if there are no guns, there's no Khayelihle.

“Fucking let go of the sjambok,” Khayelihle says, he doesn't reprimand, this is the only language that seems to be able to shake them up.

“Yobe bafana bami,” (I'm sorry my boys) his uncle says and quickly gives Khayelihle the sjambok.

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He is sitting on his bed, he has isphandla in his hand, he knows that once he puts it in, Gcina will take over him, and he doesn't know how far Gcina is willing to go. He sighs and prays that he doesn't do much damage before putting it on.

He walked, from home to his mother's house, he felt it, that MaDladla was here since his mother is with Temaswati back home, offering her support.

"Mama KaGcina," he knocks and lets himself in. "Isikhohlakali, an evil hearted person that hides her evil heart, ahhh

uyibhoza, wena,” he has a chainsaw with him. He’ll start by her feet, and then her arms, and then the best part, the head that Khaya was asking for, tonight shall be the best night.

“Hawu, my boy, what are you doing here at this time?” she asks, sipping her tea, she’s not fazed, Mthombo will not do anything to her, he might say these things but she knows that deep down, he loves her more than anything.

“I’m here to play a game with you, it’s true or false, if it’s false, then I’ll cut off your feet going up, is that cool with you?” she almost rolls her eyes, but she nods either way.

“Right, the first question is, do you love my brother? Remember the answer is either true or false,” he says and grins.

“Change your question to a statement,” she says. He laughs, loudly. His shoulders are even shaking, but his eyes, they are dark.

“That’s not an answer, bring your foot!”

“No, uyagula kanti,” again he laugh and put the chainsaw on the ground before he starts it. The noise it makes is very loud.

He forcefully takes her leg and put it on the table, MaDladla is crying, crying for help.

Everyone she killed must have cried for help too. He. Makes sure to but it straight

on her ankle, and then it cuts, she screams in agony. It's gonna be a beautiful night!

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Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 76

MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

“How did you kill my father?” He asks, with a smile that does not reach his eyes.

“It hurts,” she says. Well it hurt him too when he couldn't reach out to his siblings,

it hurt him too when he found out what she did to keep him alive, but now, he's gone, and the only way he can avenge everyone who died in her hands is by using Mthombo.

"I fucking asked you a question, how did you kill my father? Okay I know that you used your witching ways because you knew you couldn't overpower him, but why did you make it seem like he killed himself?" He asks her.

"I'm losing a lot of blood Mthombo," she says, she already doesn't have a foot, but that doesn't mean she should stop begging him. Mthombo searches himself and then

he finds it, the dry Gin that he had put in his pocket. He pours it on her footless leg, and she screams. Dammit, this is a great sound to hear.

“They couldn’t cry for help because you had bewitched them, but you will cry until you beg me to kill you,” he says.

“Xola ngane yam, please forgive me,” he grins and gets up. The chainsaw, again. He starts and lifts it up, she’s shakes her head no, crying. He throws it to the air, and quickly shits. It lands on her thighs, it’s uncontrollably cutting. The cut is not straight because she keeps on moving as she cries. He’s enjoying this, if only

Mthombo was a stoner, he would be watching her while pulling and puffing. He's always enjoyed seeing evil people suffer. She killed his father, a very beautiful soul he was, so she will suffer the consequences.

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He's done. She's dead, and now his family can start their journey of peace. He cleaned everything we'll not entirely because even though there's no blood or any of her minced body Mthombo's fingerprints are still there, so now, what's

left to do is to call Zwelihle, he always does the clean ups. He just washed his hands, now he's heading to the river.

He unclothes himself, he gets in to the river and bathes. He takes a shortcut and heads home after he's done am taking a bath.

When he gets home, he takes off his wristband, he falls asleep right after that, the wristband is next to him.

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

“MaRooi,” he says and shakes her hand.

She is leaning by her car, probably waiting

on Zano, he's just here to greet her. His father approved of Zano and her relationship, who is he to stand in-between them? Well, he doesn't even hate anyone in this world, rephrase! He doesn't hate anyone, with the exception of his aunt that he recently killed, and his mother.

"Hey, sir, how are you?"

"I'm not your sir, I'm the father of your child, so you can call me brother-in-law, I don't know if you want to shorten it to bil or what, it's your choice, mawengane yam ezoba nenwele eziyephuyephu," (mother of my child that will have silky hair) he says and grins. It's just after his father's funeral.

He's just trying to lift his mood, he was the one responsible for everything because everyone was sinking into a dark place, maybe he was sinking too but he had to step up and be the man. Kea and him still haven't spoken, they sleep in different rooms, it's only because he's just killed a person and he had to have a cleansing before he could get closer to her, just to be safe.

"What's that you said?" she asks with a small smile.

"No, I was just saying that my brother loves you so much," he says.

“Oh, I love him too,” she says and smiles, well love is a beautiful thing.

“Thank you, thank you for being here to support us, we’ll definitely do the right by your family,” he says.

“Thank you,” she says and takes in a breath. “I’m sorry about your father,” he nods his head while he thinks of an English way to answer her.

“Thank you,” he settles for this.

“Come, Zanothando is inside,” he says and leads her to Zanothando’s rondavel.

“Khayelihle,” she calls him just when he is heading to his room.

“Samke? You are here?” he asks.

“Yeah, he was like a father to me too,” she says. He nods. She nervously wipes her hands on her hips.

“We’ve done so much to each other, it was abuse to either of us, well, with you, it was under your mother’s influence, but I expected a lot from you, because you didn’t tell them that you didn’t want me,” he sighs and nods. He wasn’t there when they introduced her to his ancestors as his wife. He had just came back from his baby mama's funeral. Well, they buries her two days after her death, it was probably because of their family traditions. He hadn’t buried his son, but his mother had

already had her plans of getting him married, and no death if her grandchild would stand before her.

Right now, he's emotionally drained, and he has no energy to defend himself, some things, he never done on purpose, but those that were his fault, he apologized for. "I've forgiven you, and I hope you can forgive me too," she says. He nods, against. "Thank you," he says. He turns.

"So you never really loved me?" she asks with a chuckle. It's not that she wants to get back with him, but she just wants closure.

“I did, I still do,” he says. She nods her head. “I don’t think I’ll ever stop, kodwa it’s not that kind of love, I think it’s care more than anything,” he says. Anyone who knows him, knows him to be a loving person, but also he wants to protect the little peace he had, whenever Samke got burnt she would come for him and say hurtful things, now they say a tongue is a powerful weapon, and whatever is says by it, it cannot be unsaid.

“That’s all I needed to know, I’m sorry for your father,” she says. He nods before he thanks her. “A goodbye hug?” she asks, he

nods and opens his arms to hug her. She inhales his perfume for the last time.

Thankk you for loving me and taking care of me," he says.

"Thank you for loving me Khaye, although it came late, but I understand now, you were not given enough time to grieve your son, and I remember I'd hear you dreaming, telling someone that you'd never betray them, I knew then that you were developing something, that's what kept me here with you, you were my husband that I crushed on," she says and chortles, he smiles at her. "It was fear more than anything, I thought they would think that I moved on too fast,"

she nods.

“I get you,” he nods.

“Thank you, eyy look at the time, I should get going,” he says.

“Goodbye,” she says, and watched him walk away.

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Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 77

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

My heart aches.

Baba is gone and not coming back, I didn't take the news of baby Siqalo being a stillborn, so I was admitted. Just when I was okay and ready to give moral support to Tema, Tsandzekile came and told me about ubaba. The number of deaths in this family, it's not even a year but already we have four people dead. I've spoken to my friend, she works at a law firm in Johannesburg, she said she'd talk to her bosses, then I can do my internship next year, it will be for two years then only then will be able to write my test and I'll be a lawyer. I can't wait to give birth.

“Qo,” a knock. I know it’s Khaya. We haven’t spoken since that day I was telling him that we should go and kill uMaNxumalo, and the funny part about this is that I don’t even know if I’m allowed to be angry at him.

“Come in,” I say after some time. He pushes the door open. He gets his hoody off of his head, I don’t know when he changed into his tracksuits. They were all wearing black suits, their clothes matched their moods.

“Hey,” he says and sits down on the chair next to the door.

“Hey,” I say, I really don’t know what to say to him. I’m just wondering if this will be an

it thing, one day we are just happy, and a few hours later he just gives me a cold shoulder.

"I just had a conversation with Samke," he says, oh?

"That's great, I guess," I say.

"We are done," him and I? Alright, my heart starts rolling drums, there's something that I feel, I'm not sure what it is yet, but I know there's something I feel for him, and now that he is saying that we are done, my heart is just sinking.

"Oh, I hear you," I say, my voice breaks. God, no! It shouldn't!

“Yeah, her and I are done, now I’ll give this one my all, I’m ready for therapy too, I’m really sorry for last few days, I wasn’t supposed to come close to you, I did something sinister,” he says. Okay, now I’m breathing well, I’m just wondering what that sinister thing he did is.

“You didn’t touch her inappropriately right?” I’m asking about MaNxumalo.

“No, I would, eww how could even think of that?” He asks.

“I’m just asking Khaye, I’m sorry,” I say.

“How are you?” he asks.

“I’m alive, you? Are you good? You have been hands on, I’m proud of you,” he blinks

rapidly. "You pulled it off, your father's funeral, even your nephew, his coffin was so beautiful, I know they are looking over you wherever they are and they are smiling upon you, you are a great somebody," he chuckles brushes his head.

"Don't speak like that, you'll make me cry," he clears his throat. I laugh. Man, he's so cute.

"Sorry then," I say and shrug.

"Can I come closer to you? I swear I'm cleansed," he says. I nod my head. He lays his head on my stomach and intertwines our legs, I don't know how he does it.

“My inherited wife,” he says. I laugh, this will forever be a joke for me.

“Tomorrow, we are going to Johannesburg, right?” he nods and places a kiss on my tummy.

“Daddy loves you my boy, tomorrow we are going to Johannesburg,” he says and places his head on my tummy again. I place my hand on his head and brush it. I’m falling asleep...

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

Losing my nephew and stepchild took a great toll on me. I have to divide myself into three. I have to be strong for him, for both his losses, and then I have to be strong for my sister. And then, when I'm alone, that's the only time I cry. Bab' Nxumalo was a great father, he made sure that none of us felt like outsiders. My father died when I was very young, so I don't really know a father's love, but the short time I spent with ubab' Nxumalo, it gave me a glimpse of a father's love. And then, Mthombo's photocopy that was so small in my arms, I can't get his picture out of my mind. I held him in my arms yet he was not breathing. I

held on to him, hoping that my oxygen would transfer to him. They said he was no more, he hadn't even lived a minute but already he was no more. It broke my heart into pieces, he had to live. Mthombo cries himself to sleep every night, he makes sure that I'm asleep before he cries.

He blames himself too, he says maybe if he didn't think the baby was boy his, the baby wouldn't have died.

"Hey," he says getting in. He is coming from the garden, he does most things to keep himself busy.

"Babe," I say and smile at him. It's late, I've cooked and dished up for Zano with the

help Sli. Ski and I ate together, I put Mthombo's plate in the microwave because he doesn't eat. Kea and bhut' Khaya left, not so long ago.

"On Saturday, at night, I came here to check on you, where were you?" I ask, I was really worried that night.

"I know it's weird, but I don't remember a lot of things that happened on that day, well except that I saw a young child that gave me some kind of a prophecy," he says and chuckles. "You know, I was so shocked, he didn't look anything older than 10, but he spoke something so mature, even Khayelihle doesn't compare to that

maturity," he says and I laugh. Bhuti Khayelihle has his own days, at first I thought he was rude, and then I thought that he was a straight-to-the-point kind of person, and then he was just a joker, I get him a lot.

"Okay," I say and brush his arm. "I'm sorry for ubaba and Siqualo, I know they love you, but you need to let them rest, stop torturing yourself and blaming yourself for their death," I say. He nods.

"Thank you MaNkhalanga, I'll do just that," he says.

"Come, let's sleep," it's late, but not that late to sleep, but we can't do anything other

than cuddling because we are mourning.

“I’m still shocked that uMaDladla didn’t come to the funeral yaz,” I sigh, and shake my head.

“I wonder where she is,” Slindo and I went there to tell her about the baby and Baba, but she wasn’t there. I’m also embarrassed on behalf of my mother, she didn’t even sound sympathetic when we told her about her grandchild’s passing, she didn’t even come.

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Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 78

ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

His only parent has just been taken away from him. It hurt him, goddamn, but right now acceptance is all that matters, they need to rest well.

He was just visiting his their graveyards, all if them. From his father down to his last nephew, so far, they have graveyards at home.

He gets up and dusts himself before heads to the main house, where Mthombo and his

half wife and Sli are sitting, they are eating breakfast.

“Good morning, when is Khayelihle coming back?” he asks sitting down.

“Soon, I think in a month or so,” Mthombo says, Zanothando nods.

“Wena you need to finish off your wife, yebo we’ve lost ubaba, but it was his wish for you to have your wife be fully yours, we’ll go to the Roois, maybe month end, I’ve got a solution for the clan names, we’ll just rotate it around ‘Groot Rooi’ and ‘Great Rooi’ like you know Groot mean Big, right!” Mthombo is cracking up. How crazy can one family be?

“Mxaa I can never imagine myself born into another family,” Mthombo says, his family warms his heart. He loves them so much.

“Ma, are you okay?” Mthombo asks when Lahliwe gets in. She’s here just to relive their moments, she sleeps in one of the guestrooms and cries herself to sleep almost every night.

“I’m okay, are you all okay?” she asks them with a smile, they nod. If she had known, she wouldn’t have pushed him away all that time. He’s the only man that she knew, she loved him, and he loved her, she should have told him more often that he loved him.

They eat breakfast over a light conversation.

“I just heard that MaDladla died, but she was chopped into pieces,” Zanothando says looking at Mthombo, just to get his reaction.

“Oh? Ngampela? Really, that’s sad,” he says. Okay, he doesn’t know anything, but he feels nothing either. Lahliwe is just playing with her food.

“She deserved more than that, I never liked uMa Yazi, but it somehow hurts,” Slindokuhle confesses.

“I feel the same way too, I loved her, she had her witching ways, but she was a

mother," Mthombo says.

"Yeah, to you and Gcina," Zano says. He feels nothing for that witch!

"Ahh bafo?" Mthombo feels like Zano is angry at them because of the way Thando treated them.

"No, I was just saying bafo, but you guys are my blood," he says and winks at him just to show him that he's not angry.

His phone rings, "I bet it is uRooikazi," Mthombo says, his voice full of humor.

Zano raises his middle finger before walking out and answers the call.

"Seven, Skhombisa!" he says.

"Hey liefie, how are you?"

“Eyy sesizoze sibizwe ngamaqembe singazi la ekhaya,” (we’ll be called leaves without even knowing,) he complains.

“How are you MaRooi?” It sounds weird.

“I’m good babe, I was checking up on you, I’m going to my first appointment, do you want to be there?” he nods.

“Yeah, I’ll be there babe,” it really feels good changing from 'WeMwali' to 'Babe'.

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ZWELIHLE MAZIBUKO

She was stubborn, he felt like she was a brat, and she bored the fuck out of him, worse she had accused someone close to his best-friend of rape, but Gcina told him that he had to take care of her because she also had no choice, she had to protect her child. He tolerated her, not knowing that he'd like her, and when she left, he felt empty. He's in a process of leaving the kind of life he lives, doing jobs here and there for his criminals, he was just trying to fix himself, and then he'd come to her as soon as life was okay, but he knew that he'd have to be there for her because she had lost someone she thought she was protecting.

Yesterday, he drove her home. He's in a hotel that's nearby. He'll leave, probably next week.

He takes his phone and dials her numbers. "Zwelihle," he smiles, like he really is a beautiful world. Maybe he could be, some day, to her.

"Hey, Tema, how are you feeling today?" he asks her.

"Baby steps, I'll be okay," she says and sighs, "You know, my elder sister is home and I haven't told Tsandzekile," she sighs.

"Why don't you tell her, Tema?" he asks with a smile. She's a complainer by nature,

and he'll always be there to listen to her rantings.

"She wants our mother gone, I think life dealt with her so now she's bitter and wants to ruin everyone's happiness," she says.

"You know, I have network issues, I can't hear you well, what time should I come fetch you? So you can tell me about your sister?"

"Lendzaba yema network, come at 1pm, I'll be done with my house chores," his heart sinks, this girl just gave birth and lost her child, can't they let her rest, at least for a week?

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

“Dr. Thembekile? When did you become a Psychologist?” Nelly laughs.

“It’s Nelisile, Dr. Nelisile Ntshangase, but you can call me Nelly page, Thembekile is my sister,” He nods.

“Is Page your surname?” she laughs. He knows her very well, he’s just trying to set the mood.

“No, my surname is Magwaza, but I’m married to Miyalo Ntshangase,” she says.

“Oh I hear you, Mam' Ntshangase,” he says and studies her face, besides Thembekile, there are some part of her face that look like someone he knows, he can't put his finger on it, yet.

“How are you?” she asks him. His heart starts racing, it's sinking in, he's really doing it.

“I'm okay, on some days, are you okay?” she nods her head.

“I'm okay Mr Nxumalo,” he says.

“How are you feeling?” he asks. Oh now, he's the therapist. Many patients of hers do this, it's just nerves, she knows that he will ask questions about her, until he feels

ready to let her in. She answers all his questions, even about her marriage.

“At 8, I was molested by my aunt,” he says.

She purses her lips into a thin line and nods her head. “I created a second me as I grew up and they multiplied, I feel like they protect me most of the times, until something triggers me,” he says and shrugs. He tells her about half of his life.

She keeps on nodding. It's getting heavy for her, after their session, he'll

“Your ex wife, did you love her?” he nods.

“Yeah, I did, I just held back because I felt like they would feel betrayed,” she nods.

“And the current one? Do you think if it wasn’t arranged, you’d look at her as someone you’d love?” He shakes his head no.

“I didn’t dislike her, but I just didn’t think she was a good wife for my brother, until I saw how happy my brother was with her.” He says and shrugs.

“And now?”

“Yeah, I think she understands me, also, she listens without giving me any of those looks, you see you can tell what the next person thinks just the looks they are giving,” he says and shrugs.

“And that’s what your wife didn’t give you?”

he drags in a breath.

“She loved me, it was what mattered,” he says.

“Yes, she loved you but did she give you what your current wife gives you?”

“She was the kind of person who thinks that indoda ayikhali, if they cry then they are weak, it’s the way she was taught,” he says and looks away.

“Okay, that’s enough for today, we’ll see each other tomorrow, alright?” he nods.

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Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 79

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

It feels good, to have someone who's not close to you listening to your rantings about how hard life has been hard on you.

As he drives back home, he dials

Mthombowolwazi.

"Bafo?" Mthombo says once he answers.

"You know boy, angaz noma uyislima or yini, I don't know if you are an idiot or what," he says.

“The day I come back to Johannesburg, I swear I’ll kill you, do you not know that I’m older than you?” Mthombo’s favorite line. He loves being older.

“Okay, sorry, but how long have you been seeing Nelly, and I’ve never heard you saying that they look alike with Tsandzekile,” Mthombo laughs.

“Why are you not laughing?” Mthombo asks.

“Because I’m not cracking a joke, go one to Instagram or whatever, and Nelly, I swear you’ll see that there’s something that links them together,” he says and hangs up.

They live in Mthombo's home when they are in Johannesburg, he's planning on going back home because Nelly said that she's transferring him to another therapist, he asked that she transfers him to Durban. "Sir, there's a package that's here for you," one of the securities tells him.

"Oh, ngiyabonga baba," he thanks him and takes the wrapped package.

Open it when you are alone, Your Faithfully he unwraps it slowly, wondering what it is that is inside. It's his mother's head, he freezes a little, sadness about to take over until he remembers that his mother was a devil of a woman, and

that he had always wanted her head, just to burn it. Her eyes are wide open, it feels like she's staring at him. He goes to the backyard and burns her head. It's all over now! What's left is for them to go to that prophetess so that she can give them something to cleanse their home, because it's impossible that MaDladla did not leave them with any cusses.

He goes back inside after washing his hands. Keamogetswe is cooking, as heavily pregnant as she is.

"I'm back," he announces before he kisses her cheek. And stands behind her.

"Hey, how was your day?" she asks.

"It was great, how was yours?". He asks.

"It was just okay, what's up?" she say. He goes around to take a seat on the high chair.

"There's nothing wrong, mama," he says and places his chin on her palm. "I feel very much better about myself you know, right now I know that I'm bigger than any problem, whether it's rape at multiple personality disorder, I didn't deserve it and also I didn't cause it upon myself," he says.

"That's it," she says and smiles. "I'm so glad that you are moving on, and finding yourself in the process," she says. Growing up without both her parents was torture,

but she had an open-minded grandmother, who taught her nothing but care.

“Can I come and kiss you?” they haven’t been intimate since that day, that day where they were intimate and then she ended up in hospital. She smiles and goes to him, she adjust the high chair and gets in-between his legs. She wraps her hands around his neck and kisses him softly, he responds to the kiss, holdings the sides of her big tummy. They break the kiss and look into each other’s eyes.

“Thank you,” he says. She brushes his lip with her thumb. “We are going back home tomorrow, I think I’ll have my next

appointment with a therapist next week,” she nods her head. “If I were to find you a law firm where you’d do your articles at in Durban, would you do that?” she nods. He smiles and perks her lips.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

I’m having a bad day. This was supposed to be my day, the Nxumalos came to finish their dues, but I’m having a bad day. My eldest sister is back, I didn’t know until last week, when I came here. They didn’t think it was important to tell me.

Now, she doesn't look okay, she looks physically drained. She's so thin I don't think she'd be able to walk when it windy, in her head she's the most beautiful thing to ever happen. Like right now, she's drawing one line eyebrows because she's seen that one of abakhongi is young and is ubhut'Khaya. She wants to charm him, I've been telling her over and over again that bhut' Khaya is taken.

We are serving them food, everything is finalized. Soon, we'll slaughter a cow, so that I can go with umhlubulo to the Nxumalos. One if my aunt and two if my

uncles will take me there, officially. I'm with Nkhosingiphile right now.

“Ngiyatibuta nje kutsi wena bata kubika batsi ungubami because even natsi asikwati,” (How will they introduce you because even us do not know you) she says.

“Oh, hhay I'll tell them who I am, just to remind them,” I've had a really feel conversation with Temaswati, she sat me down and let me in on her life, and then she told me about mom, by the way I cannot stand her now, she mistreated them knowing very well that she's probably gonna be the first one to die, and leave me

in a mess. She knew they'd hate me because she 'loved' me more. Also we got to the part where she told me that make lied about my paternity, I swear if I wasn't told by her at that time, I would have gone crazy. Yes, it hurts me even now, I even cried when she told me, but she was gentle, she also gave a hug. I've decided that I will not go into search, because legally I'm a Nkhalanga, even culturally. Everything of mine was done under the Nkhalangas, my mother's family have me to the Nkhalangas, so I don't understand why anyone would send me texts telling me about my paternity.

Now, I understand why she told me, she was just preparing my heart for our sister that's back for revenge.

"Can we have this conversation as soon as the Nxumalos leave?" I ask her and sit next to her, I hold her hand. "Are you okay?" she nods her head and looks to the door. "You know you could talk to me, anytime, right?" I ask her.

"Aii I'm okay, please leave me alone," just as she says that I receive a message from Mthombo, to me telling me how beautiful I look. It puts a smile even though I know he hasn't seen me. I send him a text telling him that he's looking handsome too.

“Are you happy with him?” I look at her, she’s genuine, I’m wondering what it is that is making her bitter.

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Finale

TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

CHAPTER 80

KEAMOGETSWE MAILULA-NXUMALO

“Khayelihle!!!” He said he'd be back, he was just going to get his phone to call Mam’Lahliwe to help. Mam' Lahliwe us in

the same yard as us, I don't think calling her would need a phone. Also if he can't find his phone can't he jog to where she is? I think I'm going into labor, my lower abdomen feels like it's in fire. Khayelihle needs to be back as soon as yesterday, otherwise I will give birth here, alone. That would be a disaster.

"I'm coming!" He yells back. Oh God, I'm so gonna kill him. Tsandzekile gets in with a basin and a towel, I won't give birth at home.

"Why are you coming in with a basin?" I ask her.

“Just to calm you down,” she says. I sigh and nod. “Khayelihle ran away,” she says and chortles. She patting my face with the towel that’s wet with warm water.

“I should have known,” he told me straight up that he wouldn’t come when I give birth because only the thought of it freaks him out.

She helps me up and we head to the car. She drives me to the hospital, Khayelihle’s car is driving behind us. Am I ready to give birth? Yes. Am I ready to feel the pain? Absolutely no. But I can’t wait to meet my baby already.

“You will be okay, just breathe,” Tsandzekile says. I’m breathing, I’m not even crying, but she’s panicking. We have a very dramatic Mrs Mthombo. I’m surprised that she hasn’t fainted. When she found out that Nelisile Magwaza, the Psychologist, and her shared a father, she fainted, and I heard that it wasn’t her first time fainting. Khayelihle and Zano call her Qulekile, it’s just weird and funny.

The doctors help me to the bed. I lie down and bring my knees up. The only time I ever open my legs this wide, is when I’m having sex. The nurse keeps on saying that the

child is near. I want to get over and done with this, Lord I'm in so much pain.

"That's it, Mrs Nxumalo, I need you to push," I try pushing, and also try to make sure that my butt is firm, I don't want any mistakes of farting. Or, even releasing poop, Jesus! They say when you poop while birthing your child, that child will never be likeable. I don't know if it's myths or what.

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

Just like he had hoped, the child is a boy. He asks to go in just after they tell them that the baby is born and Keamogetswe has been stitched. The rest of his family follow behind him. Oh, he's in a cot, already bathed and clothed. Keamogetswe is said to have also taken a bath, she's just lying in bed, he face turned to the side, she's looking at the child next to her.

"Hey..." he says and goes around to the cot that the baby is put in. He looks beautiful. He smiles and takes his tiny hand and kisses the top of it.

"Yinhle nayi ingane boh," (this child is so cute) Mam' Lahliwe says. She's been

around and supportive, they also don't want her to spend most of her time alone, she's the only parent they have left, they can't afford to lose her too.

"Kanti ekabani, this child is mine, he's bound to be handsome," he says. They laugh.

"You are not even all that," Zanothando says and laughs.

"You know, I even think that the nurses fainted when he revealed himself on his birthday, aii bafo you take the cup of being ugly," Mthombo says and takes the child from the cot, "Zwide Ka Langa, Sothondose, Nkabanhle! Welcome to earth

Siphosethu esilethe ukukhanya” (our gift that brought us light) Mthombo says.

“Weee, aiii let me leave you,” Khayelihle says and laughs. He then looks at Keamogetswe and mouths a 'thank you' she smiles and nods at him.

They all didn't want to leave, but they knew that they had to give the new parents and their baby some space. Khayelihle is with a sleeping Kea, she's been sleeping for hours now, he used the time to talk to his son.

Mthombo was the one to give him a name, he said he is a gift to them all, and also the light in the darkness they have been in as a family, so his name's are Siphosethu Sibani

Nxumalo. It's been a lot they've discovered. They found out that Zanothando had a twin brother that they all didn't know about. He was killed at birth, he didn't have a name and his spirit was roaming around, so they had to do a naming ceremony for him and they call him to join his other ancestors, Sinethemba is what he was named. It was a bitter truth to swallow for all of them.

"Where is my child?" she asks after blinking multiple times before she opens her eyes. "Hey, you are awake, how are you?" He asks, taking her hand and playing with her fingers.

“I’m okay, there’s a little pain nje, but it’s nothing much,” she says and smiles. She turns her head, the cot is still next to her bed, the baby too, she’s still here.

“Thank you so much, for him, I’ll make sure that you see every day that I’m grateful,” he says and kisses her forehead. She smiles and nod at him.

“I know you will be the best father on Earth, he’s blessed to have a father like you,” she says and he feels his heart melting.

Therapy didn’t only improve his mental health, it also improved the way he thinks of life. Some things that are in his life, he’s grateful and appreciative of. He learnt to

appreciate life more than he did, and his people that are in him, they are still very much lying low.

“I've never been this happy. Worse, I had never even imagined you and I together, it was just impossible,” Khaya says. She laughs.

“Right? Even when they spoke about Ungeno, I was like, never! But right now, I feel like the best version of myself, thank you Khayelihle my Inheritor,” she says and laugh. He takes his baby in his arms and laughs.

“You are the best thing amongst all the other things that I've inherited,” he says and

laughs.

“Even the money baba left for you?” she asks.

“Nope, it doesn’t come near you, ngkuthanda ukudlula imali, I live you more than I love money,” he says and tells her to peck his lips. She does that.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

FINAL EPISODE

KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

He's just arrived home with his little family. He helps Keamogetswe settle in and then goes to fetch food from the main house.

They do have a home of their own in Durban, he bought her a house. And here, he will settle in having a Rondavel because Mthombo or Zanothando are supposed to live here.

But, for now they will be living here, at least until Sibani turns three months. He watches her eating. She looks up and catches him staring.

"What? Do I have something around my mouth?" she asks.

“No, do I need a reason to look at the perfection before my eyes?” he asks, she smiles and looks down on the plate and continues eating.

Once she’s done eating, Khayelihle takes her plate to the Kitchen and washes it. He then goes to Gcinulwazi’s Rondavel. He takes a seat on his bed after taking his picture.

“Ewu Bafo, you’ve made me a father again, I don’t know how I will ever thank you. It’s like you knew that it was what I needed, I needed something to push me to do better, Ngiyabonga bafo, thank you and I promise to take care of him, I’ll make sure that he

knows you, Ngiyabonga Ndwandwe,” he says and puts Gcina’s photo back to where it was and locks Gcinulwazi’s room before returning to his Rondavel.

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TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

They say love us often not enough for a couple to stand tall, I say otherwise. If it wasn’t love, I think I wouldn’t have been with him. I had insecurities, but he kept us strong till now, he kept on assuring me. He’s never been unfaithful to me, but he once dated my sister, it kind of made me

question a lot of things, but I'm over that now. I'm just happy with him.

Mthombo doesn't know how to be a romantic, it's funny but also it's frustrating some times. He's that type of a person who stays true to his word! If he says that he's planning to keep something from you, he'll tell you that he has a surprise, then your excitement levels will rise and then you find out that the surprise is that he bought new goat.

Last month, Mthombo came home and told me that he had something for me, I was so excited, he didn't even specify if what he

had for me was a good or bad thing, but I was excited as always.

“What is it?” I asked, but he just ignored my question and carried on driving. “Babe, what is it that you have for me?” he shrugged.

“I don’t know, you will see,” he said that parking in front of a house, he said that it was in Protea.

“Come,” for a moment, I had thought that he had bought me that house, it was in the hood, yes but it was very big and beautiful, it was like we were in a hoody Hyde Park. He took my hand in his. He knocked a man opened the door, he had grey hair and

introduced himself as Sthelo Bhembe, we got in and found his family, they are a big family I must say! Sthelo was with his wife, Thembekile, and they had 3 children. There were two other man, Hlanganani and Miyalo Ntshangase; for a moment I was confused because Miyalo looked more like Sthelo than he did with Hlanganani. Their pitch-black skins and their dimples under the eye were proof that they are siblings. Oh the Ntshangase's are really big family, they have one grandchild from Othandiwe who is already married, at his age! That child is a blessing, I swear, the way his humble? Well anyways, Nelisile and

Nontobeko were introduced to me, Nontobeko being Hlanganani's wife, and Nelly being Miyalo's wife, also there's Thandoluhle who is a very quiet teenager. Then there were two toddlers from Nelly and Miyalo, and one 7 year old from Nonto and Hlanganani. To be honest, I was really puzzled as to why I was being introduced to them, they are a lot and I still am surprised that I still remember them.

"Babe, this is Nelisile a daughter to your father, Bab' Magwaza!" as soon as he said that, everyone said their 'surprises' that was when I went down, I fainted and then Mthombowolwazi told his family, now they

call me Qulekile! I still think that they could have told me in a different way, but still, I'm happy that he did that for me, because deep down I was curious about my father, but I didn't have the guts to ask my mom.

Right now, we are parked outside his home, the one in Hyde Park, we hardly ever come here because he's always busy at home.

With the little that I had, I got an open place at home and opened a salon, it keeps me busy and sane.

"Come" he says and takes my hand after opening the door for me. I climb off and follow his lead.

I smile when we get to the sitting room, he made sure that he turns off the lights and closes every curtain, just to make candle light dinner, I squeeze his hand, I appreciate him doing this, it means a lot. Things are moved, there's a throw laid on the floor, I guess it's an indoor picnic. And then there's a table set for two. Mthombo man! He takes something that looks like a remote control and presses something on it. And then Celine Dion and R-Kelly I'll Be Your Angel starts playing. I cover my mouth with my hand, I remember playing this song on his car, and he asked who those Whites were.

“I love you Mkhathswa,” I say, he smiles like an idiot.

“I love you too, Mkami,” he says. I laugh when Zanothando peeps through the door, he is dressed like a chef. He comes in. He places Dumplings and Tripe on the table. Well, I just giggle, I thought we’d be having sea food or something.

We wash our hands, Sli is the one that gives us the dish and cloth, after then we dig in.

“I’ve listened to so many of these songs that you love, and I can quote a few for you Sthandwa Sami, but that wouldn’t mean anything because it wouldn’t be words

coming straight from my heart. I love you, and I want to always know that I will always love you," he says and smiles. "I was diagnosed with Angina, but I'm taking my pills," what the hell is Angina? And tell me why he has to tell me these news on a date, Mthombo is not fair. He should have told me about this, a long time ago.

"But..." he puts his forefinger on my mouth. "It's not that deadly, it's just chest pains. I'm taking my treatment so I'll live longer," he says. "But asikho lapho Sthandwa Sami, that's not what we should dwell in, I just wanted you to know that with my Angina-Heart I love to the moon and back," he says

and gets up. He comes to me, he kneels down, and searches something from his pocket, I'm expecting a chocolate but his hand comes back with a ring. Tears fill my eyes, my heart is so full, it feels like it will burst out of my chest any time from now. "Thandekile Ka Mthombo, wonngenza indoda emadodeni ngokwesilungu and marry me," (Mthombo's Thandekile, please make me a man amongst white men) I laugh and nod my head. He's dumb, such a dummy. He smiles and gets up before he takes my lips into his, my heart is racing as I respond to the kiss, my hands are on his

head. He wraps my legs around his trunk and stands straight up.

“Get a room!” someone yells, and we break the kiss.

“Thank you MaNkhalanga, when last did you get your periods?” he asks with a grin on his face. I think about it! I missed my periods two months ago, Jesus!

“Mthombo!”

“Ah, I’m very fertile Mina!” he says and laughs.

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TURN THE HANDS OF TIME

FINAL EPISODE

TSANDZEKILE NKHALANGA

We are all gathered in one room, my sisters and sisters in law, well I'm here to brag about my ring. I'm just so happy. I really didn't expect a ring, Zanothando even said 'Wow, you didn't faint,' I just laughed because I'm thinking that they are always waiting for me to faint in every situation, which won't happen, I'm not always fainting. I just black out when something makes my heart stop, I've always wondered what it was, people used to say that I

needed to be taken home and be done a ceremony for. Well, I'm still not sure about that, Nelly and I speak a lot, she says she would like to take me to eMandeni, at home, but she said I should be prepared for a Mbali that brags about grocery and her car installments being completed, I really laughed, I'd say she is exaggerating, but I have Nkhosingiphile. She's not as bitter as she was, she just doesn't have a filter, she has a running mouth. Apparently she lived with a man in Rustenburg, she took care of his children because their mother was dead, he says that she really loved him. But after 10 years, the ex came back,

apparently they had been going through a divorce, but they realized they loved each other, so they kicked her out of the house, she was crying when she was narrating it, it was painful, but the way she was narrating it was also funny because she was using her hands, Tema and I could not help it but laugh.

Mom is a bitter old woman, but she has someone who matches her, Nkhosingiphile, ah this girl can tell her where to get off in a polite manner. I really thought making up with her would be hard nut she's my sister and I love her so much.

“You and Zwelihle, what’s going on?” I ask Tema after we finish celebrating my ring. “There’s nothing much,” the smile on her face is so priceless. We all give her that look.

“Khuluma wena, ufuna sikhotse letibunu yakho letincane?” (talk, do you want us to beg you?) Nkhosi says and rolls her eyes and sips on her wine. She doesn’t like people who fall in love that much because of her experiences in love.

“Well, he’s a charmer!” she says, and blushes! We laugh. She tells us how much of a beautiful soul he is. I really do love him

for her, he's respectful towards her, he respects us too.

"Kumnandzi kwa Nxumalo! Others jump from one pussy to the other and other jump from one fuck to the other," Nkhosi say.

Seven looks really lost, Kea, Tema, and I exchange looks. This one has had enough alcohol for today! If we don't get her to be sober she'll end up cussing at us. "Who fucks better between the two of them?" she asks Keamogetswe. I look at her apologetically, she doesn't look offended, but she just looks uncomfortable.

"Wena Mlungu, how is Zano coming with getting back our land from you? Does he

tell you how much we blacks hate you?" Oh God, she needs to sleep.

We've learnt two things today, to never open up to her about anything, also, to not allow her to get drunk, Jesus what is this that she's doing?

Nkhosingiphile finally slept, and now we are alone and laughing at she was saying, God if it wasn't people I was close too, I'd feel embarrassed. But these ones? Ahh they just family. Slindokuhle cracks up just after we've finished laughing and we start laughing again.

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KHAYELIHLE NXUMALO

He's been going to church a lot, it's the place where finds his peace. Okay, he goes there once in a month, that should count for something, right? MaKhoza told him that every curse that was upon him, put by MaDladla was not effective, because they reversed everything when they named their other brother and reunited them with their ancestors. They say Gcinulwazi is finally rested because there's unity in his family. So that means that he's fertile, but he doesn't any child now, Siphos is showing them flames. They wake up at night and

change shifts just to rock him back sleep, but he goes back to sleep at his own time, he is a very stubborn child, he listens to himself only. Maybe they will have a child in the next 5 years, he doesn't want to divide his attention between Sipho with anyone as of now.

He just got home, he's tired. Keamogetswe has cooked, it smells divine, he greets her and kisses her cheek before he goes to take a shower. And then he goes to his son and talks to him, he's just playing with his hands and feet. He's 2 months old.

"Ya, mfana kaBaba," he says and kisses his forehead. Kea comes in with food.

“You wear suits now,” she wiggles her eyebrows. He laughs and shakes his head before taking the plate and digging in. Siphos starts crying when he’s halfway through his food, Kea takes him and tries to pacify him.

She’s so close to him. He hasn’t been inside a woman in months now, his dick is already up and hard just by her snuggling herself close to him.

“Please look at me Mama,” he says turns her to look at him. “Can I have you?” he asks, his voice kept low and hoarse. He buries his face in her neck and sucks it. His fingers find their way underneath her

panties and plays with her folds, he rubs her clit. "You shaved," he says, and gets her naked. He leaves trails of kisses from her neck to her breasts. "So full," he says and slightly bites her nipples before he sucks it, he sucks the other one while he squeezes the other one. He leaves wet kisses on her tummy down to her pussy. He puts his finger into her opening and sucks her clit. She's moaning his name, it feels damn good. He keeps on sucking her clit and moving his finger in and out, until she squirts. He lays a peck on her lips before he penetrates her with his joystick.

“Oh shit!” her walks are so warm against his dick. He closes his eyes, and holds her waist.

“Oh Lord!” she cries when he picks up his pace.

“I love you!” He says, he is sweating.

There’s a visible vein throbbing on his forehead. “You feel like heaven,” he rubs her clit and slows his pace. Her walls start clenching, he picks his pace and pounds in to her. “ fucking God I lobe you!” He groans, she’s also shaking beneath him. He spills his semen into her and collapses on her “I love you too,” she says. He kisses her cheek.

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ZANOTHANDO NXUMALO

He's never thought that he'd come this far with her. She has a lot of issues, she's seen her father raping her mother, she was basically raised in a home that was imperfect, it was just abusive for her. It created a monster, sometimes when they would have arguments, she'd throw things at him. He sat with her and told her that he would never stand that, he wouldn't hit her, but if she continues doing what she was always doing. She stopped, she gave him

the respect he wanted. Two months back, they came and paid their dues, he always laughed as he thought about it; Khayelihle was so dramatic about it. They have made it this far with love. She is his wife traditionally, and she gave birth to Eight a few weeks ago! Well, that's just a joke, his daughter has a Zulu name. He knows that seven is a very important number, it also means a lot, but he would never name his child a number! His ancestors would make sure that they burn his brain on his sleep! Mthombo is responsible for the naming of the children. Lethokuhle is what he named her. She has one name that means so

much. Oh and she has curly hair like any normal child, Khayelihle still calls her Yeps, for Yephuyephu. She's the apple of everyone's eye, she's the second girl in the Nxumalos, the first one being Slindokuhle who is hardly home. He doesn't like this Thato guy anymore, he's taking his sister away from him. But what can he say? Nxumalo was very fond of him, and he believes that he'll do right by them.

"Letho," he says and kisses her tiny lips. He wants to be a perfect father to her. Maybe just like his father was to him.

"Hey babe..." she might be married to Zulus but she'll always be a white, she wakes up

very late. She wakes up ilanga selishaye ey'nqeni.

“Njabulo Yami, my happiness,” he says and smiles at her, she kisses his cheek and heads to the kitchen to prepare coffee for her. He’s told her so many times that she’s not supposed to be cooking, all she needs to do is to rest, but she’s white and doesn’t believe in 'Superstitions' she still thinks that Impepho pollutes the air, but he’s glad that when things are serious, she always does what is expected of her, she respects him and his culture.

Lethokuhle is sleeping and he’s just had his coffee, she’s watching TV, it’s one of those

Afrikaans dramas. He doesn't hear a thing, well he only understand 'dankie' and Groot, otherwise his mind always goes blank when there's this deep Afrikaans being spoken

"Babe, do you also wait for three months before you have even if you had a Caesarian section?"

"Yes," she says and laughs.

"Oh kodwa yibhadi lami leli, this is surely a bad luck, I'll only put the tip," he says. She laughs out loud.

"Okay, woza," she says to him..

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MTHOMBOWOLWAZI NXUMALO

This time, this time he prays that his child survives, the child will not replace Siqalo in his heart, that one is his first child, even though he came as a stillborn. He's just hoping that this child if his survives, he would be happier than he is right now.

Tsandzekile shifts closer to him, disturbing him from his thoughts.

"Hey," he smiles and kisses her lips.

"Good morning, Thandekile KaMthombo, and little Mtho" he loves her. So much! She knocks him off his feet everytime, he doesn't get enough of her, he's everything

he prayed for and more. Sometimes he fails to put it into words, she's just perfect.

"I love you Themba lami, I love you so much, and thank you so much for being in my life," he says and kisses her cheek.

"I love you too," she says and he kisses her other cheek and brushes her tummy.

There are so many things he would have liked to change about his past maybe change his family too, sometimes he would even think that if he could turn the hand of time his life would be perfect. But now? He doesn't want that, if every event of his life hadn't happened then he wouldn't have found her, if we wasn't born into a family of

crazies his life would be boring, he just
doesn't want to Turn The Hands Of Time.

THE END